



ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

**Accountability for Curriculum Implementation in Primary Schools of
East Wollega Administrative Zone, Ethiopia**

By
Feyera Beyessa Urga

May 15, 2025
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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**Accountability for Curriculum Implementation in Primary Schools of East Wollega
Administrative Zone, Ethiopia**

A doctoral thesis submitted to the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum Studies

By

Feyera Beyessa Urga

Under the supervision of

Ambissa Kenea (Prof.)

May 15, 2025
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Addis Ababa University
College of Education and Behavioral Studies
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this dissertation entitled: “*Accountability for Curriculum Implementation in Primary Schools of East Wollega Administrative Zone, Ethiopia*” is my unique, brand, and original work. I have undertaken the research work independently with the guidance and support of the research supervisor. This study has not been submitted for any degree program in this or any other institution, and all sources of materials used for the dissertation have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Feyera Beyessa Urga

Signature -----

Department -----

Date -----

Addis Ababa University
College of Education and Behavioral Studies
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATION FOR THE PHD DEGREE

Name of Student: Feyera Boyesa

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Approved by: Name and Signature of Members of the Examining Board

External Examiner: Mengistu Hail (Dr.) Signature: [Signature]

Internal Examiner: Beky Hagos (Dr.) Signature: [Signature]

Supervisor: Prof. Ambisse Kene Signature: [Signature]

Dr. Dessu Wirtu
Chair, Department Graduate Committee

Chair, College Academic Commission

[Signature]
Signature _____


Signature _____ Date _____

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CI	Curriculum Implementation
C and I	Curriculum and Instructional
DfE	Department for Education
ESDP	Education Sector Development Program
ESSA: Every Student Succeeds Act	
GWMES	Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System
LEA	Local Education Authority
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NPM	New Public Management
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
PTAs	Parent-teacher Associations
REB	Regional Education Bureau
SBM	School-Based Management
SCRC	School Cluster Resource Center
SLFM	School Local Financial Management
SMBs	School Management Bodies
SPs	School Principals
Sups	Supervisors

WDR	World Development Report
WEOs	Woreda Education Offices (District offices)
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TGE	Traditional Government of Ethiopia
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

Abstract

The study aims to investigate accountability for curriculum implementation in primary schools in the East Wollega administrative Zone, Ethiopia. The system theoretical framework and World Development Report (2004) conceptual framework served as the study's orientations, as it explored the current accountability relationships among the key stakeholders in the primary education system. To achieve the study's objectives, an exploratory case study type and a multiple case study (holistic) research design were employed. A purposive sampling technique was used. Data were collected from primary and secondary sources using semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and document analysis. Data was collected from 6 primary schools, which includes 6 school principals, 6 Parent-teacher Associations (PTAs), 3 supervisors, 12 students, 12 teachers, 12 parents, 6 curriculum and instructional (C and I) experts of Woreda Education Offices (WEOs), and 2 curriculum developers of Regional Education Bureau (REB). The subject of the study is 59. The collected data were qualitatively analyzed using a thematic approach. The findings of the study reveal that the voice accountability relationship between curriculum users and the curriculum developers and experts can often be characterized as meaningless due to several interrelated factors such as lack of rich information and communication, absence of media and technology platforms, cultural barriers, limited curriculum users' involvement in decision-making, unclear representative of the electoral connection linking with curriculum implementation to voting behaviors, no formal and informal participation of the curriculum users, and weak feedback mechanism. The study further reveals that the long route compact accountability relationships between school curriculum implementers, and both curriculum developers and experts are weak and frequently characterized by thick authority, poor enabling environment, absence of appropriate reporting, contractual agreement, meager implementers' autonomy, and the politicization of the experts' responsibilities to focus on top-down subordinate directives. This accountability relationship was effectively exercised to hold school curriculum implementers accountable for easily counted scores and politically attractive reports rather than the implementation of the school curricula. The short route students' power accountability relationship was masked by the hopeless students themselves, the poor response of School Management Bodies (SMBs) to students' concerns, little information, no legal and official written accountability policies...and fear of the school's political pollution which limited students' ability to hold school curriculum implementers accountable. Parents' power accountability relationships were challenged by local norms and awareness, resistance from SMBs, variability in engagement levels, limited knowledge, lack of transparency, a limited information. This study confirms that management accountability relationships between SMBs and teachers were strongly working for report-driven, creating mistrust and an incomplete accountability relationship that diverts teachers' focus from implementing the curriculum. The study depicts that wastage of instructional time, lack of autonomy, an enabling environment, appropriate reporting techniques, and accountability mechanisms, and the absence of an accountability policy had paralyzed management accountability relationships. The study affirms that soft and forgiving accountability mechanisms were the convincing consequences. Finally, the existing system accountability relationships for curriculum implementation were loosely coupled. Hence, in addition to valuable recommendations, reasonably, I proposed a school-based accountability model for reducing system fragmentation of accountability relationships that may serve for better implementation of the curriculum.

Keywords: accountability, compact, curriculum implementation, curriculum users, management, power, primary education, system, and voice

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Primary education is at the core of development and progress in modern societies. The level of education develops the individual's capacity to read, write, and calculate (Bruns & Rakotomalala, 2003). It is universally accepted as the foundational level of education in all nations of the world. It provides students with a basic understanding of various subjects as well as the skills they will use throughout their lives (Rubio, 2024). In Ethiopia, the primary education curriculum is aimed at addressing effectively the needs of both society and the individual, bearing in mind the crucial issues of poverty reduction and sustainable development strategies (MoE, 2009).

Yet it is important to note that the primary education sector has faced a myriad of problems in the world in general and in Ethiopia in particular. Prominent among the problem areas that bring to light the poor performance of the sector are the poor quality of school products; flawed administrative procedures and lack of accountability in the school system; politicized employment and appointment of school heads; improper supervision; and defective quality assurance and control mechanisms (Molapo & Pillay, 2018; Teferra et al., 2018; Usman, 2016). Students' poor performance on national and international tests, weak knowledge and skills of students, and weak implementation of the curriculum during the 1970s and 1980s... were also considered serious problems (Leveille, 2006; McLaughlin, 1987; Sarason, 1971).

These failures have forced people to give attention to accountability in education (Rothman, 1995) so that school districts and states attempt to ensure that schools and school systems meet their goals. The major goals of the school system are to promote academic excellence and equity for a diverse population of students within the public education system and to provide a choice of educational opportunities within the public school system for parents and students. Similarly, increasing interest in accountability as a result of decentralization policies and global managerial education reforms is the growing interest in primary education, in pressure to improve teaching and learning (Framework, 2000).

Ethiopian educational history indicates that the issue of school management and decision-making at the school level is a recent development. The modern school system was introduced into the

country by missionaries during the nineteenth century. The first modern government school was built by Emperor Menelik in 1908; further schools were built by Emperor Haile Selassie and the subsequent regimes (Nekatibeb, 2012). The rise of different governments to power in Ethiopia was accompanied by educational reforms and policy changes. From 1941–74, the imperial education system functioned based on the emperor's conviction that education held a key position in the country's development.

However, each of the two post-imperial-era governments had well-defined reform policies of their own. For instance, the socialist regime issued a five-volume publication entitled "General Directions of Ethiopian Education" in 1980. It aimed to cultivate Marxist ideology, advance scientific and technological knowledge, and integrate education and production (Nekatibeb, 2012). Since the introduction of modern education at the end of the Derg regime (in 1991), several years have passed through a centralized education system. This is a sharp departure from the Derg's central control of primary schooling. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia issued large-scale educational reforms based on policy documents entitled Education and Training Policy in 1994 that called for accountability with greater community or curriculum users' participation in the decentralized primary education system (MoE, 1994). In this study, I used parents and students as curriculum users because they play crucial roles in educational settings. Their engagement with the curriculum can significantly influence educational outcomes and the overall learning experience (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Learn, 2000; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2017).

Similarly, the school guideline in 2002 has brought a change in educational structures, management, and accountability pressure in the Ethiopian education system. This was further strengthened with Education Sector Development Programs (ESDPs) III when the government decided to decentralize critical decision-making from regions through Zones to the Woredas (Districts) and municipalities, and further to the school level, intending to have education become more responsive to school situations (MoE, 2005). The devolution of decision-making authority to the Woreda level was expected to strengthen the implementation of the curriculum based on the guidelines' duties and responsibilities. This encourages school curriculum implementers [School Management Bodies (SMBs) and teachers] and curriculum users (students and parents) to hold curriculum and instructional experts at Woreda Education Offices (WEOs) accountable for completing their responsibilities for curriculum implementation (MoE, 2002). To make clear about

curriculum users, students are the primary users of the curriculum because they are the ones who experience the learning process (Fullan, 2007; Marsh, 2009) and parents are the indirect users of the curriculum for they are supporters, advocates, and influencers of the school practices in the implementation of the curriculum. They are consulted during curriculum reviews or reforms, making them indirect contributors to the implementation process. Their concerns can influence policy and content decisions (Pinar, 2019).

The post-1991 transition from a centralized to a decentralized education system provides educational professionals with the necessary powers and responsibilities to address educational issues in their respective communities. This transition introduced educational reforms that provide a greater accountability relationship for educational activities in general and for better curriculum implementation in particular (MoE, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2015). Hence, primary school curriculum users could be actively empowered to participate in the implementation of the curriculum by using decentralized and democratic schooling, permitting them to exercise their voice and power accountability relationships (MoE, 2002). In this case, voice is the relationship of accountability between curriculum users, REB's curriculum developers, and curriculum and instructional experts at WEOs. The range of measures through which curriculum users express their preferences for better implementation of the curriculum, whereas the power or right relationship describes how school curriculum implementers keep curriculum users accountable for meeting the curriculum's implementation demands.

In the context of this study, accountability is defined as professional work determined by a commitment to do what is best for the curriculum's users (Jerrim & Sims, 2022; Sagor, 1996), which is a necessary component to drive the curriculum implementation process. In the context of the primary school education system, curriculum implementation encompasses not only classroom instruction but also broader support structures such as school leadership, teacher training, learning materials, and community involvement. It is influenced by systemic factors including education policy, resource allocation, and administrative capacity (Fullan, 2007). It is a process that involves several actors, including teachers, students, parents, SMBs, WEOs, and curriculum developers (MoE, 2002). These actors are known as education stakeholders, and their accountability relationship is a driving force in the implementation of the curriculum (Di Gropello, 2004; Pritchett, 2015). For successful implementation at the primary level, alignment between national

curriculum standards and local school practices is essential. However, curriculum users will hold these education stakeholders accountable when the primary school curriculum does not go as expected. This leads to the critical participation of curriculum users in the education system being more explicitly pronounced (MoE, 2002, 2005).

However, in the decentralized primary education system of Ethiopia, accountability for the implementation of the curriculum does not easily rest on school implementers such as SMBs and teachers. Rather, it rests with the formal primary education system's education stakeholders. They are categorized as Regional Education Bureau (REB), who act as curriculum developers for primary schools; WEOs' curriculum and instructional (C and I) experts; SMBs [Supervisors, Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs), school principals], teachers; and curriculum-users (students and parents) (MoE, 2002). They should live up to their responsibilities and participate in the implementation of the curriculum in a very responsive and productive way to address the needs of end users of the curriculum.

Notably, various scholars strengthen the same opinion when they assert that school curriculum implementation needs to be monitored under curriculum-users' participation and accountability systems. Wohlstetter and Mohrman (1993), for example, emphasize that when decision-making decentralization is used to increase accountability, one of the primary goals is often to increase the voice and power of the curriculum users through long-route and short-route accountability relationships, respectively. In this case, the long route includes curriculum users who are expected to influence REB's curriculum developers and WEOs' C and I experts through voice accountability relationships, and the short route was considered preferable as it gives direct authority to curriculum users, allowing them to exercise their power or right over the school curriculum implementers (Di Gropello, 2004; Pritchett, 2015; WDR, 2004). This relationship helps them to reflect their interests, values, and the broader context of education, and they feel empowered to hold schools accountable for what is taught.

Users of the curriculum will feel more assured that their opinions are respected and taken into account as a result, which will boost their confidence in government-sponsored educational initiatives in general and the implementation of the curriculum in particular. Both REB's curriculum developers and WEOs' C and I experts must address the concerns raised by curriculum users based on their input before using the compact accountability relationship to hold educators

accountable for raising students' engagement in the curriculum through the long-route accountability relationship (Di Gropello, 2004; WDR, 2004). Compact accountability relationships can be connected to the rewarding of appropriate behavior and the punishment of inappropriate behavior as a component of accountability enforcement (Beckmann, 2000; Emilsson, 2017; WDR, 2004). This will result in evaluative actions and measures being taken to hold teachers and SMBs accountable for weak actions in the implementation of the curriculum.

On the other hand, curriculum users have the right to leverage their position as clients to persuade teachers and SMBs to enhance the curriculum's implementation. They have the authority to take part in and make decisions regarding teacher promotions, dismissals, and other related matters, enabling them to closely monitor and manage educational activities (MoE, 2002). They are the intended recipients and direct participants in the curriculum's implementation through education. Users of the curriculum must exercise their right to persuade the curriculum. Under those circumstances, Ballard and Bates (2008) observe that it is important to hold teachers accountable for insufficient student engagement in the curriculum. Once adequate accountability measures are put in place to hold teachers accountable, their attitude toward their duties changes, and invariably, effective curriculum implementation is guaranteed.

As curriculum users, parents have the right to hold SMBs and teachers accountable for their actions through a power-accountability relationship. They have central actions in checking the progress of the implementation of the curriculum at their school (MoE, 2002; Pritchett, 2015; Tweedie, 1989b). This is because parents are taxpayers and one of the financial resources of the primary schools; it is fairly straightforward for parents to assess how the designed government official curriculum documents (students' textbooks, syllabi, and teachers' guides) are translated into the classroom practices. This can be done through a short-route accountability relationship that contains both powers and a management accountability relationship that is expected in connecting SMBs and teachers (MoE, 2002; WDR, 2003).

Accountability relationship in the primary school system is a necessary component of the successful implementation of the curriculum to meet the interests of curriculum users. In this case, curriculum users would be empowered to exercise accountability relationships in participating in and making the decisions on performance evaluation, promotion, and dismissal of curriculum implementers and other related matters so that they would be able to closely follow up and control

the implementation of the curriculum (MoE, 2002). This can be applicable through both routes of accountability relationships (Di Gropello, 2004; Pritchett, 2015; Smith & Benavot, 2019; WDR, 2004) in a closed primary education system.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Well-established accountability relationships are key to the successful implementation of the curriculum. This is because an accountability system encourages everyone to perform his/her duties more responsibly by providing details on the actions as well as opportunities for meaningful implementation of the curriculum (Brill et al., 2018; Darling-Hammond, 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2014). Even though the accountability movement has helped to make school performance more transparent (Coburn et al., 2016; Fullan, 2000), public opinion generally considers public education to be in crisis (Fowler, 2009) and failing to meet today's challenges in the implementation of the curriculum (Bushaw & Lopez, 2010). Globally recent studies from research on improving the system of education indicate that education systems are failing to implement curriculum effectively as one of their fundamental objectives (Silberstein & Spivack, 2022) and they persistently fail to produce learning for all and engage all students with classroom curriculum practices (Pritchett, 2015; WDR, 2018). Specifically, primary schools are no longer making the desired noticeable impact in achieving the set objectives of the curriculum. At the classroom level, curriculum implementation is highly influenced by the weak commitment of teachers and a poor accountability system (Datnow, 2005; Desimone, 2002).

Curriculum implementation will collapse if parents simply wait to be told what to do and if students do only what they are told about their engagement with the curriculum. Maile (2002) indicates that to achieve quality instruction, the exercise of voice and power by parents and students should be fruitful, apt, and free from harm, something that can be secured not by regulation but through clear accountability. There are also problems inherent in the school administrative procedures, instructional process, and the product of the education system (Usman, 2016). The greater demands from parents as taxpayers and students have a pronounced concern for holding the accountability of curriculum implementers for their actions. In practice, this was reflected in the belief that "the parents have a right to expect that their resources are being used responsibly and that the public institutions are accountable for caretaking the public trust" (Supovitz, 2009, p. 215).

It is necessary to research to pinpoint the accountability issues that prevent education stakeholders from implementing the curriculum. As a result, in recent years, crisis narratives about education in general and curriculum implementation in particular have gained traction. These narratives have damaged public confidence and placed the blame on teachers and schools. This dominant narrative claims that national education systems need to devote more funds to measuring and monitoring learning and highlighting unproductive practices among education stakeholders, who are frequently characterized as unmotivated or lazy (Alhamdan et al., 2014). The execution of the curriculum would be hampered by an incompatible system of accountability relationships (Taguma & Barrera, 2019).

International studies conducted in developing countries on primary schools also revealed that less emphasis was given to putting the curriculum into practice with a sense of accountability systems. For instance, the study conducted on Educational Accountability Relationships and Students' Learning Outcomes in Tanzania's Public Schools indicated that the opinions that are largely reported by both parents and students involve that curriculum developers are very concerned about observable school facilities but less concerned about exercising accountability relationships for the implementation of the curriculum (Galabawa & Agu, 2001). In this study, the application of systems theory for accountability and curriculum implementation has not been sufficiently explored in the primary education context.

Curriculum implementation suggests a high investment of time and effort in important decisions on topics and content deemed necessary and focuses on accountability, which has become a central practice in the field of curriculum and instruction (Alonsabe, 2009; Kridel, 2010). Yet, several studies have manifested that teacher absenteeism is another serious problem that weakens accountability relationships for curriculum implementation in Africa. Some studies in several African countries show that teacher absenteeism from class is a great challenge for the implementation of the curriculum. Evidence from Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Uganda shows that 44% of teachers were either absent or at school but not in the classroom as expected (Bold et al., 2017). These imply that weak system-based accountability relationships were exercised in preventing curriculum implementers from putting the curriculum into practice as planned. These studies are centered on teachers'

absenteeism, with little attention to exploring how education stakeholders are held accountable for weak implementation of the curriculum through system theory.

In addition to the above assertion related to teachers, other stakeholders are not in the right position to take accountability responses to their responsibilities. As evidence, the study conducted by Areaya (2006) on curriculum implementation: Yesterday's Issue? in Sub-Saharan countries in general and Ethiopia, in particular, indicates some inhibiting factors for implementing the curriculum at the school level. These are: incompatibilities of the organizational arrangement, lack of instructional facilities in the school, lack of teachers' knowledge and skill to conform to the new model is one of the hindering factors, and lack of staff motivation is another, teacher's limited professional support, and little attention of school principals' leadership roles.

Curriculum users have been encouraged to be told the accountability of teachers, schools, curriculum developers, and experts for the effective implementation of the primary school curriculum (MoE, 2002). Yet, in the Ethiopian education system, Teferra et al. (2018) declare that graduates of primary education lack competence, which requires integration of knowledge, skills, and the necessary values. They also did not possess adequate literacy, numeracy, and the skills required to continue their secondary education. This is due to the inadequate practice of curriculum users to hold the accountability of education stakeholders (curriculum developers, curriculum and instructional experts, school management bodies, and teachers) to their duties and responsibilities and little emphasis has been placed on accountability measures at all levels for coherent learning and successful implementation of curriculum (Teferra et al., 2018).

Another recent study in Ethiopia shows that accountability for curriculum implementation rests with teachers. School management bodies did not involve parents in holding teachers ... even teachers and the parents did not know each other during the teaching-learning process (Asrat, 2018). Indeed, most studies indicated above do not center on how various educational stakeholders are held accountable for the actual implementation of the curriculum through system-based accountability relationships for curriculum implementation. There's a limited exploration of how systems thinking can be integrated into existing accountability frameworks in primary school curriculum implementation. Hence, it is of paramount importance to investigate how systems thinking can be embedded in primary education actors' relationships to improve curriculum implementation.

A notable country-wide study by Amare, Tassew, Belay, and Yorke (2004), titled "*Education System Coherence in Ethiopia: The Case of GEQIP-E Implementation*," explored the coherence of the Ethiopian education system. Their findings showed that education systems coherent around schooling, such as school inputs, student enrollment growth, and dropout reduction, coherence around learning outcomes remains weak. Despite offering valuable insights into national education reform, the study was limited by its inability to consider power and management accountability relationships. This limitation stemmed from the lack of data from crucial stakeholders, such as school principals, teachers, students, and parents. As a result, the study could not fully examine the four components of accountability relationships that influence the effectiveness of education systems.

Furthermore, given that schools function within distinct community contexts, understanding local-level implementation and relationships is essential for ensuring that policies translate into improved student learning. This study seeks to fill this gap by adopting a case study approach focused on a single primary school within one zone in Ethiopia to explore a deep investigation into the relationship between the education actors for curriculum implementation. Despite the growing emphasis on educational accountability in many educational systems, limited research has focused on accountability relationships for curriculum implementation.

What inspired me to do this research is that various national and international studies were pushed toward education accountability for assessment and student learning outcomes (Carnoy & Loeb, 2002; Figlio & Ladd, 2014; Goss, 2022; Komba, 2017; Millett et al., 2008; Morse, 2014; Pritchett, 2015; Sharon et al., 2022), accountability for curriculum development (Gooler & Grotelueschen, 1970; Winter, 2019; Wrigley, 1978), accountability and educational leadership (English, 2007; Kim, 2024), teachers' professional accountability (Rahmatollahi & Mohamadi Zenouzagh, 2021; Ryder, 2015; Tuinamuana, 2011), quality provisioning and accountability (Beyessa, 2019; Gallagher, 2010; Maila, 2007)... and accountability and school performance (Ingersoll & Collins, 2019; Newmann et al., 1997; Nichols & Harris, 2016). These studies have given little attention to how various education actors are held accountable for the actual implementation of the curriculum in a holistic approach.

Secondly, from my observation, the roles and responsibilities of the various actors in the education system, including REB, WEO, schools, and curriculum users, were not clearly defined by the

existing education guidelines. The accountability of the decision-makers for curriculum implementation along the lines of the decentralized primary education system is also unclear. Furthermore, there are no adequate international, national, or local studies conducted on educational accountability relationships for curriculum implementation in primary schools. Hence, this study is brand-new, which makes it unique to address ambiguous accountability gaps for the curriculum implementation process through system accountability relationships.

In a world of fast-changing knowledge, I am motivated to look at how education system stakeholders are fulfilling their responsibilities in primary schools for implementing the curriculum. Indeed, in line with my argument, several research findings reveal that if the education system accountability relationship is not coherent for the implementation of curriculum, it can lead to several negative outcomes that ultimately affect students' learning experiences and achievements (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Elmore, 1995, 2004a; Fullan & Quinn, 2015). Elaborating on this issue, I extend my argument that the repeated failure of students to pass the exam in the Zone shows that the system's accountability was not coherent as expected to address the needs of the curriculum users. That is why I need to seek the point of accountability relationship for the implementation of the curriculum.

However, exercising a system of accountability relationships for curriculum implementation leads to overall improvements in student performance and helps schools to larger achievement than when schools would have occurred without accountability (Hanushek & Raymond, 2005; Torres, 2021). One can claim that even though there are many factors from different angles contributing to this failure, there has been an inadequate flow of accountability for curriculum implementation within the primary school system, and educational structural stakeholders don't participate in monitoring and holding one another accountable. These problems mentioned above are the ones that stirred me to conduct this case study research. Hence, it is essential to understand the observed gap through the lenses of the triangular accountability relationships (WDR, 2004) exercised at the primary education system level for curriculum implementation.

1.3 Research Questions

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

1. How do curriculum users (parents and students) practice their voices to hold REB's curriculum developers and WEOs' C and I experts accountable for the implementation of the curriculum?
 - a) How do students practice their voices to hold REB's curriculum developers and WEOs' C and I experts accountable for the implementation of the curriculum?
 - b) How do parents practice their voices to hold REB's curriculum developers and WEOs' C and I experts accountable for the implementation of the curriculum?
2. For what purpose do REB's curriculum developers and WEOs' C and I experts hold curriculum implementers accountable through a compact accountability relationship?
3. How do curriculum users exercise their powers to hold SMBs and teachers accountable for better implementation of the curriculum?
 - a) How do students exercise their powers to hold teachers and SMBs accountable for the implementation of the curriculum?
 - b) How do parents exercise their powers to hold teachers and SMBs accountable for the implementation of the curriculum?
4. What are the roles of SMBs in holding teachers accountable for curriculum implementation through a management accountability relationship?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Schools serve a variety of public purposes, including providing children with knowledge and skills; training a productive workforce; socializing children in the civic virtues of participation and obedience; and fostering racial harmony and social mobility. An emphasis on public purposes underlies the collective welfare orientation toward decisions and actions in individual cases. School systems direct their efforts toward achieving collective ends, which are socially defined goals for the schools. Primary school systems' collective ends are determined in a complex and continuing process involving a variety of actors: REB's curriculum developers, WEOs' C and I experts, curriculum implementers, and curriculum users.

With the growing focus on accountability for the implemented curriculum, curriculum users are based on individual judgments about students' needs and interests. In this case, meeting the needs of students is judged by their parents as the responsibility of educators for implementing the

curriculum into action. Accountability is still centered on satisfying parents about their children's engagement in the curriculum. Thus, the main objective of this study is to investigate how educational actors fulfill their responsibility to implement the curriculum in the primary school education system. Thus, the study was not aimed at measuring and evaluating what is going on in the classroom but rather to investigate the practice of the primary school education system's accountability relationship for curriculum implementation. This study aims to offer evidence from an exploratory study of the actual practices of accountability relationships for curriculum implementation among education stakeholders. Specifically, the study will be targeted at:

1. Determine curriculum users' voices to hold REB's curriculum developers and WEOs' C and I experts accountable for the implementation of the curriculum.
2. Examine the curriculum users' powers to hold the accountability of SMBs and teachers accountable for the implementation of schools' curricula.
3. Identify the compact relationship of both REB's curriculum developers and WEOs' C and I experts, and curriculum implementers to hold curriculum implementers accountable for curriculum implementation.
4. To examine the management accountability relationship of SMBs and teachers to hold teachers accountable for curriculum implementation.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Research on accountability that links the implementation of curriculum practices in federal and regional governments has been rare and would be a new practice. Thus, the research findings on this particular issue would first contribute to the knowledge base on the subject of accountability relationships in the implementation of the curriculum in the decentralized primary education system, which is relatively new and requires more studies, especially when the focus is on SMBs and teachers to implement the curriculum. Secondly, it provides an in-depth look at the coherence level among educational stakeholders of the primary education system that continues to meet the competing demands imposed by the complex environment in which it operates. This would help to draw curriculum developers and experts to the significant influence of SMBs and teachers through compact accountability relationships for implementing curriculum to meet the needs of curriculum users.

Thirdly, the study would be very beneficial for teachers to change their perceptions and practices toward curriculum users' needs to implement the curriculum responsibly. It addresses how end-users of curriculum try to exercise their rights and voices to hold the accountability of school curriculum implementers to help teachers put effective components of curriculum implementation. Fourthly, the study also tries to explore the significant accountability relationships among curriculum users, frontline curriculum implementers, and curriculum developers that promote appropriate curriculum implementation by indicating how these education stakeholders are achieving their roles. This exploration will help to provide data that can guide policymakers in reforming education systems, allocating resources effectively, and designing better monitoring mechanisms. The data drives new reforms toward more equitable education systems.

Thus, it provides information for curriculum developers, curriculum and instruction experts, SMBs, teachers, and curriculum users on how the curriculum is implemented with the accountability relationship among them. In addition, it will be important for policy/curriculum developers to be more cognizant of the essential or required components of the present and future primary school curricula and to consider the appropriate and indispensable inputs during their policy/curriculum making and planning by listening to the voices of curriculum users. It is also politically useful to open the ears and eyes of the REB's curriculum developers and WEOs' C and I experts to hear and satisfy the curriculum users' or voters' concerns about the implementation of the primary school curriculum. Lastly, it serves as a source of information for the research community and institutions, as well as curriculum users. It adds relevant information on accountability routes, relationships, nature, and opportunities for implementing the curriculum at primary school. Thus, it serves as a source of information for those who conduct further research on the issue and related practices. In general, the findings of this study will inform REB to redesign the workable accountability relationships through a system framework as a critical instrument for ensuring that curriculum implementation is both effective and sustainable.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

The study is bounded by time, location of the study, participants in the study, and the concepts of the study. In terms of school grade levels, this study focused on primary schools (grades 1–8) in the East Wollega Zone of Oromia Regional State. The rationale for the specific focus is that

primary schools set the foundation for future education, and the students are relatively mature and active enough to provide detailed information about issues in the study. This study also limited the accountability relationships of educational organizations in curriculum implementation because accountability is a central aspect of organizational change (World Bank, 2003). It is used in government institutions as a control mechanism and a tool for regulating the responsibilities and behaviors of employees (Eckardt, 2008) to overcome the current challenges of Ethiopian primary education.

Implementing the curriculum is the most crucial and sometimes the most difficult phase of the curriculum development process. That is why accountability is significantly tailored to the final destination of the curriculum. As a consequence of that, I argue that whatever the already developed curriculum is, if implementation fails, the engagement of students in the curriculum will be meaningless. In terms of concepts, the accountability relationships of the study include not merely measurements of what teachers and SMBs do to implement the curriculum, but rather it is primarily focused on how curriculum users think (believe) about SMBs and teachers' behaviors. And how curriculum developers/experts discharge duties and responsibilities to oversee the implementation of the components of the curriculum concerning the conceptual framework of this study.

Thus, the study specifically focused on investigating the voices and powers of curriculum users to hold the accountability of curriculum developers/experts and frontline curriculum implementers for implementing primary school curricula through the long and short routes of the accountability framework of this study. In terms of participants, the study is limited to those purposely selected REB's curriculum developers, WEOs' C and I experts, SMBs, teachers, and curriculum users because they are regarded as having better knowledge and practices of accountability relationships and are assumed to be affected by the implementation of the curriculum directly or indirectly.

The Ethiopian education system addressed accountability through decentralization by devolution, where users have been empowered to participate and make the decisions on performance evaluation, promotion and dismissal of teachers and principals, and other related matters so that they would be able to closely follow up and monitor the implementation of curriculum (MoE, 2002). As a result, the study concentrated on the accountability for curriculum implementation

after 1991. This is due to the Ethiopian tradition of accountability for curriculum implementation, which demonstrates that WEOs' C and I experts are given the authority to execute the curriculum in their schools while REB's curriculum developers are responsible for elementary education (MoE, 2002, 2005).

Hence, this time was the time of transitional government and curriculum reform, accountability with decentralization. The Transitional Government was established in July 1991 with the Transitional Period Charter (Setegn, 2015). Then, after the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) made changes in the government structure, the REB had the mandate to develop and implement primary school curricula. The study is limited to the Oromia regional state primary education system because the primary school curriculum is developed and put into practice by the REB. The findings of this study do not embrace current education policy and curriculum reform implementation. Because of the period of data collection, those documents were not included in the data collection and analysis. In terms of the number of WEOs and schools, the study identified three purposely selected Woredas and six purposely selected primary schools due to unrest and displacement problems in the East Wollega Zone. This delimitation was also, indeed, at the time of data collection, more than 300 primary schools were out of use or closed due to the instability of the zone.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

As in all research studies, there were limitations to this study that should be noted to better understand the implications of the results (Merriam, 1998). The root of these limitations can generally be categorized as having to do with the case study design of the qualitative study, the case selection process, or my bias as the researcher (Cresswell, 2012; Stake, 1995). Understanding these limitations is an important part of the methodological discussion.

The first case study design has its limitations. That is, while a collective case study approach allowed for a deep and rich exploration of accountability for curriculum implementation, the focus on a single bounded system limited the generalizations that could be made (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). The collective case study design enabled me to develop an understanding of a complex issue within a natural and real-life context. However, this understanding was only as strong as my acknowledgment of the limitations of the design (Merriam, 1998). For this reason, it is imperative

to view the results of this study as a contribution to understanding accountability for curriculum implementation in primary schools, with the awareness that the results cannot necessarily be generalized to contexts outside the bounded system (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995)

Secondly, the researcher is the primary instrument for both data collection and analysis in a qualitative study (Creswell, 2013a; Patton, 1999), and because of this, it was important to acknowledge and be transparent about any sources of bias I held toward the topic of exploration. One of the perceived drawbacks of case study design is that it relies too heavily on the interpretation of the researcher, as there is no broad base of data through which to draw conclusions and control for researcher bias (Merriam, 1998). However, Chowdhury and Shil (2021) argue that the potential influence of researcher bias is what makes case studies suitable for holistic research because it recognizes and acknowledges that there are no simple answers to complex issues. Creating transparency around how my biases might have affected the final analysis is imperative to ensure the trustworthiness of the results (Merriam, 1998), and doing this requires an exploration of my background and my motivation for studying the topic of teacher evaluation.

Thirdly, the absence of locally conducted research reports on accountability for curriculum implementation and other relevant pieces of literature at both the federal and regional levels made it very difficult to consult and enrich the nature of the problem. The scarcity of documented shards of evidence was one of the difficulties faced, which forced the researcher to rely on a few available theoretical sources with limited empirical evidence. In addition to the scarcity of well-documented materials or research reports on accountability for curriculum implementation, the people interviewed were very hesitant and showed fear by relating to the current political situation, and they were highly reserved about giving information about their experiences with the educational accountability system for curriculum implementation. This made me take more time to get the required data.

Another limitation was that participants would not or did not share complete details of the process, due to personal or professional concerns or their own biases. Their reporting may have been influenced by their ideas of what answer was anticipated for a given question, preventing them from providing an authentic response. Furthermore, the major challenge that arose during the data collection was the difficulty in accessing the participants at the initial time of the planned data collection, as several locations within the study area experienced sporadic civil unrest. There was

a restriction on movement to the districts or Woredas, which resulted in the loss of time for data collection. Three Woredas were selected, and this may be seen as a limitation. As a result, the limitation of time constraints was equally manifested, as there were longer intervals to wait for the lifting of travel restrictions to allow access to research participants. As a result, a lot of time was wasted. Finally, one of the limitations of this study is that it does not include students who have a high rate of absenteeism and do not follow their studies properly. The study also includes parents as respondents who at least participate in schooling and follow their child's educational activities.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

- **Accountability:** refers to the clear assignment of roles, responsibilities, and expectations among various stakeholders such as education authorities, school leaders, teachers, and communities to ensure that the national curriculum is effectively delivered in classrooms
- **Accountability system:** a structured framework that ensures all stakeholders, such as education authorities, school leaders, teachers, curriculum users, and curriculum developers, are held responsible for effectively implementing the intended curriculum to students. It establishes clear expectations, monitors performance, and enforces consequences or provides support based on results. It is a closed loop reflecting a chain of responses to perceived needs or demands.
- **Compact:** is a formalized and mutually agreed-upon understanding between curriculum developers and curriculum implementers regarding their roles, responsibilities, and expectations in ensuring effective curriculum delivery. It is the broad, long-route, top-down relationship of accountability connecting REB's curriculum developers or WEOs' C and I experts to school curriculum implementers.
- **Curriculum developers:** are educational professionals who devote their careers to designing primary school curricula that teachers use in the classroom to facilitate student learning.
- **Curriculum implementation:** refers to the process by which the officially designed curriculum (plans, policies, content, teaching methods, assessments) is translated into practice within classroom settings for primary school learners. It is not just about teachers delivering lessons rather it's about the whole school system working together.
- **Curriculum users:** are the end-users of the school curriculum and have the direct (students) and indirect (parents) voice and power accountability relationship to hold REB's

curriculum developers or WEOs' C and I experts and school curriculum implementers, respectively, for improved implementation of the curriculum.

- **Curriculum-users' voice:** voice is the relationship of accountability between curriculum users and the range of measures through which curriculum users express their preferences and influence curriculum developers/experts. Accountability in this context is the willingness of curriculum developers/experts to justify their actions and to accept electoral, legal, or administrative penalties if the justification is found lacking.
- **Curriculum users' power:** is the relationship of accountability connecting curriculum users as rights holders to hold school curriculum implementers accountable for better implementation of the curriculum.
- **Education system:** This is the system that comprises everything that goes into educating Oromia regional state-school students at the REB, district (WEOs), or community levels.
- **Management:** defined as the relationship that connects SMBs and teachers, comprising internal processes for SMBs to provide the enabling environment and monitor teachers to hold them accountable for curriculum implementation. It is actions that create effective frontline curriculum implementers within the primary schools.
- **System:** a group of interacting or interrelated elements that are organized for a common purpose. In the context of this study, the purpose is to put an officially designed primary school curriculum into classroom practices.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The study has five chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction and presents the background of the study, the statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study, delimitation, limitations, significance of the study, the definition of key terms, and the organization of the study. The second chapter presents a review of related literature and accountability for the curriculum implementation framework adopted for the study. The third chapter focuses on the research design and methodology. The fourth chapter is devoted to addressing the characteristics of the respondents with respective codes, research data, and interpretations; and finally, chapter five presents the conclusions and recommendations of the research to the concerned bodies and for further research in the area.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter focuses on the relevant literature review, which serves as a lens for this study. It introduces two major themes of this study, such as the concept of accountability and curriculum implementation. In the first place, this chapter introduces the meanings and concepts of accountability; a brief history of accountability in education; essential elements and accountability; accountability models; decentralization and accountability in public schools; autonomy and accountability; accountability mechanisms; and the nature of accountability in Ethiopian primary schools.

The second part of this literature review addresses the definitions of curriculum implementation, key education stakeholders' actions in the implementation of the curriculum, and the accountability relationship between these stakeholders for curriculum implementation with their roles and responsibilities, and ultimately for what and to whom they are held accountable for the implementation of the primary school curriculum is highlighted. The third part of this section contains the four components of accountability relationships in the primary education system: voice, compact, power, and management relationship. The fourth part is the summary, and the last one emphasizes the theoretical and conceptual framework.

2.1 Accountability in Education

2.1.1 Meanings and Concepts

Accountability has several different meanings depending on time and context. It is an elastic concept and has been difficult to define in precise terms OECD (2010). In this sense, it has been variously defined across all disciplines and organizations (West et al., 2011). Accountability lacks common definitions across disciplines and may be understood in different ways across languages (UNESCO, 2017). It requires a relationship between living actors in society. Therefore, accountability is also called "the DNA of civilized societies" (Zadek, 2007, p. 1). Accountability in education is a contested and complex concept. Despite this, some form of accountability is as inevitable as it is important. Some see it as "the engine of policy" (Cotter, 2000, p. 12). Given the growing understanding of the crucial importance of education for the future prosperity of their countries, governments are looking for ways of exercising central control over schools.

The concept of accountability is also defined in various ways. A few of those definitions that are especially pertinent to this study are cited. According to Hill and Bonan (1991, p. 35), accountability is described as a relationship between two parties that meets four conditions: One party expects the other to perform a service or accomplish a goal; the party performing the activity accepts the legitimacy of the other's expectation; the party performing the activity derives some benefits from the relationship; and the party for whom the activity is performed has some capacity to affect the other's benefits.

The term "accountability" is chameleon-like, but on a basic level, it may be thought of in terms of being "called to give an account to some external authority," a form of social interaction "in which people are required to explain and take responsibility for their actions" (Sinclair, 1995, pp. 220-221). This, therefore, implies a relationship between those who seek answers and those who are answerable, those who may impose sanctions, and those who anticipate them. There is, of course, a distinction between simply giving an account and being called to give one (Mulgan, 2000), the latter of which implies an authority who enforces responsibility on another.

An accountability system is

A closed-loop system reflects a chain of responses to perceived needs or demands; an activity or set of activities that emerge to fill those demands; outcomes that result from those activities; and feedback on outcomes to the source of the demands. The feedback may generate new demands or the regeneration of the old ones. In either case, the previous set of activities may be modified or remain intact; a new or altered set of activities may be modified or remain intact; a new or altered set of outcomes may be produced; and the loop is completed again with feedback to the source of the demands (Levin, 1974, p. 37).

The concept of accountability is further defined as a social relation that allows an actor (provider of services) to feel compelled to explain and justify his or her conduct to consumers (Bovens, 2005). Therefore, the concept implies having a system that makes the curriculum implementers answerable to the curriculum users. Further on accountability, Baez Camargo (2011, p. 3) has said that "accountability is indeed a broad concept that covers and permeates a vast array of relationships involving power and decision-making authority across sectors and organizational strata of the society and government". According to Zahran (2011), accountability is the obligation

of... to be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken by ... and to be responsible for honoring commitments, without qualification or exception.

Likewise, accountability is "... required or expected to justify actions or decisions; responsible"; it is "an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions", and it can be "the state of being accountable, liable, or answerable. In the words of Edwards and Hulme (2014, p. 9), accountability is "how individuals and organizations report to a recognized authority (or authorities) and are held responsible for their actions." From the standpoint of this study, systems of accountability are the most important issue that emerged as one of the ways of improving the implementation of the curriculum in primary education. Accountability helps to ensure good performance in the education sector and that the overall investment is worthwhile to engage students with the curriculum.

Nevertheless, for the improvement to materialize, there must be a well-established accountability framework, relationships, and arrangements. The literature argues that the outcomes of accountability are not always positive, and if they are not well-planned, accountability dysfunction may occur. Accountability dysfunction primarily results from a lack of supportive structures within the education system and accountability overload, that is, having too many overlapping evaluation criteria and/or too many stakeholders and supervisors, each with his or her requirements for reporting purposes with which the actor is expected to comply (Levitt et al., 2008).

To gear the definitions of accountability through this study, according to Sagor (1996), accountability is defined as professional work determined by the commitment to do what is best for the client, not what is easiest or most expedient. In the context of this study, accountability is the professional obligation to clients and curriculum-users (students and parents) for the implementation of the curriculum, and they expect professional commitment from educational officers and educators on two sides: one from curriculum developers and curriculum and instructional experts of WEOs and the second from the curriculum implementers (SMBs and teachers) according to their duties and responsibilities given by the Regional Education Bureau (REB). Therefore, the concept implies having a system that makes both sides answerable to the curriculum users in a closed loop of the primary education system for the implementation of the primary school curricula.

2.1.2 Brief History of Accountability in Education

Accountability in education has a long history. Nevertheless, the questions of when and why accountability originated, and its significance in education, in general, and curriculum implementation, in particular, have been given paramount importance. Thus, accountability was born out of a perception of stagnant scholastic achievement (as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress) in the face of rapidly growing funding for public education in the 1970s and 1980s (Ladd, 2011). Other explanations for the emergence of educational accountability include enrollment declines, social inequality, erosion of quality education, poor performance on international tests, graduates lacking the knowledge and skills expected in the workplace, and curriculum implementation issues in the 1970s (Leveille, 2006; McLaughlin, 1987; Sarason, 1971).

Similarly, it has been argued that the provision of services in key sub-sectors such as schools, health care systems, courts, and prisons is worse due to fiscal crises, widespread corruption, poor performance, and lack of accountability (Minogue et al., 1998). Moreover, a significant number of scholars globally have claimed that people's confidence in their governments has fallen abruptly, as evidenced in New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and Australia (Gruening, 2001; Schneider, 1995). Other writers argue that traditional government is no longer adequate and may even be an impediment to progress (Minogue et al., 1998; Parsons, 2010).

Following these shortfalls, various movements took hold in the Anglo-Saxon countries, namely, the United Kingdom, Australia, the United States of America, New Zealand, and Ireland (Common, 2017; Parsons, 2010). These pioneers' reform movements aimed at correcting inefficiencies in their public sectors (Minogue, 1998). The movements of those countries aimed at increasing returns to education and rising enrolment pressures on state officers, and the movement to replace input-based policies with output-based ones, gained considerable momentum in selected districts and states during the early 1990s.

On the other hand, to escape from the above challenges, various countries have made possible initiatives and measures. For instance, Parsons (2010) explains that various initiatives and actions were taken to overcome the declines experienced by the education system. In this case, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries were the first to

embrace New Public Management (NPM) ideologies. The United Kingdom has played a significant part in the emergence of NPM doctrines and can conceivably claim to be the place of origin (McLaughlin et al., 2002). NPM favors accountability on outcomes over processes, so its reform focused on reducing direct government control and accountability through programs involving gentrification, privatization, decentralization, and a growing emphasis on users as consumers (Ossege, 2012).

Additionally, the work by Oxborne and Gaebler (1995); (Schneider, 1995) in the USA on reinventing government with decentralization, which focused on organizational results in customer services and setting goals and evaluation of performance for customer-driven accountability, was also significant. In the UK, programs such as the School Financial Management Initiative (FMI) in 1982, School-Based Management (SBM), Local Education Authority (LEA), School Local Financial Management (SLFM), people's panel in 1998, and the Education Act of 1988, were formulated to ensure quality provision of social services at the local level (Taylor, 2009).

More importantly, for the essence of this study, let me acknowledge the logical and progressive movement of the USA's educational accountability system coming as based on their act documents. In the USA, educational crises have brought alert hesitation about the knowledge of future generations. For example, complaints about the lack of student learning in public schools, as voiced in *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, indicated that the USA was in danger of being overtaken by its global competitors. It inferred that the USA and its educational institutions had lost sight of the basic purposes of schooling and of the high expectations and disciplined effort needed to attain them. Indicators of student performance and the demand for new skills led some researchers to conclude that the USA was raising a scientifically and technologically illiterate generation (Goldberg & Harvey, 1983). Hence, state and local leaders responded in the 1980s and 1990s with various efforts that included initial forays into standards, testing, and accountability. In those same years, the federal government provided aid to assist those efforts.

Consequently, in 2001, a national educational accountability movement that was continued as an effort to improve student learning, the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* initiative was established with four pillars: stronger accountability for results; more freedom for states and communities; encouraging proven educational methods; and more choice for parents (Nash, 2002). These types of alerts are generally followed by a variety of attempts to fix what is wrong with educational

practices. NCLB also includes accountability provisions with consequences impacting entire school districts. Failure to meet benchmark goals can lead to reduced funding, reconstituted schools, relocated students, and fired teachers and administrative staff (Kridel, 2010).

Based on this, one can see that satisfaction with previous alerts and actions about education improvement does not work for the USA, and they recognize that the education sector is a crucial engine for economic transformation; it was not left out of stepping reforms and improvements, accountability system, and measures for curriculum implementation (Nash, 2002). Therefore, in December 2015, No Child Left Behind was replaced by the most recent version of the country's federal education law that promotes a new accountability system. This law is named the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and was signed by Barack Obama. It represents good news for the American nation's schools and was operational in 2018-2019.

Besides, the indicators of this ESSA might be considered for multiple measures of accountability systems as evidence of learning, opportunities to learn, and student engagement (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2016). It also emphasizes equal opportunity for every student's engagement in their learning. The global issue of accountability in education has also drawn great attention to achieving the goals of schooling. For example, in the 21st century, the widespread interest in accountability is reflected in research, where the use of the term increased tenfold in studies published between 1965 and 2000 (Dubnick, 2014).

At the same time, research-driven fuels are of paramount importance to strengthening accountability in the education system, and it is not a recent phenomenon in developed countries. Taking that into consideration, the development among education researchers on the implementation of accountability for school effectiveness and improvement has demonstrated that schools and teachers make a difference. They argued that the development and implementation of strong accountability systems has been one powerful, perhaps the most powerful, trend in education policy in the UK, USA, and many other countries, including the Netherlands, Australia, Canada, Sweden, and Russia (Barber, 2005). This is because improving student achievement has always been at the forefront of major educational reform movements (Dilworth & Imig, 1995).

By and large, in addition to these magnitudes of accountability, the increased global attention to accountability in improving the educational process is rising and propagating to meet the changing

scenarios of the future. Thus, the interest in accountability is also due to: weakness in delivering education services (WDR, 2004), sharing blame on unclear lines of responsibility (UNESCO, 2017), and the emergence of massification, marketization, decentralization, and standardization (Smith & Benavot, 2019).

On the other hand, concerning Africa, one can find that the growing demand for educational accountability systems for school teaching and learning has been a recent phenomenon. Accountability mechanisms in the education system to enhance effective teaching-learning in Sub-Saharan Africa are in their infancy (World Bank, 2008). In Kenya, educational accountability was launched by covering a diverse array of providers of education to give an account of their work and hold them responsible for their performance (Report, 2011). Whereas, in Ghana, the *Ghana Education Evidence Summit* was introduced to bring together policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to share rigorous evidence about improving accountability and learning outcomes in education at every level of the education system (MOE, 2017b). Similarly, ensuring an accountability system in education has also put a great emphasis on the Ethiopian Development Education Roadmap (Teferra et al., 2018).

The Education Development roadmap document recognized the core accountability system among curriculum sectors, policymakers/decision makers, education and training providers, and users. The assumption of this document at its infant stage does not show the innovative educational accountability system, but rather is interested in safely tracing the 1990s (Clark, 1986) accountability triangle after 37 or 40 years. The assumption of Clark was to improve the profile of education quality, and he proposed the accountability system as the involvement of three main forces or triangle of powers in public policy, such as governmental authority (government, legal environment, external constituencies), professional authority (faculty, administrators, staff), and the market (students, parents, business).

On the contrary, other scholars specify this educational accountability triangle in comprehensible educational structural relations. Thus, for one, WDR (2004) indicates that high-quality learning of basic education rests on education systems that create relationships of accountability between clients, policymakers, and providers. Consequently, accountability for effective delivery of education in general and curriculum delivery in particular has to be monitored by local education structures through community participation (MoE, 2002). Thus, accountability as participation of

education stakeholders can be related to the sharing of roles and/or responsibilities between multiple stakeholders within a system (Suzuki, 2002). The assumption is that local education structures would know about the status of curriculum implementation and, in turn, they would improve future implementation practices through accountability relationships.

2.1.3 The Essential Elements of Accountability

The above definition of accountability by Schedler (1999, p. 13) pointed out the essential elements of accountability as enforcement, monitoring, and answerability. These essentials are discussed below. Beckmann (2000) sees enforcement as an element of accountability that can be linked to the rewarding of good and the punishing of unacceptable behavior. Accountability measures that good enforcement falls within the parameters of the law and policies should be duly diligent in supporting good governance. Due diligence implies that doing the right thing is an obligation, not an option.

Secondly, control is a management task that requires information and justification of attempts to shed light on what happens in the decision-making process and the use of power one has over other stakeholders (Beckmann, 2000). Monitoring refers to the exercise of power transparently. Monitoring involves determining who should be accountable for what. The answers to this question will reflect the overall curriculum implementation approaches in a school. For instance, if the school is democratic and all stakeholders are seen as important participants in the implementation of the primary school curriculum, then all concerned bodies need to account for their involvement in this process. As is the case, it will not be the sole responsibility of the school principal alone, but rather the responsibility of PTA, School Cluster Resource Center (SCRC) supervisors, WEOs' C and I experts, and REB's curriculum developers. All are accountable for the better implementation of the curriculum as the educational structural organization of the Oromia regional education system.

The third essential of accountability affirms that answerability implies being accountable to and being judged by somebody (Dorn, 1998) and having to respond to questions and the opportunity to ask questions in return. According to Beckmann (2000), questions relate to reliable information about decisions (what has been done or will be done, or valid explanations of decisions). It is about finding facts, generating evidence, and subjecting the exercise of power to the rule of law and

reason. In practical terms, answerability is embodied in reports back and follow-up discussions; in general terms, in evaluation. The latter revolves around the question: How well are teachers doing as curriculum implementers? (Maile, 2002). The point of this study, to see how well they are doing, is an exercise involving the implementation status of the school curriculum.

2.1.4 Models of Accountability

Different approaches to accountability fit different contexts, yet individual or institutional responsibilities can be identified, and those responsible bodies can be expected to provide an account of their actions (UNESCO, 2017). The issue of educational accountability is probably the most pressing and most problematic issue facing public schools today. Thus, all professions are required to be accountable in various ways for the quality of the service they render to their clients. Although various authors used different taxonomies of educational accountability, this study focuses on four basic models that are applied in the education system. These are political, legal, market, bureaucratic, and professional (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Darling-Hammond et al., 2014).

i) Political accountability: Legislators and school board members, for example, must regularly stand for election and answer for their decisions. Political accountability means that politicians, legislators, and/or school board members "must regularly stand for election and answer for their decisions" Darling-Hammond et al. (2014, p. 1050). The assumption here is that if, for example, a government has not fulfilled its promises on education, it will not be re-elected or, at least, it will lose the votes of many disappointed citizens. In this type of accountability, civil society, Parliament, and the media play a key role as watchdogs or forums to which the account is to be given. In the context of this study, politics or voice indicates how well curriculum users can hold the politicians and policymakers, or the curriculum developers and curriculum and instructional experts of the WEOs, accountable for performance in discharging their responsibility for the implementation of curriculum in the primary education system.

ii) Legal accountability: Schools are to operate following legislation, and citizens can ask the courts to hear complaints about the public schools' violations of laws. However, the most traditional forms of accountability are political and legal. Legal accountability in the education system encompasses the frameworks and mechanisms that ensure educational institutions,

administrators, and educators adhere to established laws, policies, and ethical standards. This accountability is crucial for safeguarding students' rights, ensuring effective implementation of the curriculum, and maintaining public trust. The documents are, for example, United States: Federal Accountability Laws (No Child Left Behind Act, Every Student Succeeds Act) that mandated annual standardized testing and imposed sanctions on schools failing to meet performance benchmarks, thereby holding schools accountable for student outcomes.

iii) Bureaucratic accountability is based on the superior-subordinate relationship and depends upon the formal definition of the responsibilities of positions within an organization. Federal, state, and district education offices promulgate rules and regulations intended to ensure that schooling takes place according to set procedures. This type of accountability aims to control school educational processes and the use of fiscal, material, and human resources, as well as to adopt and fulfill bureaucratic rules and routines. Upper management sets the standards for educational processes; the teachers and principal together are responsible for working according to these rules and standards and are held accountable for their actions. Upper management rewards school personnel who elicit the desired behaviors and punishes them to minimize undesired behaviors (Adams & Kirst, 1999; Bovens, 2010).

In the context of this study, this policy describes a mechanism where upper management is authorized to award, punish, and determine the related standards and rules about what is done to implement the curriculum. This mechanism leads to how REB and WEOs should reward or punish schools and teachers, respectively, due to their actions to play the role of a compact accountability relationship. This is because schools, SMBs, and teachers are accountable to the higher levels of the educational system (REB and WEOs). Similarly, bureaucratic accountability relationships, also called management accountability relationships, are the actions that create effective frontline curriculum implementers (teachers and SMBs) within the schools. This relationship directly links SMBs with the teachers to make curriculum implementation effective. It is a form of top-down accountability relationship for how well and how the curriculum implementers' responsibilities and curricula' objectives are communicated to the students. This accountability relationship manages expectations utilizing a hierarchical arrangement, based on a supervisory relationship between subordinate and superior. This is often combined with legal accountability, where the

subordinate, for instance, a school principal, is the executor of legal provisions while the superior is the lawmaker or legal overseer (Skedsmo & Huber, 2019).

Bureaucratic, compact, and management accountability relationships represent a form of administrative (O'Day & Smith, 1993) or bureaucratic accountability (Adams & Kirst, 1999; Darling-Hammond & Ascher, 1991). Under these circumstances, bureaucratic or hierarchical accountability is the most conventional modality of administrative accountability. In this modality, public authorities promulgate rules and procedures on how education should be delivered, and school inspectors (and/or other local authorities) try to ensure that schooling takes place according to such rules and procedures (Darling-Hammond, 2004). The first systems of bureaucratic accountability adopted an input approach and, accordingly, focused on discovering whether the necessary resources were in place in schools for the appropriate implementation of the national curriculum (Falabella & De la Vega, 2016).

iv) Professional accountability: Teachers and other staff are expected to acquire specialized knowledge, meet standards for entry, and uphold professional standards of practice in their work. In education, the focus of professional accountability might be described as threefold (O'Day, 2002): First, it is centered on the process of instruction, that is, on the work of teachers as they interact with students around instructional content. Professional accountability thus concerns the performance of adults in the system at least as much as it concerns students. Second, much of the focus of professional accountability concerns ensuring that educators acquire and apply the knowledge and skills needed for effective practice. Knowledge development is thus front and center. And third, professional accountability involves the norms of professional interchange. These norms include placing the needs of the client (curriculum users) at the center of professional work, collaborating with other professionals to address those needs and ensure the maintenance of standards of practice, and commitment to the improvement of practice as part and parcel of professional responsibility. Despite its promise, however, reliance on professional accountability alone cannot ensure that all students' needs are addressed.

On the other hand, Kogan (2022) says that professional accountability is seeking to meet responsiveness to clients, students, and parents. That is, the stronger the professional autonomy of teachers and schools, the more responsive to their clients they will be. This model focused on evaluating the success of the curriculum implementation process through standardized tests,

declaring school performance results to the public, and rewarding or punishing schools or teachers based on their performance results. On the other hand, to achieve higher academic performance for less cost, performance-accountability policies implement teacher-incentive strategies such as teacher performance contracts and paying for performance (Bruns et al., 2011; Fuhrman, 1999a).

v) Market accountability: This model first empowers parents and the local school community with the authority to make decisions regarding the teaching program, instruction, budget, and staff, leaving the control of school performance to the parents and community who have been thus empowered. Parents have the right to choose which school their child will attend, to transfer the child to another school of their choice in case they are dissatisfied, and to participate in school decisions while the child attends school. Parents and students may, in some cases, choose the courses or schools they believe are most appropriate (Darling-Hammond, 1991). With market accountability, children or parents are customers who choose schools and can shop for the one that best reflects their preferences. The discipline of competition ensures that educators or curriculum implementers respond to parent and student preferences.

In the implementation of the curriculum at the school level, all of these accountability mechanisms have their strengths and limitations, and each is more or less appropriate for certain goals. For instance, political mechanisms can help to establish general policy directions, but they do not allow citizens to judge each decision by elected officials, and they do not necessarily secure the rights of minorities. Furthermore, (Darling-Hammond, 1991) argues that legal mechanisms are useful in establishing and defending rights, but not everything is subject to court action, and not all citizens have access to the courts. It is important to be specific about the educational context in which an accountability mechanism may operate; thus, only two of these forms apply to teaching on a regular, day-to-day basis (Darling-Hammond, 1989).

Market accountability is also not promoted by educational policies and guidelines. Furthermore, scholars indicate that bureaucratic accountability is more useful in situations where it can be related to behavioral rules that can produce desired results through applicable and methodical standards; and more useful in situations that show a variety of consumer preferences; where the state provides the choice of service areas; and where the need is felt for competition in quality development, creativity, and innovation (Darling-Hammond, 1989; Kirst, 1990).

Moreover, bureaucratic mechanisms are appropriate when standard procedures will produce desired outcomes, but they can be counterproductive when curriculum users have unique needs that require differential responses by those who must make non-routine decisions. Schools are agents of government that can be administered by hierarchical decision-making and control. Policies are made at the top of the system and handed down to administrators, who translate them into rules and procedures. Teachers follow the rules and procedures (class schedules, curricula, textbooks, rules for promotion and assignment of students, etc.), and students are processed according to them (Darling-Hammond, 1989).

Consequently, professional mechanisms are important when services require complex knowledge and decision-making to meet clients' individual needs, but they do not always take competing public goals (e.g., cost containment) into account. Thus, it is more useful in complex, changing situations requiring professional knowledge to present public services based on protecting the public interest and consumer preference (Darling-Hammond, 1989).

It is argued that because of these limits, no single form of accountability operates alone in any major area of public life. The choice of accountability tools and the balance among different forms of accountability are constantly shifting as problems emerge, as social goals change, and as new circumstances arise (Darling-Hammond, 1989). In the context of this study, curriculum users should evaluate publicly available, comparable information and choose the preferred implementation of the curriculum option. Each model has its strengths and weaknesses depending on the context it is applied to. Effective accountability often requires a combination of these models tailored to specific organizational needs and cultural contexts.

2.1.5 Decentralization and Accountability in Public Schools

A centralized education system is entirely defined in terms of quotas, regulations, and procedures. Individuals are hired to perform exercise routines and will be rewarded through salary structures and job security. In decentralized organizations, accountability is defined in terms of broad corporate goals, and performance is rewarded with greater independence (Hill & Bonan, 1991). There is currently a global trend of decentralizing education systems. Most countries are experimenting with or contemplating some form of education decentralization. The process

transfers decision-making powers from central ministries of education to intermediate governments, local governments, communities, and schools.

According to Rondinelli et al. (1983), the extent to which control over education delivery in general and the implementation of the curriculum is transferred by three types of decentralization, such as: First, de-concentration means shifting management responsibilities from the central to lower levels while the center retains overall control (center decides, local level implements). Secondly, delegation occurs when central authorities lend authority to lower levels of government or even to semiautonomous organizations, with the understanding that the authority can be withdrawn (local levels can decide, but decisions can be overturned centrally).

Thirdly, devolution is the transfer of authority over financial, administrative, curriculum, and pedagogical matters that is permanent and cannot easily be revoked. It may result in stronger local authorities and is one pathway to achieving community-financed and managed schools. The transmission from a centralized to a decentralized education system involves changes in school-based management that make school staff accountable as professionals. They must take the initiative in assuring the needs of their students, devising appropriate services, and constructing realistic explanations for success (Hill & Bonan, 1991).

According to Naidoo (2003), decentralization refers to the governance system of any society. It is the process by which authority, responsibility, power, resources, and accountability are transferred from the central levels of government to the local levels. When decentralization of decision-making is used for purposes of increasing accountability, one of its central aims is often to increase the voice of those who are not heard, or at least not listened to, in the context of typical school governance structures (Upadhyay & Rajasekhar, 2020). When this is the goal, a community control form of site-based management is typically the instrument used for its achievement (Wohlstetter & Mohrman, 1993). The basic assumption giving rise to this form of site-based management is that the curriculum of the school ought to directly reflect the values and preferences of parents and the local community (Ornstein, 1983).

School professionals, it is claimed, typically are not as responsive to such local values and preferences as they ought to be. Their responsiveness is greatly increased, however, when the power to make decisions about curriculum implementation, budget, and personnel is in the hands

of the parent/community constituents of the school. School councils in which parent/community constituents have a majority of the membership are the primary vehicle through which to exercise such power. Decentralization approaches to accountability assume that school leaders will become teachers of those with newly found voices, usually parents and/or staff. The school leader's task is to "empower" these people and to actively encourage the sharing of power formerly exercised by the school management bodies (Tanner & Stone, 1998).

Thus, accountability as participation of educational stakeholders can be related to the sharing of roles and/or responsibilities between multiple stakeholders within a system (Suzuki, 2002). The hypothesis is that local education structures would know about the status of curriculum implementation and, in turn, they would improve future practices. The World Bank (2008) also states that decentralization in schools can lead to greater accountability in education processes, and decentralization also helps in clarifying lines of accountability. This approach can improve the quality of teaching and learning by locating decisions closer to the point at which they must be carried out, which will energize teachers and administrators to do a better job and assist teachers (Upadhyay & Rajasekhar, 2020).

2.1.6 Accountability and Decentralization in Ethiopian Primary Education

It is also important to note that Ethiopian primary education has a decentralized educational structural management system. MoE (1994) initially introduced changes with decentralization, such as accountability, a new curriculum, implementation, and an education management system. It was welcomed with high expectations that curriculum users have the right to be involved in any educational activity. Decentralization by devolution in Ethiopia has created the responsiveness of parents and students, educational professionals, principals, teachers, and supervisors. These indicated their responsiveness, responsibility, and accountability in the primary education system (MoE, 2002).

In particular reference to this study, educational decentralization has been designed as a guideline to increase the voice and power of curriculum users to hold the accountability of curriculum implementers. Parents have been empowered to participate and make a decision on "performance evaluation, promotion and dismissal of teachers and principals, and other related matters so that they would be able to closely follow up and control educational activities" MoE (2002, p. 3).

Primary school curriculum implementation is one of the central icons of those decentralized educational activities in which parents can actively participate.

Scholars remind us that decentralization alone is no guarantee of the effective implementation of the curriculum. For example, according to UNESCO (2017), when the enabling environment goes unfulfilled, individual efforts are hindered. Hence, regardless of the ingenuity of the accountability approach, if actors lack key conditions, no approach will be effective. For example, for teachers to be held accountable for the quality of curriculum implementation (an individual responsibility), certain conditions are crucial, such as sustained motivation, clear information, professional development, and resources (Smith & Benavot, 2019).

2.1.7 Autonomy and Accountability

This section is to highlight the relationship between accountability and how one can affect the other in the school curriculum implementation process. Both the terms "autonomy" and "accountability" are interrelated, as when educators or teachers may be given autonomy to work in their way, yet be accountable and strive for the implementation of the curriculum. Accountability is not inextricably linked to autonomy; that is, one cannot be held accountable for actions for which one was not responsible, or for something for which one was not free to do or not do (Peteet et al., 2022). Accountability necessarily involves autonomy, and accounts of moral and professional action make sense only where the agent is considered to be autonomous. If the agent is merely responding to his supervisors in the sense of working strictly to their orders, then it is they, not them, who should provide the explanation and justification for his actions. Hence, embracing accountability in relationships need not be inversely related to autonomy as people may assume (Peteet et al., 2022).

In some countries, such as England, the current rhetoric stresses the government's trust in teachers, and talk of professional autonomy has come to the forefront (McLarty et al., 2010). In light of this, a more rigorous understanding of the role of autonomy in implementing school curricula seems necessary. Professional autonomy has become a prominent topic in the current policy discourse: we find a renewed emphasis on giving power and responsibility to teachers on the front line, stressing that the government trusts teachers. Teachers are the experts on the frontline to implement the curriculum (McLarty et al., 2010).

However, educators' autonomy does not mean total independence or isolation. It does not mean that it also means an absolute condition of freedom. Whereas, it is denoted as responsibility, mutual support, interdependence, and commitment (Jumani & Malik, 2017). Teacher autonomy relates to the decision-making granted to teachers. Autonomous action may relate to decision-making about scheduling, selecting, and executing instructional, curriculum, assessment, and pedagogical activities related to the classroom (Wermke et al., 2019).

Holding teachers accountable for other people's (students') behavior is an inappropriate policy that results in ineffective teaching, diminished enthusiasm for learning, and lower levels of achievement. There are both legal and psychological reasons for this. Making teachers responsible for students' behavior absolves students of responsibility for their actions and develops an externalized locus of control in students that leads to teacher control and student dependence. Because every person is accountable for his or her behavior but not for what other people do, teachers must be held accountable for what they do as teachers, but not for what their students do as learners. Students are responsible for their learning (Frymier, 1998).

The underlying foundation for these claims is what the government calls supported autonomy' which explicitly acknowledges teachers' professional expertise (Lander, 2016) and front-line curriculum implementers. Having various aspects of autonomy levels, teachers are accountable not just for their performance but collectively for the performance of the school (Burgess, 1992, p. 69). Various scholars strengthen the same opinion when they assert that school teaching-learning needs to be monitored under local participation and accountability systems. For example, Wohlstetter and Mohrman (1993) emphasize that when decentralization of decision-making is used for purposes of increasing accountability, one of its central aims is often to increase the voice of the clients.

Likewise, Verger and Parcerisa (2017) argue that decentralization has a significant role in increasing local control over education provision and often financing, while the central government maintains responsibility for monitoring and regulation. It is also important to note that Ethiopian primary schools have a decentralized educational structural management system. That is, according to MoE (2002), decentralization by devolution (D by D) indicates that stakeholders would address educational problems in their localities and shape the school curriculum and its implementation.

2.1.8 Mechanisms of Accountability

The implementation of the curriculum is collaborative and usually considered more responsible than any other educational activity. Thus, schools and teachers do not work in isolation from government decisions or community activities. This interdependence is one of several factors limiting the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms in education; unpacking the assumptions that underpin accountability requires caution. For one thing, responsibility may not be clear. Teaching, for instance, cannot be parsed into easily defined, routinely performed tasks. Even if that were possible, teachers may depend on the actions of others to fulfill their responsibilities.

Nonetheless, if any failures or inefficiencies are discovered, then there must be accountability mechanisms in place to keep the system running. Conceptually, accountability mechanisms refer to the "procedures, instruments, and arrangements by which account is given" Klijn and Koppenjan (2015, p. 244), and they can be either formal or informal (Romzek, 2014). The question of how processes work can be answered by delving deeper into the accountability mechanisms. In this case, formal and informal accountability mechanisms perhaps tell us about the existing practices of accountability for the implementation process of the school system.

2.1.8.1 Formal Accountability Mechanisms

When accountability is explicitly manifested in written agreements or contracts, it is the formal accountability mechanisms that are in play. According to Koliba et al. (2011, p. 211), these mechanisms "provide stable parameters used to structure coordinated action". For example, formal accountability mechanisms stipulate reporting relationships, performance expectations, monitoring, rewards, and sanctions (Romzek, 2014, p. 308). First, the reporting relationships say something about the actors' roles, responsibilities, and obligations. In some agreements, it is stated explicitly what the relationships and roles will look like; for example, who is accountable to whom, but also what the responsibilities and performance expectations are concerning the actors' different roles.

Second, the official performance expectations stipulate the goals of the interaction, and these can be specified as inputs, outputs, or outcomes. Most often, outputs are preferred, as these can be developed into measurable objectives. Third, monitoring is often equated to some form of external

auditing, in which measurable outputs and summary assessments are in focus. Nonetheless, when it comes to complex curriculum delivery, it can be difficult both to specify and measure performance. Fourth, the consequences of performance result most often in either sanctions or rewards. For example, if one collaborating actor fails to meet its responsibilities, the other actor can choose to collaborate with another, i.e., the partner option. A potential reward could be a shared return on investment (Romzek, 2014, p. 308).

However, when it comes to sanctions, research indicates that there is a tendency not to impose sanctions even though collaborations fail to meet performance expectations. This has been explained by the difficulty of monitoring the collaboration properly or due to a lack of political will (Dubnick & Frederickson, 2014). Lastly, according to Dubnick and Frederickson (2014), the prerequisites for formal mechanisms are enhanced if agreements are clearly articulated in advance. It could be difficult, however, to write clear and explicit agreements, especially when it comes to those concerning social services, as clients may have complex and interdependent needs. This kind of agreement often requires renegotiation after a while, when the actors have some more experience in the collaboration (p.31).

2.1.8.2 Informal Accountability Mechanisms

According to Romzek et al. (2012), formal structures of accountability only provide a partial picture of the mechanisms that are at play in collaborations. Informal accountability mechanisms are important complements to the more formal ones. The authors state that the informal mechanisms provide inter-organizational "grease" that enables collaborations to work (p.451). In contrast to formal mechanisms, informal mechanisms are more difficult to map as they are embedded in the collaboration itself and emerge when collaborating actors recognize a need for interdependencies and mutual accommodation to achieve shared expectations (p.444).

Furthermore, research suggests that informal accountability mechanisms develop over time (Van Slyke, 2007). Romzek et al. (2012) distinguish between the following informal mechanisms, among others: unofficial performance expectations, shared norms, facilitative behaviors, informal monitoring, and informal sanctions and rewards. First, the informal and unofficial performance expectations, i.e., the unspoken goals, among the collaborating actors concern organizational and individual working relationships, but also administrative practices. These are not stipulated in any

agreements, and they might be multiple and conflicting as the actors come from different institutional settings (Romzek, 2014, p. 309).

Second, shared norms and facilitative behavior act as informal codes of conduct that, in the end, can foster reciprocal accountability. Thus, if these features are prevalent in the collaboration, the possibility of some kind of shared accountability among the collaborating actors increases. The relationship between shared norms and facilitative behaviors is "cyclical and reinforcing" in the sense that "shared norms lead to facilitative behaviors, and facilitative behaviors reinforce the commitment to shared norms" (Romzek et al., 2012, p.445). Shared norms refer to, for example, trust, reciprocity, and respect. Trust among collaborating actors is seen as pivotal when it comes to joint curriculum implementation. Not only does trust increase the possibility for mutual accountability, but it also fosters productive working relationships (ibid.). Trust is also one of the most important prerequisites when it comes to selecting the "right" collaborator.

Mansbridge (2014) further states that if a selection process is based upon trust, trust-based accountability emerges in the need for monitoring and sanctioning decreases (ibid., p.58). Reciprocity has to do with an individual, voluntary actions "to benefit another without expecting any immediate payment or reward but trusting that the recipient will return the favors at some time if needed" Romzek et al. (2012, p. 445). The last shared norm, respect, is mainly about having respect for each collaborator's institutional territory. When it comes to facilitative behaviors, it has to do with, for example, frequent and sustained communication through phone calls, e-mails, meetings, and information sharing; anything that facilitates collaboration (p.446).

Third, informal monitoring is less about controlling and measuring than traditional monitoring. Instead, it is more about "improving the performance of the partnership through negotiation and learning"(Romzek, 2014, p. 314). Finally, informal rewards and sanctions refer to reputation, among other things. For example, an informal reward signifies an enhanced reputation. But it can also contribute to enhanced opportunities for future collaboration or public recognition. Instead, formal sanctions are manifested through diminished reputation and loss of opportunities (Romzek et al., 2012).

In general, school accountability mechanisms will be successful in improving the functioning of school organizations for the implementation of the curriculum. Hence, when teachers show

weakness and are absent from their workplace regularly, parents should take corrective measures (MoE, 2002). If implementation problems are observed, there will be disciplinary problems for the actors. For example, particularly in developing countries, school-governing bodies are given important responsibilities in terms of the management of schools, e.g., deciding on future investments and even on the dismissal and hiring of teachers (MoE, 2002).

2.1.9 Nature of Accountability Measures in Ethiopian Primary Schools

There are binding principles that guide actors within the accountability system of primary schools. Thus, according to MoE (2002), it is crucial to amend the existing structure of educational management to include representatives of the community, educational professionals, school principals, teachers, and supervisors, clearly indicating their respective power, responsibility, and accountability in the system. The guideline document has also empowered the community (parents) to participate and make a decision on the performance evaluation, promotion, and dismissal of teachers, principals, and other related matters so that they would be able to closely follow up and control the educational activities (p.3).

In this case, according to the Ethiopian Federal Civil Servants Proclamation(Proclamation, 2002, p. 1671), SMBs can take the necessary measures against those teachers and educational professionals who do not discharge their duties and responsibilities properly. These measures can be called disciplinary penalties. These measures are (a) simple disciplinary penalties such as oral warnings, written warnings, and fines up to one month's salary; and (b) rigorous disciplinary penalties like fines up to three months' salary, downgrading, and dismissal from the job. The purpose of disciplinary action is to correct work-related behavior.

The above notion implies that each employee is expected to do according to their duties and responsibilities as outlined by the immediate supervisor and to comply with applicable policies, procedures, and laws. When an employee does not meet the expectations set by the appropriate authority, disciplinary action may be taken to address the employee's behavior. For this reason, the SMBs, for example, have the right to take appropriate measures against any administrative worker who negatively influences a student who demands proper engagement in the curriculum (MoE, 2002).

2.2 Curriculum Implementation

2.2.1 Definitions

Effective curriculum implementation is crucial for the success of any curriculum innovation; it is the real test of the change. This is not surprising as curriculum implementation entails extensive and concerted involvement of many stakeholders. It often requires restructuring habits, reforming thoughts, and a deeper conceptual understanding of instructional methodology among the implementers. This takes time and much planning. Existing literature on curriculum implementation looks at the issue from two perspectives: for one, curriculum implementation as instruction helps to explore the practices of accountability relationship for what is going on in the school, and to engage students with the curriculum. Secondly, curriculum implementation as a system requires careful coordination among various elements of curricular content, instructional strategies, assessments, and active participation from all stakeholders involved in education.

By recognizing it as an interconnected system rather than isolated parts, educators can create more cohesive learning experiences that ultimately lead to improved student outcomes. This is because the study focused on exploring the implementation of curriculum from their perspectives of system thinking that incorporates the roles and responsibilities of primary school educational structural organizations. In both cases, accountability in curriculum implementation is essential for ensuring that educational objectives are met effectively. By establishing clear roles among stakeholders, implementing robust processes for monitoring progress, creating supportive structures, addressing challenges proactively, and employing strategic enhancements, educational systems can foster an environment where accountability leads to improved teaching practices and better student engagement in the curriculum.

2.2.2 Curriculum Implementation as Classroom Instruction

The first perspective on curriculum implementation equates it with instruction, or the actual teaching and learning that happens in the class. It is the engagement of learners with the curriculum and the planned learning opportunities (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977; Saylor & Alexander, 1981). Fullan and Pomfret (1977) asserted that “implementation is not simply an extension of planning and adoption processes, it is a phenomenon in its own right” (p. 336). Curriculum experts holding

this school of thought thus contemplate issues of planning instruction, teachers' behavior, and teaching models. This aspect of implementation would likely explore the practical aspects of taking a designed curriculum and translating it into day-to-day teaching activities within a classroom setting, including how teachers select instructional strategies, utilize materials, and assess student learning to effectively deliver the intended curriculum objectives (Nevenglosky, 2018).

From the instructional perspective, it involves how teachers deliver content, utilize pedagogical strategies, assess student learning, and adapt materials to meet learner needs (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2017). Effective instruction plays a pivotal role in ensuring that curriculum goals are achieved, requiring teacher competence, adequate resources, and continuous professional development. The scope is confined to the lessons conducted by teachers, a result of the teacher's implementation of the curriculum in the classroom. Instructional plans are made as a result of the second level of curriculum development (Remillard, 1999), where the teacher deliberates on the curriculum documents and adapts or translates them into classroom activities appropriate to the students.

This level of curriculum development is where teachers link their understanding of the curriculum to their practice, transforming curriculum plans into instruction. In the context of this study, curriculum implementation involves the practice of formally approved subjects, syllabi, and teacher guides. The learner acquires knowledge or experience through an organized environment with instructors and a set of prescribed rules and regulations. The curriculum is the documents (student textbook, teacher guide, and syllabus) that were designed by Oromia REB and have been implemented in school environments.

2.2.3 Curriculum Implementation as a System

In ensuring effective curriculum implementation, one needs to consider it from the perspective of both instruction and change. Although classroom instruction is the most direct manifestation of curriculum change, one needs to look from a broader and deeper perspective; as instruction changes to be aligned with curriculum change, a sustainable change in teachers' behavior is probably what policymakers or curriculum developers desire; a leading edge shift in the way textbooks are written is actually what society requires; and, ultimately, a change in how

community and society view education and learning outcomes is the ultimate purpose of the curriculum change. A change of this scale needs engagement with all stakeholders. There is a real need to pay more attention to the process of establishing mechanisms that facilitate change, which ultimately support teachers' classroom instruction more sustainably. This requires looking at the curriculum implementation as a system, which is the process of putting a new curriculum into practice within a school or educational setting should be viewed as a complex, interconnected network of components, where each part influences the others, requiring coordinated planning, execution, monitoring, and feedback loops to ensure successful students' engagement in curriculum (Beauchamp, 1975; George, 1975).

A system consists of a set of interrelated components organized to attain the ends (goals and objectives) for which the system is established. With a systems approach, the objectives are always placed at the center of decision-making. A systems approach provides the planners and implementers of the plan with a systematic and comprehensive view of the whole process of curriculum implementation. Beauchamp (1975) described the system as consisting of the "personnel organization and the organized procedures needed to produce a curriculum, to implement it, to appraise it, and to modify it in light of experience" (p. 59). It involves continuous decision-making and actions. Each system is essential for the effective running of educational institutions at various levels. The planning and carrying out of these systematic processes is known as curriculum engineering (Beauchamp, 1975; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1993).

Effective curriculum engineering is essential to reduce the gap between the aspired curriculum and the implemented curriculum. This entails establishing a comprehensive long-term plan covering areas of teacher education, resource production and distribution, assessment, professional development, supervision, and monitoring. The role and responsibility of various stakeholders have to be ascertained, and action plans have to be drawn up at the state, district, and school levels. The important element of coherence and components of interaction between these sub-systems must be put in place so that the silo mentality does not hinder the success of the curriculum implementation. Generally, in the context of this study, the implementation of the curriculum refers to the act of working out the plans and suggestions that have been made by subject experts in a classroom or primary school system.

Seeing the process of implementing a new curriculum as a system through accountability means that each person or group is held accountable for their part in making sure the curriculum is successfully delivered, tracked, and improved based on transparent performance indicators and feedback loops among education system stakeholders. In other words, everyone involved is accountable for the curriculum's implementation. Indeed, accountability in curriculum implementation is crucial for ensuring that educational standards are met and that students receive quality instruction. In primary schools, this involves key stakeholders: curriculum users, SMBs, WEOs, and REBs can be directly or indirectly involved in the implementation process. Thus, their role is going to be discussed as follows.

2.2.4 Key Stakeholders and Their Accountabilities for Implementing the Curriculum

The curriculum is implemented by people, making them central to the implementation process, both because of their characteristics and thanks to their interactions with other determinants. It is widely acknowledged that stakeholders display some agency, which contributes to shaping the process and the outcomes of curriculum implementation. Primary school curriculum development and implementation in the Oromia regional state are delivered via educational structures. People in schools and school districts have overlapping responsibilities. Also, the work of higher-level administrative or curricular teams affects that of lower-level professional teams. If people responsible for a major portion of innovation respect, support, and trust one another, they are also likely to interact positively with others throughout the organization. Accepting the systems model to likewise, in implementation, conflict must be managed so that everyone can win: students, teachers, chairs, and principals.

However, successful implementation requires energy, time, and patience. It demands recognizing that implementation is more than a set of techniques or disconnected approaches. The level of giving account or answerability according to their duties and responsibilities to curriculum users is paramount to making the implementation successful. Key education stakeholders in Ethiopian primary schooling can be found at the school level (e.g., CRC supervisors, principals, PTAs, teachers, students, and parents) as well as at the regional and Woreda levels. They are powerful groups that strive to direct diverse avenues of the curriculum to serve their particular purposes.

This can be done in the education system in a closed loop that involves key educational stakeholders.

For instance, in the context of this study, the departure of curriculum implementation starts from curriculum developers, REB, via WEOs, to schools. Schools and teachers are the curriculum implementers, and students are the direct classroom curriculum, whereas parents are the indirect users of the implemented curriculum. Hence, those users have the right to communicate or complain to curriculum developers/experts and the schools/teachers about their needs. This makes curriculum implementation cyclic. However, the frontline implementers' accountability can enhance successful implementation and overcome the bottleneck to make curriculum implementation actionable. Those key stakeholders as account givers are REB curriculum developers, WEOs' C and I experts, SMBs, and teachers. However, the role of curriculum users as account holders is going to be stated under the sub-section of the accountability relationship for curriculum implementation.

2.2.4.1 REB's Curriculum Developers

Curriculum developers play a crucial role in the successful implementation of educational curricula. Their responsibilities encompass a wide range of activities that ensure the curriculum is not only well-designed but also effectively delivered in educational settings. As a main duty and responsibility, the Regional Education Bureau has the right to develop and implement the primary school curriculum (MoE, 2002, 2012). They can be found coordinating the implementation of curriculum, evaluating teachers' instruction, analyzing student test data, assessing education standards with school staff, recommending textbooks, and mentoring teachers on pedagogical strategies. REB can be considered policymakers, for they are an active participant in making educational policies. Based on the evaluation performance, they have the right to force WEOs and school curriculum implementers to hold them accountable for their actions. Curriculum developers will also be involved in conducting teacher training conferences to introduce new learning standards and demonstrate effective teaching methods. Moreover, according to OEB (2009, pp. 7-8), regional education bureau curriculum developers have the following key roles and responsibilities:

- *Developing the region's curriculum, urging implementation, evaluating the implementation, giving feedback, and making improvements;*
- *Providing training sessions for teachers on how to implement the curriculum effectively*
- *Evaluation and improvement of the curriculum;*
- *Provide a new curriculum induction program for teachers.*
- *Monitoring the implementation of the curriculum and providing professional development.*
- *Collect input from teachers and learners; use it to revise and improve the curriculum.*
- *Working closely with teachers during implementation to address challenges and share best practices;*
- *Monitor how schools and educators respond to sanctions and rewards, and others.*

2.2.4.2 WEOs' C and I Experts

The powers and responsibilities at the regional and zonal education administrative levels have been devolved to Woredas (MoE, 2002). They are the immediate school districts (so-called Woreda education offices) that occupy a position between Zone education offices and local schools. They inspect the implementation of the curriculum at the primary school level (MoE, 2002). Schools are mainly located not far away from Kebeles and Woredas, which are the lowest-level administrative units in the primary education system of Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia. This situation gives the chance for WEOs' C and I experts to enhance and strengthen supervision and monitoring at school levels to make sure that the implementation of the curriculum is maintained (p.7). Both the manner of teaching and the content being addressed need oversight. According to REB (2009, pp. 14-15), WEOs' C and I experts have the following responsibilities to make curriculum implementation successful:

- *Identifying school textbook requirements;*
- *Distributing the students' textbooks according to the needs of the schools;*
- *Urges the curriculum to be implemented at the school level;*
- *Monitoring how the distributed books are used in the schools;*
- *Providing teachers with an induction program on newly developed curriculum materials; and;*
- *Monitoring the implementation of the curriculum and giving professional support;*
- *Monitor how school curriculum implementers respond to sanctions and rewards; and*

- *Using feedback from evaluations to make necessary adjustments and improvements to the curriculum.*

Moreover, their roles and responsibilities are multifaceted, requiring a blend of pedagogical knowledge, organizational skills, communication abilities, and a commitment to continuous improvement. By focusing on these areas, they can significantly enhance the effectiveness of curriculum implementation and are influential regulators and promoters of curriculum innovation. They set the standards, guidelines, and incentives for new or revised curricula. They have a vital role and responsibility to consult with various stakeholders, especially teachers and students, to understand their needs, expectations, and perspectives on curriculum innovation (REB, 2009).

2.2.4.3 School Management Bodies

The main feature of successful school management bodies was that they built a collaborative culture that combined individual responsibility, collective expectations, and corrective action (Fullan et al., 2015). School Management Bodies (SMBs) include cluster school supervisors, school principals, and parent-teacher associations. They must be community activists to speak and act for teachers, students, and parents. They must listen to what these individuals have to say. They facilitate meaningful action among all parties involved in curriculum implementation (MoE, 2002). They are critical to the success of school curriculum implementation.

This is true in school-based assessment systems, where teachers are directly involved in all curricula, pedagogy, and assessment in curriculum implementation. Teachers must also direct their teaching to develop their students' examination skills and techniques (Keddie & Mills, 2019). In implementing the curriculum, there are organized interactions of people and materials planned and used by teachers. They include the teacher's role, teaching styles, and instructional techniques (Siraj-Blatchford, 1998). The above assertions of curriculum implementation, teachers' actions at primary schools, and their responsibility according to the guidelines have been evaluated, and decisions made by SMBs. Indeed, the intention of this study is not to evaluate curriculum implementation but rather to explore accountability for actions taken for implementation.

The notion of accountability conjures up power struggles that plague schools. Where decisions have been taken by the principal alone, it is no longer possible. Principals may no longer be able to make decisions unilaterally because students and parents now have more power within the school and especially within the school management body for the effective implementation of the curriculum. Although they have various school and personal duties and responsibilities, from this study's standpoint, they do have common managerial activities for effective curriculum implementation. Mostly, they have the following common accountability actions (Schedler et al., 1999) for making primary school curriculum implementation effective. Monitoring is the transparent exercise of power closer to the school. Monitoring involves who should be accountable to whom and about what. The answers to this question will reflect the overall management approach in a school. They have to find a means of engaging students and parents in the school curriculum (Mojkowski, 2000). It also enables SMBs to exercise power over teachers to identify problems in translating the written curriculum into effective classroom practices. They are called school curriculum implementers.

Beckmann (2000, p. 14) sees enforcement as an element of accountability that can be linked to the rewarding of good and punishing of unacceptable behavior. That is, SMBs need to be clear that the process and checklist are meant to find out who is working and not working. Thus, when they undertake to exercise their powers in demanding quality service from the school manager, it enforces accountability. "Enforceability" means the right to impose sanctions if the information or rationale is deemed inappropriate, and answerability implies being accountable to and being judged by somebody (Dorn, 1998) and having to respond to questions and the opportunity to ask questions in return. Accountability must have the quality of answerability (the right to receive relevant information and an explanation for actions). According to Beckmann (2000), questions related to reliable information about decisions (what has been done or will be done, or valid explanations of decisions).

In practical terms, accountability for curriculum implementation is embodied in reports back and follow-up discussions, and in general terms in evaluation. It helps judge school curricula, pedagogies, and students' learning. The latter revolves around the question: how well are teachers doing? (Hadisaputra et al., 2024). Seeing how well teachers are doing an exercise in improving the implementation of the curriculum. Under this conception, primary school curriculum

implementers are schools and, explicitly, the frontline implementers, teachers. However, after fulfilling the enabling condition for curriculum implementation, schools as an organization have their role relationships for what teachers are accountable for.

2.2.4.4 Teachers as Frontline Curriculum Implementers

The teacher's role in curriculum implementation is very important because the teacher, with his or her knowledge, experience, and competencies, translates the structured curriculum into learning experiences. For instance, through the teacher, learners can acquire knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. Teachers must become extremely knowledgeable about the new curriculum content, perfect new instructional approaches, and understand how to manipulate the educational environment while taking their students' backgrounds and learning styles into account (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2017). The appropriate methodology is adopted by the teacher, such as teaching from the simple to the abstract, from the known to the unknown, and not forgetting the many kinds of individual differences that appear in the classroom.

Behaviorally, to select just a few of many possible indicators, teachers may be required to adopt and use new pedagogical techniques such as different class groupings, new authority relationships with students, experiential and peer-based learning situations, instructional planning, and the like and authors argue that asserts, teachers view their role in curriculum implementation as an autonomous one. Teachers must think of students as being capable of desiring, needing, and exercising more autonomy (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977; Tyler, 1949).

They select and decide what to teach from the prescribed syllabus or curriculum. Since implementation takes place through the interaction of the learner and the planned learning opportunities, the role and influence of the teacher in the process are indisputable. The key to getting teachers committed to being involved in the implementation of the curriculum is to provide effective feedback to students on their learning methods. Curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment merge in classroom practice. Thus, the main roles of the teachers are to combine the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment to implement the curriculum effectively. Teachers should be guided to use assessment not just to test how well content and skills have been learned, but to understand the

strengths and weaknesses of individual learners and to ensure that future classroom activities use this information to each student's advantage (Munna & Kalam, 2021).

As an element of teachers' responsibility in CI, Stabback (2016) stressed the genuine worth of teachers for formative assessment: it is the bridge between teaching and learning, without which the two are not easily connected. Teachers should be guided to use assessment not just to test how well content and skills have been learned, but to understand the strengths and weaknesses of individual learners and to ensure that future classroom activities use this information to each student's advantage.

The teacher addresses the needs and interests of learners by creating experiences from which they can learn. It is the teacher's role to formulate lesson objectives that are derived from the syllabus and subject content and ensure that the objectives are achieved through the learners' mastery of the content. The teacher should work hard to pique students' interests and desire to learn (Carter et al., 2023). It is the teacher's role to emphasize good discipline during the implementation process by employing class management techniques, and more so, the teacher should be a role model in exhibiting good discipline in class and outside class. This is important for creating a good atmosphere for teaching and learning. The teacher assesses the learners in the process of curriculum implementation. This is to measure whether the intended curriculum objectives and aims have been achieved by the learners and see whether some gaps require remedial action. The assessment can be at the end of every lesson or in the form of an assignment that may be periodic (Carter et al., 2023).

The teacher supervises the learners' activities in and outside the classroom environment. This is done to find out whether there is normal progress in academic and non-academic achievement. The supervision is done based on the work plan drawn at the school or classroom level. The teacher's planning role is very important and aids in supervision. The teacher carries out counseling and guidance to achieve the intended aims and ensure that learners keep focus in the right direction throughout their course of study (Ibid). In current policy and practice, educators are often held accountable as well for organizational conditions and practices believed to contribute more or less directly to students' welfare. One prominent example is the characteristics or conditions of schools, explaining variation in their effectiveness (e.g., collaborative professional

cultures, high expectations for student achievement, clear goals). These organizational conditions figure among the criteria government inspectors use in evaluating schools in Scotland and England, for example (Leithwood, 2005). However, as these illustrations begin to suggest, in addition to being held accountable for student welfare directly,

Indeed, teachers in primary schools are held accountable for effective curriculum implementation. The central focus of this study is how accountability relationships perform in the primary school education system for implementing the curriculum. Teachers, as front-line curriculum implementers, should be held accountable for implementing the officially prescribed syllabi and subjects at school to help students acquire knowledge or experience. As a result, CI is assumed to be the translation of behavioral duties and responsibilities drawn by curriculum developers to those responsible for implementing roles and generally, along with certain rewards and sanctions that would induce or constrain implementers when both long-route and short-route accountability relationships coherently bring change in behaviors (new skills, practices, and roles) to address curriculum-users demand.

Because of various limitations among accountability mechanisms, no single form of accountability operates alone in any major area of public life. The choice of accountability tools and the balance among different forms of accountability are constantly shifting as problems emerge, as social goals change, and as new circumstances arise (Darling-Hammond, 1989). In the context of this study, I argue that professionals are obliged to do whatever is best for their curriculum users based on the best available knowledge in their fields. Thus, good implementation of the curriculum is defined as meeting the needs of individual students and the expectations of the parents.

Arguably, the most important form of accountability is professional accountability, which is of paramount importance to implementing effective components of the curriculum at the classroom level. Indeed, as per the conceptual framework of this study, it is important to deal with the accountability relationship at the system level in a way that simultaneously improves the implementation of the curriculum. So, the next sub-section explicitly addresses the voice, compact, client power, and management accountability relationships for primary school curriculum implementation.

2.3 Accountability Relationships for Curriculum Implementation

Education is a social phenomenon for which an appropriate organizational structure has been developed to enable all concerned bodies, including students, teachers, parents, the community at large, and the government, to contribute their respective shares in educational work (MoE, 2002). In particular, in curriculum implementation, Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) contend that teachers should have a curriculum coordinating body that helps to unify their work and develop a relationship with other parties involved in curriculum implementation. In Ethiopia, the shared responsibility for curriculum implementation was pronounced by recognizing decentralized educational management; stakeholders would address educational problems in their localities through decentralization by devolution (D by D); Woredas have been empowered to carry out the majority of educational activities, including the implementation process of curriculum (MoE, 2002). This is because the decentralization trend largely results from frustrations with perceived failures of centralized bureaucratic systems (Rado, 2010). It has been a further development that increases local control over education provision and often finance, while the central government maintains responsibility for monitoring and regulation (Verger & Parcerisa, 2017).

Therefore, local educational structures have to get involved in many ways in the implementation because the curriculum affects them directly or indirectly. These stakeholders shape the school's CI. This indicates that local governments grant them enhanced parents' active participation, increasing accountability, and providing services to match the demand for managing and monitoring delivery practices Verger and Parcerisa (2017, p. 2). The existing educational accountability relationships in Ethiopia between the government, curriculum developers, and curriculum implementers are structurally indicated in documents on school organization and management, community participation, and financial management guidelines (MoE, 2002). Nevertheless, to make instructional delivery or curriculum implementation coherent for learning outcomes, Pritchett (2015, p. 15) clarifies that since any human system is composed of "actors" and "relationships" among actors, a brief description of a system of education must have at least four sets of actors: parents/students; the executive apparatus of the state actors who control, via executive decisions like the adoption of laws, regulations, policies, and the allocation of budgets; organizational providers of schooling; and teachers.

Concerning instructional delivery or classroom curriculum implementation, Pritchett (2015) indicates the collaborative working accountability relationships of curriculum developers, instructional implementers, students, and parents as a clear message. To complete any description of a system, he has to specify how the actors are connected through triangular accountability relationships that provide feedback loops. By considering the primary school education system in mind, in this study, the point of departure from REB is that they have a responsibility to make and implement the primary school curriculum followed by WEOs, SMBs, teachers, students, and parents (MoE, 2002).

Yet, zone education offices have the work of distributing teaching materials, which is not professionally linked to the practice of curriculum at the school level. They are overlooked in the activities of CI because WEOs have been “empowered to carry out the majority of educational activities” (p. 2). According to their roles and responsibilities being given to them, one can explicitly address that REB as developers and providers of technical, professional, material, and capacity building; WEOs’ C and I experts who control, monitor, and supervise the overall CI; school management bodies as collaborative organizational curriculum implementers; teachers as frontline curriculum implementers; and students and parents as right holders for the implementation of curriculum (MoE, 2002) through their voice and power. Thus, the accountability relationships of these education stakeholders will be seen in line with the responsibilities given to them and the penalties associated with weak performance (MoE, 2002). For example, (Marsh, 2007). Marsh and Wills (2007, p.222) argue that teachers, principals, and other stakeholders involved in implementing a curriculum may wish to use "existing interventions and checklists" or devise their own approach to discovering how curriculum documents are being used.

Despite curriculum implementation being a crucial practice of service delivery in the education system, it requires that students be in school and that they learn. This, in turn, rests on education systems that create relationships of accountability between curriculum users, curriculum developers/experts, and curriculum implementers, with clear objectives, adequate resources, capable and motivated providers, progress assessments, and performance-oriented management (WDR, 2004). The assumption is that "*one size does not fit all*" explains that policy developers have compacted organizational providers, organizations/schools manage frontline providers and

clients exercise client voice and power through interactions with curriculum developers and schools (pp.47-48); however, the assumption is that weaknesses in any of the relationships or the capacity of the schools or teachers can fail in the implementation of the curriculum. These relationships can be understood through various dimensions, including roles, responsibilities, communication, and feedback mechanisms to improve the implementation of the curriculum.

Accountability systems can be significantly different according to who is expected to provide the account, to whom the account is owed, what is to be accounted for, and what the consequences are of providing an account (Leithwood & Earl, 2000). Several scholars have created relationships between accountability systems in a range of policy fields according to these and other variables. To this end, the existing and well-established accountability relationships (Pritchett, 2015; WDR, 2004) are assumed and examined. These accountability frameworks have four types of common relationships: voice, compact, client power, and management relationships for delivering high-quality education in general and implementing curriculum meaningfully in particular.

In general, relationships will indicate the collaborative nature of the shared responsibility of CI. Hence, the World Development Report's educational accountability framework consists of two paths to accountability: the long route and the short route. On the other hand, the long route path contains voice and compact relationships, and the short route path has client power and management relationships. However, accountability mechanisms will be discussed next in the following sub-section.

2.3.1 Voice and Compact Accountability Relationships

To achieve educational goals in general and curriculum implementation in particular, curriculum developers and experts in the area must provide adequate accountability measures either autonomously or through the pressure of parents' and students' voices. This is because parents and students see education as an opportunity to lead better lives, but they may also want education to reinforce traditional values. Whereas compact requires a means of assessing a school's contribution to the effective implementation of the curriculum and creating an environment for schools to innovate and bring those innovations to scale, school autonomy with accountability. A more explicit compact relationship can be made with organizational implementers (schools).

Hence, under this sub-section, one can see the simultaneous work of those relationships to put pressure on the curriculum implementers/schools to do well.

2.3.1.1 Curriculum Users' Voice Accountability Relationships

Voices from various curriculum users should be heard. A voice relationship is defined as a complex accountability relationship that connects clients and government officials in education, for example, curriculum developers. It is only the first part of the long route of accountability. Effective solutions are likely to be mixtures of voice, direct participation, and organizational command and control, with functional responsibilities distributed among central, regional, local, and school administrations (WDR, 2004). This relationship is further defined as the long route of accountability through which students provide mandates and/or their preferences to curriculum developers (the state) to design services that respond to their needs (Di Gropello, 2004).

The voice also addresses the issue of how well curriculum users (students and parents) can hold the regional state curriculum developers accountable for performance in discharging their responsibility for better implementation of the curriculum WDR (2004, p. 113). The implementation of the curriculum is the icon of educational provision. If dissatisfaction with curriculum implementation is observed, they should show their voice by providing reliable information. Concerning curriculum implementation as one of the educational services, voice implies that parents and students may speak either in meetings by visiting REB and WEOs, or by using social/government media, or writing letters. These bureaus and offices are expected to be well-informed about the problem of the transmission of curriculum objectives from paper to practice. It is assumed that this mechanism may enhance teachers' responsibilities to implement the curriculum to meet students' needs (Carl, 2009) by creating lesson plans and syllabi within the framework of the given curriculum.

2.3.1.1.1 Students' Voice Accountability Relationship

The process of curriculum implementation involves helping the learner acquire knowledge or experience. It is important to note that curriculum implementation cannot take place without the learner. The learner is therefore the central figure in the implementation of the curriculum (Bediako, 2019). While teachers are the arbiters of classroom practice, the learners hold the key to

what is transmitted and adapted from the official curriculum. In 21st-century education reform, many countries have emphasized student learning. However, the role of students is not always taken seriously. Curriculum developers, SMBs, and teachers still play dominant roles in curriculum decisions. In particular, they simply see students as curriculum receivers.

In this study, student voice has emerged to analyze the accountability relationship between primary school students, regional curriculum developers, and experts of WEOs about the implementation process of the curriculum. Contextually, students' voices refer to the opinions, feedback, and perspectives of students regarding their educational experiences, including curriculum content, teaching methods, and overall school environment. The concept of students' voices in holding district education offices accountable for curriculum implementation is an important initiative that emphasizes the role of students in shaping their educational experiences.

In this regard, the relationship between students' voices and accountability in the context of district education offices for curriculum implementation is a multifaceted issue that involves several key components. Cook-Sather (2006) describes the student voice as having a legitimate perspective, presence, and active role. Wolk (1998) argues that everyone has a voice and, therefore, this is not something that can be "given," and he asks, "What do we do with it? And to what conscious degree have we developed it and continue to develop it?" (p. 186). Students' voices are located within a complex web of school structures and cultures that are shaped by curriculum developers, school leaders, teachers, researchers, and students themselves. In its most conservative form, voice means having a say when asked but without any guarantee of a necessary response, whereas in its most radical form, voice calls for "a cultural shift that opens up spaces and minds not only to the sound but also to the presence and power of students" Cook-Sather (2006, p. 363).

Principles of student voice have been effectively enacted within schools in different ways internationally. For example, in Denmark, the government has emphasized student voice as a vehicle for creating democratic schools (Flutter, 2007). In the USA, students' voices have been about promoting diversity and breaking down racial and class barriers (Mitra, 2001); and in Chile, it is concerned with designing innovative pedagogies and curriculum materials to develop education in democracy (Fielding & Prieto, 2002). In Ethiopia, the education management guideline pinpointed that students have a right to get appropriate teaching-learning support from

teachers and evaluate their performance (MoE, 2002). Incorporating students' voices into the accountability framework for WEOs regarding curriculum implementation is essential for creating an educational environment that is responsive to learners' needs. This support would be provided through the request of students to be engaged with the curriculum.

2.3.1.1.2 Parents' Voice Accountability Relationship

There is growing awareness that parents can play an important role in school and teacher accountability (Agarwal et al., 2009). At the same time, social accountability approaches are not always well-defined in the literature or education policies. A review of the national education plans of 40 mostly low and middle-income countries and in-depth case studies of Bangladesh, Cambodia, South Africa, and Timor-Leste found that many policies refer to the increasing role of parents in teacher accountability (UNESCO, 2017). In this case, parents as curriculum users wanted clear, accurate information about what and how their child was doing in school and information about what they could do to help. They wanted to be able to support the child at home and talk with the teacher respectfully and understandably. Studies have shown that parents want the school to be open to their participation in a variety of school activities that may take place at home, at the school, or in the community. They provide schools with financial resources to purchase the required materials. Given information and options, parents could voice concerns and undertake improvements in schools (Hirschman, 1970) for effective implementation of the curriculum.

Many service problems can be improved by making sure that commitment follows students to ensure quality services. Most of the evidence for this comes from studies examining the effect of fees on the behavior of private providers (who must, of course, operate this way), but it applies to all such methods. The commitment and voice from the client/curriculum-users will (WDR, 2004) improve front-line implementers' behavior; increase supply and sustainability; increase vigilance and a stake in receiving a better curriculum from each transaction; and make better choices about which educational services to demand. In Ethiopia, parents are perhaps motivated to seek quality teaching and learning.

Parents should collaborate with WEOs and REB to understand the curriculum better and advocate for necessary changes based on their observations. To that end, accountability systems should provide data that increases parent involvement and support, as well as inform public policy and resource allocation (UNESCO, 2005). Parents are government taxpayers and the direct participants and intended beneficiaries of the implementation of the curriculum via schooling (Pritchett, 2015). They have the right to demand, either on their own or in alliance with others, that the accountability of curriculum developers and experts respond in ways that compensate for weaknesses elsewhere in the implementation chain. In general, parents have a vital role in holding WEOs and REB accountable for effective curriculum implementation through advocacy or engagement in policy making process (PTA, 2018), collaboration with educators (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013), providing feedback mechanisms (Hill & Tyson, 2009) and monitoring the implementation of the curriculum (Bryk, 2010). By leveraging their voices collectively, parents can significantly influence educational practices to ensure that all students receive a high-quality education aligned with their needs.

2.3.2 The Compact Accountability Relationships

The compact introduced in this subsection is composed of relationships of accountability necessary for increasing the power of incentives for good performance. In this study, both REB's curriculum developers and WEOs' C and I experts (who have the responsibility to oversee and support the curriculum implementation process) are seen as one position of a compact accountability relationship with the primary schools. The compact relationship is broadly defined as a long-term relationship of accountability that connects curriculum developers or experts to the school's curriculum implementers (WDR, 2004).

A more explicit compact relationship can be made with organizational curriculum implementers, perhaps even with multiple implementers within the primary education system. This structure can give clearer guidance on desired outputs and outcomes, freeing SMBs and teachers to pursue defined goals (WDR, 2004). Hence, those curriculum developers and experts must use compact relations to enforce and monitor the curriculum implementers (teachers and SMBs) accountable through evaluating performance. The compact requires assessing a school's contribution to the

collective objectives of education and creating an environment for organizations to innovate and bring those innovations to scale for school accountability (MoE, 2002; WDR, 2004).

When applied to primary schools, curriculum users tried to use their voice to hold REB curriculum developers and WEOs' C and I experts accountable for their actions, which affect schools/teachers' implementation of the school curriculum through compact relationships. However, the compact accountability relationship between both REB's curriculum developers and experts of WEOs and curriculum implementers needs to balance the autonomy of schools and teachers with performance assessment (MoE, 2002; WDR, 2004).

Nevertheless, Lingard et al. (2017) explain that top-down bureaucratic accountability approaches to accountability can readily become toxic and are exploited (a) as a mechanism to govern education systems and (b) as part of a simplistic and populist politics of education that over-allocates blame to teachers for poor implementation of the curriculum. However, as Henig (2013) has argued, educational accountability holds the potential to drive quite different collective engagements with schools that are only just beginning to be explored. In this case, Darling-Hammond (2004) argues for a broader conception of accountability that examines whether the actions undertaken by curriculum developers produce better quality instruction and higher levels of learning for a greater share of students and whether they work to address shortcomings in children's opportunities to learn.

On the other hand, having the same spirit and working under the same policy and guidelines with REB, WEOs, SMBs, teachers, and curriculum users has made immense contributions to the effective implementation of the primary school curriculum. Therefore, the real success of curriculum implementation is largely determined by the quality of the planning, design, and teacher training done beforehand and the support provided by WEOs during the implementation. The following four guidelines, developed by (Pratt, 1980, pp. 435-442), provide district/WEOs officials (in the context of this study, WEOs' C and I experts) with strategies for monitoring and supporting teachers:

Continuous contact with teachers to provide advice and assistance, to encourage mutual contact between teachers as well as effective contact with learners and parents; clear communication to illustrate roles, explain terminology, illustrate possible means of

evaluation, and supply answers to the frequently asked questions for successful implementation of the curriculum.

This creates an opportunity for professional growth by way of improved perspectives and increased responsibilities. A further advantage of intrinsic compensation is that it rewards the actual development and not its symptoms. Teachers often find their rewards merely in their acceptance of a new curriculum and not so much in the implementation of it. Curriculum making, to bureaucratic systematize, is about bringing expert, universal knowledge to bear on schools and school systems regardless of context. Good curriculum developers provide expert advice that helps curriculum systems run more smoothly (Null, 2023). Jordaan (1989) also mentions that how WEOs monitor and support teachers will ultimately pay off for the successful implementation of the curriculum. They should not only offer support during implementation, but problems must be addressed continuously. Practice-oriented in-service training must be provided, and supporters must be available continuously to offer assistance and encouragement.

In general, a compact relationship of accountability is necessary to increase the power of incentives for good performance in the implementation of the curriculum. Instructions given by curriculum developers and experts to school implementers must be clear and backed with sufficient resources for adequate and regular compensation (WDR, 2004). The existing hierarchical bureaucratic structures of the educational system from the bottom up are primary schools, WEOs, Zone Education Offices, the Regional Education Bureau (REB), and the Ministry of Education (MoE). Primary schools and school WEOs are fundamentally bureaucratic hierarchical structures, and WEOs were empowered by REB to address educational problems in their localities through decentralization and carry out the majority of educational activities, including curriculum implementation (MoE, 2002).

Due to this reason, it is argued that bureaucratic accountability relationships between WEOs' curriculum and instruction experts and school curriculum implementers can be verified through information. These experts anticipated that a substantial and strong monitoring function would be used to generate information about the performance of primary school curriculum implementers (MoE, 2002). Both REB curriculum developers and WEOs' C and I experts have the role of strengthening educational supervision to make sure that curriculum implementation is practiced as intended. They also provide educational resources and a compact accountability relationship for

the implementation of the curriculum (MoE, 2002). Having a double compact accountability relationship with curriculum implementers, both curriculum developers and experts have the power to oversee and monitor the implementation of the school curriculum.

However, in compact accountability relationships, there are political or technical procedures that shift the school's focus away from the implementation of the curriculum, as planned may be the reason why the bureaucratic accountability relationship is not working. Hence, bureaucratic relationships frequently fail. There is no bureaucracy in failed or failing nations since the state's level of control is so low (such states are referred to as low-income countries under stress). This occurs when nations are engulfed in protracted civil wars or when sizable portions of the nation are out of the government's control (Elmore, 2004b; WDR, 2004, 2018). The cooperative relationship between the state and public school curriculum implementers is frequently incredibly weak when it comes to implementing curricula, even in working states (WDR, 2004).

This is because empirical studies suggest that the political appointment and commitment of the education stakeholders depress the bureaucratic accountability effort for putting curriculum into effect, and there is also significant resistance from the bureaucrats against measures that would increase bureaucratic efficiency (Luca, 2016; Toral, 2022).

2.3.3 Curriculum Users' Power Accountability Relationships

This section tries to highlight the concept of client power to hold the accountability of teachers and schools for curriculum implementation through direct involvement in the evaluation and operation of schools. Thus, in addition to the voice and compact relationships of long-route accountability, the third type of accountability is the curriculum users' power relationship, which is defined as a relationship that connects parents and students to school curriculum implementers (WDR, 2004). It is regarded as the short route of accountability, which denotes forms of direct client feedback, co-management, and/or curriculum users' choice related to the implementation of the curriculum (Di Gropello, 2004).

Further, the curriculum-users' power, or how well students and parents can increase the accountability of teachers for the implementation of the curriculum, can be improved by correcting the flaws of the long route of accountability. This can improve the learner's actual engagement

with the curriculum (WDR, 2004). Under this type of accountability, the end-users of the curriculum are expected to hold both curriculum developers and experts through long-route accountability relationships and SMBs and teachers through short-route accountability relationships for curriculum implementation. This is because teachers are directly accountable to the students and parents. Thus, they may use the alternative route to be engaged in the effective implementation of curricula. When communities are not involved in establishing, supporting, or overseeing a school, the school is often seen as something alien.

However, curriculum users' participation in school teaching-learning is expected to increase when the school management respects their involvement and works cooperatively with them. Thus, scholars argue that many educational innovations today are anchored on the strong foundation that communities are part of an existing learning landscape (Burkill & Eaton, 2010). In particular, research (Chindanya, 2011) has underlined parental involvement, but the bigger picture is to see the whole community as a multi-layered system capable of reforming and transforming classroom practice. Besides, his sub-section articulates students' and parents' power as an intervention for curriculum implementation that can make significant contributions to the success of school teaching-learning. By and large, curriculum users have the right to make their views known to hold both teachers accountable when they are dissatisfied with school curriculum implementation practices. Thus, schools in general, and teachers, in particular, are increasingly held to account not just by governments but also by parents and students (UNESCO, 2017). On the other hand, the management relationship will be discussed in the following sub-section of this review.

2.3.3.1 Students' Power Accountability Relationships

To the question of why teachers should be held accountable, Ballard and Bates (2008) observe that it is important to hold teachers accountable for students' learning to take place. Once adequate measures are put in place to hold teachers accountable, their attitude towards their duties improves, and, invariably, quality instruction and improved learner attainment are guaranteed. Furthermore, Orlich et al. (2010) identify core assumptions expected of a teacher that necessitate the holding of one responsible for all that happens in the classroom and state that the teacher should be committed to students and their learning, should be able to monitor and manage students' learning, should be able to reflect on own practice, and should be a member of a supportive professional community.

In terms of who and what teachers are accountable to, Maphosa et al. (2012) state those teachers are primarily accountable to the learners for implementing the school curriculum. The main curriculum transactions take place between the teachers and the learners. Therefore, the teacher has to be answerable to the learners in the way they learn in classrooms. Teachers are responsible for meeting learners' various and diverse learning needs. Thus, students have the power to hold teachers accountable for curriculum implementation. These diverse learning needs can be achieved through effective curriculum implementation. Therefore, students have to show their views about the implementation status of the curriculum to the school management bodies to be well-engaged.

Students often express interest in several school-related issues and, given the opportunity, can be active participants in dealing with them (Allen, 1995a). This is the case with the curriculum and how it is taught, where there is considerable potential for student participation in decision-making. According to (Marsh & Willis, 2003), many different people may create the planned curriculum, and teachers may enact variations of it, but students experience it in their own ways. Further, they state that many professional educators assume that the more likely it is to make informed decisions; however, because "students can participate in curriculum implementation", it does not necessarily mean that they should participate (p.200). Students have certain expectations and rights as curriculum users of the school, including the right to evaluate the quality of the services they receive (Dyan, 1980) and the right to negotiate what they learn (Hargreaves, 1992).

City et al. (2009) argue that the real accountability system is in the tasks that students are asked to do and when they ask for their curriculum engagement. Constantly improving and refining instructional practice so that students can engage in deep learning tasks is perhaps the single most important responsibility of the teaching profession and educational systems as a whole. In this sense, accountability, as defined here, is not limited to mere gains in test scores but deeper and more meaningful learning for all students. Another reason often advanced for student participation is that students are, in effect, clients of the school. In business dealings, clients have specific expectations and rights; in virtually every profession, the client decides what services they want and whether these services have been provided satisfactorily (Marsh & Willis, 2007).

2.3.3.2 Parents' Power Accountability Relationships

Teachers are also accountable to the parents of the learners they teach. In sending their children to school, parents have faith in the school system and the teachers. It is important to note that parents

differ in their education and literacy levels. However, all parents have expectations about school insofar as the molding of their children's future is concerned. Since parents have primary responsibility for their children's education, their concerns should be respected when possible. Parental rights enable parents to monitor school management bodies' decisions and actions, in particular, teachers' practices of curriculum implementation. Parents are also free to visit the school and enquire about their children's teaching-learning activities. Yet, some literature argues that direct parental participation in schools is also typically a weak force since there is little about public schools that parents can affect or channel into narrow interests, and it has little impact (WDR, 2004).

Regarding parents' power, Dodd and Konzal (2002) indicate that parents are both teachers of their children and mediators of the school. They have the right and obligation to make sure that students are well-engaged in the curriculum of the schools they attend. Concerning this, (WorldBank, 1995) has also noted that educational institutions may be accountable for their performance when parents are more closely involved in the activities of the institutions. When parents are involved in the affairs of a school, the students will be more likely to be satisfied. More importantly, this will help the education process to be more effective. Parents have a fundamental right to hold school administrators and teachers accountable for curriculum implementation, as this directly impacts their children's education. This accountability is rooted in various accountability models.

Direct parental participation in schools is, furthermore, typically a weak force since there is little about public schools that parents can affect (WDR, 2004). This is because they cannot see themselves as valued team members, and they see themselves as simply a means of mobilizing additional resources for the school. However, since "parents are taxpayers and one of the financial resources of the schools", it is fairly straightforward for parents to assess whether the teacher is present and not abusive to students (p.126). As curriculum users, Glatthorn et al. (2005) indicate that parents also have the responsibility to monitor the activities in the school about teaching and learning and to hold the teachers and SMBs accountable. Parents possess both the right and responsibility to hold school administrators and teachers accountable for curriculum implementation due to legal frameworks supporting parental involvement (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). Conversely, schools also should have an ethical obligation to be transparent about curriculum choices and instructional methods, allowing parents to understand how these decisions affect their children's learning.

Advocates for parental choice of school argue that parents are the best judges of what education most suits their children. With the right to send a child to school, parents could ensure that their child received an appropriate education and that schools would respond to their concerns about the implementation of the curriculum and school quality. In this case, concerns about the quality of instruction and effectiveness of teaching-learning have prompted calls for stronger accountability to parents. Advocates argue that giving parents rights enables them to ensure both that their children receive a good education suited to their needs and abilities and that schools maintain quality and offer the most appropriate educational programs. In particular cases, these rights enable parents to hold schools and teachers accountable for their actions (Tweedie, 1989). In this case, their central actions are to check the progress of primary school curriculum implementation.

In this connection, UNESCO (2016) stated that access and the provision of quality education are realized through the appropriate level of community participation. This also implies that effective school curriculum implementation can be realized in the presence of community participation in general and parent involvement in particular. Therefore, when dissatisfaction with students' engagement in the curriculum is observed, parents can hold teachers and schools accountable by communicating with the school management bodies. That is, if students do not engage with the appropriate curriculum, parents will exercise their pressure on the school system for better implementation of the curriculum. In this regard, Shea and Bauer (1991) say that the most widely used and/or requested services by parents for student learning are information exchange through informal feedback, progress reports, conferences, program information, parent-coordinated service programs, counseling, therapy, and consultation.

Generally speaking, the result of effective curriculum implementation would be improved student learning outcomes. However, improved learning outcomes and reduced teacher absenteeism are driven by the increased participation of parents in school committee meetings (Pandey et al., 2011). Hence, parent involvement can make a difference. For instance, beyond the traditional approach of parental involvement (like an investment of money and time), parents' role can take many forms, such as: volunteering at the school; communicating with teachers; assisting with homework; attending school events such as performances or parent-teacher conferences, shared-decision making within the school; and community partnerships (Epstein et al., 2018).

This type of communication has made significant contributions to curriculum implementation success by holding schools and teachers accountable. Thus, parents can play a significant role in the implementation process of the curriculum. For instance, Glatthorn et al. (2005) indicate that parents have a responsibility to monitor the activities in the school for teaching and learning and to hold the teachers and schools accountable. In Ethiopia, the education guideline document indicates that when there is a weakness in implementing the curriculum and when teachers are absent from their regular work, parents should take corrective measures (MoE, 2002). Therefore, parents have been given the right to hold curriculum implementers accountable for better implementation of the curriculum. They should use remedial measures that vary from simple to rigorous disciplinary penalties based on the recommendation of the proclamation.

2.3.4 Management Accountability Relationships

This section tries to address the relationship of SMBs with the teachers in curriculum implementation. According to (Di Gropello, 2004), a "management relationship" is one that exists between organizational curriculum implementers and frontline professionals and teachers. Moreover, (WDR, 2004) affirms that the management relationship is the relationship of accountability connecting organizational providers and frontline professionals, comprising internal processes for public organizations to select, train, motivate, administer, and evaluate frontline professionals. In the context of this study, organizational providers are adopted as organizational implementers, primary schools that implement the curriculum. Management accountability in education refers to the responsibilities that SMBs have in ensuring that teachers effectively implement the curriculum. This includes providing support, resources, and oversight to facilitate successful teaching practices.

A frontline professional is also adopted as an employee who is engaged in the actual implementation of the curriculum, for example, primary school teachers (WDR, 2004). Schools and their management bodies are expected to implement educational activities according to the curriculum, the objective reality of the area, and the student's level of understanding, and indicate problems encountered in the implementation process by conducting research and implementing the results in the schools (MoE, 2002). Under this accountability relationship, teachers and other staff members are expected to acquire specialized knowledge, meet standards for entry, and uphold professional standards of practice in their work. This system is based upon adherence to

professional norms in which educators are accountable for adherence to standards and accountable to their peers (Anderson & Planning, 2005).

The management relationship is multidirectional and is focused more on the internal accountability approach. For example, Carnoy et al. (2003) indicate that internal accountability operates at the level of personal responsibility that teachers have for students in their class; the relations of expectation, trust, and responsibility cultivated in school communities extend beyond the spatial bounds of the school; and formal institutional accountabilities at the school level. These mechanisms not only enable teachers and schools to be held to account for implementing a curriculum but also enable systems and governments to be made accountable for providing necessary resources and conditions for learning (Nichols & Berliner, 2007).

Structurally, when applied to this study, organizational curriculum implementers at the school level are school principals, PTAs, and SCRC supervisors, who have direct relations with the teachers (the front-line implementers) to monitor, enforce, and take the role of answerability for the progress of the implementation of the primary school curriculum. This is because curriculum implementation is more professional. They must put worthwhile learning first. Schools must be accountable to parents, the community, and the government to develop the responsibility and accountability of educational personnel working at various levels of the education system (MoE, 2017a). Yet, the implementation of the curriculum is one of the core domains of an education system that needs multiple (vertical and horizontal) accountability types for the schools.

Students should be engaged in what they learn. (Allen, 1995b) argues that if people are serious about empowerment in education, then students should be encouraged to voice their concerns and opinions about curricula and participate in decisions about their implementation. Further, if students become active participants in decision-making, then a more positive collegial relationship will be established between teachers and students (Johnson, 1994). Fullan (2015) suggests that "curriculum implementers must start treating students as people, and they should stop thinking of students just in terms of learning outcomes and start thinking of them as people who are being asked to become involved in new activities" (p.189). Thus, students are responsible and trustworthy people who, if allowed, use their sense of responsibility in a meaningful way.

Another accountability relation by Tweedie (1989a) affirms that schools and their management bodies are held responsible for meeting the needs of individual children and serving collective

ends, despite inadequate resources that require tradeoffs. Before teachers are held accountable for what happens in schools, they need to be supported. In addition to their accountability to the government, teachers are also accountable to school management bodies, which are on the spot in schools for professional actions on behalf of the government (Barrett, 2005). Teachers often argue that they have professional rights and have to work with great autonomy. However, such rights may not be claimed if teachers are engaged in an excessive amount of unprofessional conduct in full view of the parents.

Broadly speaking, accountability may seem abstract. However, its presence or absence influences the way students learn, teachers teach, and governments govern. Hence, well-designed accountability mechanisms encourage collaboration, leading to good-quality education, and badly designed ones supply a veneer of effectiveness or, worse, bias education and undermine the very purpose for which they were introduced. In an attempt to introduce accountability, dilemmas arise (UNESCO, 2017). In general, SMBs play a pivotal role in creating an environment conducive to effective curriculum implementation.

The responsibilities of the SMBs include: SMBs must communicate clear goals and expectations regarding curriculum standards (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005) provide ongoing training and professional development opportunities to help teachers stay updated on best practices and curricular change (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017), exercise monitoring classroom practices and evaluating teacher performance to ensure alignment with curricular goals (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). My argument is that SMBs and teachers can identify good practices within their schools and can set up mechanisms to propagate and share strategies for the actual engagement of students in the curriculum. This is because parents and students can respond to information about individual student engagement in curriculum implementation by investing more time and effort outside of school or by increasing direct engagement with teachers and school administrators.

Hence, arguably, a well-designed accountability system can create collaboration among key stakeholders that leads to effective implementation of the curriculum. SMBs are accountable to both WEOs' C and I experts and curriculum users, whereas teachers are directly accountable to both curriculum users and SMBs. They must closely ensure that strict implementation of the curriculum is in line with the national and regional guidelines to enforce, monitor, and evaluate

the front-line implementers to satisfy the needs of the students. Teachers must be supervised and take their own personal, professional, and collective responsibility for continuous improvement and success for all students (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009), and this helps to reduce complaints raised from curriculum users. However, it is important to note that if SMBs are given autonomy over decision-making, they must be held accountable for the implementation of the curriculum to satisfy the needs of the curriculum users (Woessmann, 2007).

2.3.4.1 School Cluster Resources Centers Supervisors (SCRCs)' Accountability

The process of curriculum development and implementation must be supervised. Some must monitor what is occurring and determine whether these actions are appropriate. According to Ornstein and Hunkins (2017), the word supervision is associated with instruction. Certainly, instructional supervision is important, especially at the level of implementation. Hence, during the implementation phase, not only the matter of teaching but also the content that is being addressed needs to be supervised as well.

Supervisors can place much of the responsibility in the hands of seasoned and experienced teachers. They may need to schedule more supervisor-teacher conferences and more in-service training for staff members to deliver a new curriculum. Doll (1982) points out that supervisors have three major tasks:

Assessing the entire faculty/school in determining the purpose of education and monitoring professionals' actions to ensure that these purposes are adhered to in program delivery; providing democratic instructional leadership; and maintaining open channels of communication within the school organization and between the school and the community.

In addition to the above assertion, Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) indicate that supervisors can carry out in numerous ways: classroom observation, demonstration teaching, supervisor-teacher conferences, and staff development meetings. In this case, if supervisors are effective, the teachers within the system will likely feel committed to and comfortable with the new program being implemented.

Hence, teachers will be satisfied, and thus the organization will run smoothly. The role of supervision is to ensure curriculum implementation, provide direct technical support and on-the-job training to teachers, and conduct program evaluation, monitoring, and

coordination in a way that contributes to the improvement of learning quality (MoE, 2012). Thus, SCRC supervisors and teachers have also made immense contributions to the effective implementation of the curriculum. These are MoE (2002, pp. 28-29):

Offering professional support to teachers bolsters the teaching-learning process; supervising and giving training to enhance the teaching capacity of teachers; and ensuring that the disciplines required by the teaching-learning process and professional ethics are maintained thoroughly.

The SCRCs are working with the school principals, teachers, students, and communities at large. Structurally, they are seen as one of the school's management bodies, and they do not have separate offices like WEOs. They make every decision on the curriculum implementation process in collaboration with other school management bodies so that they are at the point of curriculum implementation in particular to meet the needs of the curriculum users. They have to be held accountable for the less-than-demanding implementation of the curriculum.

2.3.4.2 Parent-Teacher Associations' Accountability

Efficient and effective management of schools should be entirely internal or just left to school management bodies. For a school to be able to do well in every ramification, inputs from internal and external resources have to be thoroughly considered and implemented. One of those useful resources is Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs). According to Onderi and Makori (2013), PTAs provide a link through which parents and the rest of the community assume a partnership responsibility and, in that way, participate in the education of their children.

However, scholars argue that the PTAs are mainly concerned with issues related to school construction activities, school facilities, and the management of funds (Galabawa & Agu, 2001). On the other hand, Mabeba and Prinsloo (2000) argue that PTAs can assess the school's rules and values to make sure they are clearly stated and can be understood by the students. They should also ensure all students are treated fairly and without personal preferences or prejudice. Students should be encouraged by PTAs to ask questions and be counseled when they have problems or when make mistakes. However, many parents or PTA officials have no time to go to school and follow up on this, leaving all the above-mentioned activities to teachers.

Across several countries in the world, PTAs play several roles and responsibilities in schools (Onderi & Makori, 2013). For instance, in the USA, Lin (2010) reports that PTAs involve parents in classroom decisions, promoting communication, social events, fundraising, and lobbying the state and national legislature on behalf of the students. In Hong Kong, Chan (1995) noted that:

PTAs provide a means for parents and teachers to work together, a channel to articulate their needs, and a forum for the exchange of educational views. An urge for the school to make a parent policy, an opportunity for them to participate in the educational process of their children, a means to pool the parents' strength in supporting the school's development, and a network for the parents to meet and exchange views on the education of their children, among many other positive considerations.

In Kenya, PTAs are involved in monitoring the implementation of school programs and education services and mobilizing additional resources. PTAs have the following duties and responsibilities concerning the front-line curriculum implementers, and they would be accountable to the parent-teacher collective for their responsibilities MoE (2002, p. 25):

They ensure that teachers properly execute their teaching responsibilities; advise and correct those teachers who failed to discharge their duties and responsibilities properly; refer the principals who could not be contacted through advice along with a punishment proposal; ensure that teachers are teaching in the interest, demand, and rights of their students; make sure that programs of the schools are properly implemented according to the schedule; provide the necessary support for the implementation of the curriculum, and conduct teachers' performance evaluation.

Yet their disciplinary roles are discussed in the conclusion section of this study. By and large, PTAs are powerful organizations affiliated with many schools across the country. It plays an integral role in how schools function. As local and national organizations of parents and teachers work together to improve the quality of teaching-learning at a grassroots level, they play an integral role in how schools function for academic events.

2.3.4.3 School Principals' Accountability

According to MoE (2002), as one of the principals' obligations, they must carry out their activities in a transparent and accountable manner. They will be accountable to WEOs' C

and I experts according to their responsibilities. Because of this, school principals play an important role in integrating the efforts of teachers, staff members, students, and parents to achieve the desired objectives of education and facilitate the overall aspects of the teaching-learning process, with many duties. One of the duties of principals is to ensure that educational activity satisfies the demands of the local people (MoE, 2002).

Thus, they are also accountable for the implementation of the curriculum to meet the needs of the curriculum users. Therefore, as the main body of curriculum implementers of the schools, principals are accountable to WEOs' C and I experts or REB curriculum developers and curriculum users. Similarly, they are also key figures around whom much of the school's activities revolve, to a great extent determining the school's success or failure when the curriculum is implemented. Principals have many responsibilities, such as instructional leaders, supervisors, and creators of a favorable school environment. In this case, the principal, as an instructional leader, should lead the implementation of the curriculum.

According to Hoy and Miskel (2008), instructional leadership encompasses those actions the principal takes and delegates to others to promote growth in student learning. The instructional leadership of a principal has a positive and direct effect on student achievement. The purpose of the principal's instructional leadership role is to facilitate effective teaching and learning. He/she should organize effective instructional programs, create a positive climate, exercise effective management behavior, and overcome the constraints of the community or handle input from the community effectively.

According to Matrin (1990), the principal must be able to maintain good human relations, be able to identify people's potential, and maintain good interpersonal communication skills. Principals must also show their teachers that they have enough confidence in them to give them the freedom to plan their learning programs and to make independent decisions. Levine (1987) also confirms this point of view by saying that one of the school principal's main objectives should be to democratize schools. This involves respecting every individual and treating them with dignity so that the growth and development of the people on whom they rely will take place.

The principal also must ensure that there are opportunities for consultation in decision-making so that every teacher's expertise will be utilized, and that, if necessary, even restructuring of systems will take place. He further says that to be part of a democratic society would require the development of teachers' skills, attitudes, and responsibilities, so that monitoring and support is an in-class support system designed to assist the teacher. Donmoyer and Wagstaff (1990) suggest that, for this to work, it must be frequent and continuous. Principals should have time set aside for assisting teachers who experience problems in the implementation of the curriculum.

Furthermore, Sergiovanni et al. (1993) see the principal's role of monitoring and support as a leadership function that involves professional observation of teaching and learning events and ensures the improvement of the teacher's teaching abilities with a view to professional development. They also suggest that the improvement of curriculum implementation must start with the teacher. Teachers should not be alarmed if the principal expresses an interest in what they are doing in the classroom.

In general, it is often said that a school is as good as its principal. Indeed, school principals have an important role to fulfill in the provision of education. Their chief mandate is to drive the school curriculum such that students' achievement is realized through good teaching (MoE, 2002). Theirs is a supervisory role that demands a special relationship between them, the teachers, students, and parents, if stellar academic results are to be achieved. The quality of the interpersonal relationship determines how well the principal can motivate followers (Smith, 2002).

School principals who always remember that they are accountable for the academic achievement of students will establish a supportive culture of participatory decision-making that encourages intellectual stimulation and holds high-performance expectations (Sillins, 2002; Sushila, 2004). Thus, school principals have been given the power and responsibility to encourage teachers to enhance their efficiency, address ethical problems on the part of teachers and students, facilitate a favorable situation for the teaching-learning process, and appropriately manage the overall educational activities in the schools (MoE, 2002).

According to Spady and Marshall (1991), principals should acknowledge teachers for exemplary teaching and encourage them to share their expertise with others. They should identify quality teaching and provide timely feedback that promotes professional growth. Similarly, principals have to avoid educational wastage and take disciplinary measures against teachers and staff members who do not carry out their respective responsibilities for implementing the curriculum (MoE, 2002).

2.3.4.4 Teachers' Accountability

Accountability does not easily rest with single actors. For instance, schools may be responsible for providing supportive learning environments, but to deliver on this, they rely on governments providing resources, teachers respecting professional norms, and students behaving appropriately. Furthermore, individuals or institutions are obliged, based on a legal, political, social, or moral justification, to provide an account of how they meet clearly defined responsibilities (UNESCO, 2017). They are accountable to immediate school management bodies and the government that hires them, WEOs' C and I experts, and REB curriculum developers, and conversely, they are accountable to curriculum users (MoE, 2002).

Professionally, teachers are, on the other hand, the icons of front-line school curriculum implementers. As a result, conceptions and practices of accountability in education are founded on the idea that the teacher is accountable to the student, the parent, and the larger community. This is because teachers' main responsibility is to ensure high-quality instruction. In practice, good teaching is a complex and demanding task. Teachers need to manage and convey curriculum, ensure engagement and learning, and adapt instruction to student needs and changing classroom dynamics (UNESCO, 2017). However, as Ranson (2003) has argued, the term can be used to connote relations of being held to account and giving an account; the former implies coercion between the accountable person and the agencies that hold them to account, whereas the practice of giving an account emphasizes taking responsibility for narrating and justifying one's actions.

Teachers in schools may experience both senses of accountability in their everyday work: for example, being held to account by SMBs for their performance while giving accounts to students and parents regarding their pedagogy, curriculum, or assessment. Levitt et al. (2008) describe teachers' accountability to parents as a form of ethical or moral accountability. Teachers are said to have a commitment towards students and their parents, and other stakeholders, to act in the best interests of students to facilitate their effective learning and development. Parents see accountability as a collaborative relationship between themselves and their teachers, which resonates with the comment of (Levitt et al., 2008) that accountability relationships are increasingly horizontal, rather than of the vertical superior/subordinate type. Lewis and Naidoo (2006) observe that teachers could be afraid that parents may be aware of their shortcomings in teaching.

Hence, Clase et al. (2007) state that the success of any country's education system is dependent to a great extent on the mutual trust and collaboration existing between all partners. To this end, teachers and parents are partners in the education of children. As a result, teachers must work well with parents and report to them on how they carry out their responsibilities, and teachers must also be accountable to parents for their actions that affect teaching and learning in schools.

On the other hand, teachers are also accountable to the government through the relevant educational structures. Their accountability is two-way. The government makes available the resources and pays teachers so that they can produce the results. So the teachers are accountable to the government as employers, and the employer is accountable to the employee insofar as making sure that conditions are put in place to ensure that the teachers implement the curriculum. Before teachers are held accountable for what happens in schools, they need to be supported (Barrett, 2005).

Teachers have to have properly participated in staff development training on curriculum implementation practices if they are to be held accountable. Proper and meaningful interpretation and implementation of the curriculum rest on the quality of the teacher. Teachers bridge the gap between the planned curriculum as espoused in curriculum policy documents and the actual curriculum as practiced in actual teaching and learning. It is, therefore, important that teachers are properly equipped with knowledge, skills, and values to implement the curriculum. Maphosa et al. (2007) observe that school staff development meetings should also be an integral part of school curriculum implementation plans.

Further, Maphosa et al. (2007) indicate that it would be impossible to hold teachers accountable for students' engagement in the curriculum when they operate without basic resources such as textbooks. However, where resources are provided, teachers have to be accountable. The teacher considers teaching to be more than just a job. Teachers are hired to teach. They should be in school every day to teach. Professional accountability is, in this case, important for teachers. Therefore, they have to be committed to their teaching and understand teaching holistically as involving the imparting of the requisite knowledge, skills, and values that enable learners to fit and function effectively in society. Teachers often adapt curricula based on their students' needs, which requires support from administrators to ensure alignment with educational standards.

In this regard, various scholars stress that a lot is expected of teachers in their commitment to duty, and a sense of accountability to learners, parents, and school authorities will ensure that teachers perform well. But, some of the indicators of teacher commitment include these, among others (Maphosa et al., 2007). Lethoko et al. (2001) point out a lack of a culture of teaching and learning in most public schools, for instance, in South Africa, where the school system is faced with a lot of challenges, a lack of professionalism among teachers being one of them. Maphosa et al. (2007) further observe that teacher absenteeism results in a plethora of challenges in the school and negatively affects learning. In advance, Chapman (1994) observes that the main reason why teachers are often absent from school is a lack of accountability and states that because classroom teaching occurs in relative isolation from central, regional, and even district authority, few people outside the school or community know much about the diligence with which individual teachers approach their work.

Teachers' commitment should be drawn from the loyalty to the children or community to which they are assigned (Chapman, 1994). Attending school and teaching should not be based on fear of sanctions imposed by authorities, but on a commitment to serve through a good sense of accountability. The position taken in this study is that accountability can be beneficial when these different senses of accountability are held in the particular balance demanded by specific contexts. Teachers should perform the following: always being available to teach; using varied and learner-engaging methodologies; eagerness to see students succeed; assisting all learners, including those with special needs; improvement where there is a lack of resources; sacrificing time and working outside of working hours; engaging students in both curricular and co-curricular issues; working with parents and appraising them on learners' progress; resolving conflicts between and among students; being a role model (Chapman, 1994).

However, it can (and often has) become toxic in situations where the balance is lost, and where coercive relations of holding educators to account, often concerning narrow sets of performance data, overwhelm the professional type of accountability that involves teachers explaining and justifying their practice (Lingard et al., 2017). Notably, if an employee or subordinate works under the influence of many bosses or superiors, he or she is subjected to a state of confusion, dilemma, anarchy, and disorder (De Hoyos et al., 2017). This situation also affects the effectiveness of schools' implementation of the curriculum.

Consequently, the literature highlights several benefits of ensuring the unity of command in organizations, including fostering a better relationship among superiors and subordinates; providing clear and well-organized authority, responsibility, and accountability; reducing and/or avoiding duplication of work; providing prompt or quick decision-making; and enhancing coordination and teamwork, boosting workers' morale and positive attitude, and ultimately leading to higher productivity (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). To summarize this sub-section, critiques of the 2004 WDR have questioned the dichotomous presentation of seemingly mutually exclusive pathways. The short route and the long route to accountability are intertwined and should not be viewed in isolation (Dewachter et al., 2018).

The short route "needs the long route" of responsive elected authorities to work (Fox, 2015, p. 347). And indeed, "accountability approaches are effective in some contexts, and some aspects of education may be detrimental in others" (UNESCO, 2017, p. 7). Thus, adopting appropriate complementary approaches leads to the best practices (Dewachter et al., 2018) for curriculum implementation. Teachers are also accountable to the school management bodies by ensuring effective teaching-learning, properly using educational materials, and encouraging students to do so (MoE, 2002). Thus, in the schooling system, teachers' commitment and dedication to their profession have paramount importance in bringing about much-needed behavioral change in students.

They have to be fully aware of their curriculum users and should be responsive to them on effective components of curriculum implementation (content and skills to be taught, evidence-based intervention, instructional arrangements, classroom management procedures, and evaluation progress). Hence, no matter how structured the curriculum or how tightly managed the school day is, the interactions between students and teachers are, to a large extent, the result of the individual diligence, professionalism, and commitment of teachers. In any case, the most detailed accountability processes cannot ensure high-quality instruction without high levels of teacher commitment to and engagement in the process. High levels of teacher dissatisfaction with traditional accountability processes are reflected in widespread reports of teacher stress, anxiety, and resentment, sometimes inaccurately reported as an unwillingness of teachers to be accountable at all (Reeves, 2004).

2.4 Summary

In summary, the implementation of the curriculum is an interlocking set of statutory powers and duties and non-statutory responsibilities. It can work effectively and develop creatively only if education stakeholders grasp their responsibilities and act accordingly, and this would be possible if curriculum users are fully informed and actively involved in holding curriculum developers, curriculum and instructional experts, and curriculum implementers accountable. Curriculum implementation will collapse if curriculum users simply wait to be told what to do or do only what they are told. Equally, an exercise of voice and power accountability relationship by curriculum users should be fruitful and free from harm. This can be ensured not by regulation but rather through clear accountability. The underlying premise is that teachers are not the only entities accountable for implementing a curriculum, and the roles of the primary education system's structural stakeholders are crucial in ensuring that the curriculum is carried out in a way that meets the demands of curriculum users.

2.5 Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study is premised on systems thinking theory and its emphasis on the connection between guidelines, processes, and practices. A system can be defined as an entity that is a coherent whole (Ng et al., 2009), such that a boundary is perceived around it to distinguish internal and external elements and to identify input and output relating to and emerging from the entity. Systems theory, by (Lai & Huili Lin, 2017), alludes to a two-pronged approach to systems. As a result, it mainly focuses on the interactions and connections within the organization (the school). Since the learning organization operates in a specific context, this necessitates maintaining a balance that results from interactions between internal and external system components. Systems theory is hence a theoretical perspective that analyzes a phenomenon as a whole and not as simply the sum of elementary parts. The focus is on the interactions and relationships between parts to understand an entity's organization, functioning, and outcomes.

Conceptualizing systems theory may be confined to how the organizational branches or inputs perform. This can exist in the school system due to its functioning through the interrelationships among everybody, every physical matter within its structure, and the energy derived from external

forces. Education systems are made up of elements that include people acting in specific roles, like teachers, students, and parents; organizations, like schools and ministries; and things like classrooms and teaching materials. Since systems are based on interdependence among their components, if one of the components does not perform, the whole system fails to implement curriculum through accountability relationships (Mele et al., 2010).

The theory of systems thinking has greatly influenced how one can understand and change organizations (McNamara, 2017). According to the author, systems thinking is a way of helping a person to view systems from a broad perspective that includes seeing overall structures, patterns, and cycles in systems, rather than seeing only specific events in the system. The application of the system theory is referred to as system analysis, and system thinking forms a major component. When you view a system from a broad perspective, it helps you to identify the major causes of issues in the organization to know the best way to address the issues. The broad view or perspective can help consultants identify solutions to tackle the various problems in the system, provided the consultant focuses on the whole system.

In recent years, the authors have been investigating some important applications of systems thinking in school settings (Shaked & Schechter, 2014). A system is an interconnected set of elements that is coherently organized in a way that achieves something” (Meadows, 2008, p. 11). The curriculum implementation process is viewed as communication and control taking place between the components of a system. Primary education systems are made up of elements that include people acting in specific roles, like teachers, students, and parents; organizations like schools, WEOs, and REB; and things like classrooms and teaching materials.

The primary school system is interconnected in terms of the functions it performs, its main stakeholders, the interrelationships or flows of information, accountability, or resources among sub-systems, or the levels at which various education stakeholders operate (Mansoor & Williams, 2018). Since systems are based on interdependence among their components, if one of the components does not perform, the whole system fails (Mele et al., 2010). Through systems thinking in primary education (Pritchett, 2015; Spivack, 2021), it can be easy to grasp the connection between feedback relationships and emergent properties of tangible systems, like ocean life, but it can be harder to see these connections in social systems like education.

This is why developing a framework for studying education systems that identifies the elements, relationships between them, and resulting system functions is so helpful. These elements interact with each other via relationships: the parents send their children to school, the teachers implement the curriculum, the teachers are employed by the REB, the school is managed by SMBs, and curriculum implementation in the school is monitored by WEOs and REBs. As with the economy, the functions are revealed by the results of the interactions among the elements, but they might include the implementation of school curricula.

Systems thinking can enable the design and implementation of school curricula from a holistic perspective. Emphasizing the importance of the whole and the interdependence of its parts, systems thinking assists in grasping the big picture both in terms of the curriculum's numerous components and in terms of how that particular curriculum may interrelate with myriad other school practices and subjects. From the systems thinking perspective, systemic coordination of curriculum with various disciplinary contents, instruction and assessment practices, and policy issues is vital to raising student achievement levels. This is because such coordination results in clear and consistent expectations for teaching and learning, addressing the changing needs of students and teachers (Shaked & Schechter, 2019).

The accountability relationship with education system reform, curriculum, and its implementation reform was introduced as a theory of change with education stakeholders' duties and responsibilities in post-1991 Ethiopia to address changes in curriculum implementation. The two-way principal-agent accountability relationships of the primary education system play a great role in successful curriculum implementation. Applying systems theory to curriculum implementation allows researchers to view schools not as isolated units but as parts of a broader educational system influenced by national policy, regional education offices, community expectations, and global education goals (Fullan, 2007).

In the Ethiopian context, where decentralization and educational reform have been key strategies (MoE, 2005), systems theory provides a valuable lens to explore how accountability mechanisms at different levels (regional, Woreda, and school) shape and are shaped by the processes of curriculum implementation. Particularly, systems theory highlights the feedback loops that exist within education systems—mechanisms through which performance is monitored and adjusted. In the case of curriculum implementation, these include teacher supervision, school inspections,

continuous professional development, and standardized assessments. The effectiveness of these accountability processes depends not only on policy directives but also on how they are interpreted and enacted by various stakeholders (Elmore, 2004).

Hence, system theory can be applied to curriculum implementation by providing a framework for a holistic approach to investigate how education stakeholders fulfill their responsibility for the curriculum to be implemented. The implication is that, despite rigorous curriculum and enabling environments, accountability in the primary school system is the most important driving force for successful curriculum implementation. Hence, it is argued that effective implementation of the curriculum will be achieved by linking the internal accountability relationships (power and management) to the external accountability relationships (voice, politics, and compact) of the primary education system in a continuous and shared accountability system. Indeed, Macbeath (2008) advanced the notion of shared accountability, and it is in this frame that I find systems thinking relevant in arguing for shared accountability between education stakeholders such as curriculum users, school curriculum implementers, WEOs, and REB (Brundrett and Rhodes 2011).

2.6 Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework of this study is informed by the 2004 World Development Report's accountability framework, which explains the relationships between policy developers or curriculum developers, end-users, and service providers (WDR, 2004). Service providers are adopted and contextualized as curriculum implementers, and end-users are curriculum users (students and parents). Arguably, this accountability framework is the most influential and advanced, and emphasizes the importance of public services responding to the demands of local end-users and advocating for greater decentralization and control, and more accountability (WDR, 2003). It is also a useful starting point for identifying the entry points for influencing the quality, efficiency, and responsiveness of school curriculum implementation.

It is the detailed relationships between three actors: clients, providers, and policymakers or developers (Lateef, 2016; Pritchett, 2015; WDR, 2004). In the context of this study, those actors are curriculum users as clients; curriculum implementers (SMBs and teachers) as providers; REB curriculum developers or WEOs' C and I experts as curriculum developers or experts. The framework has two routes. The first one is the long route, which includes influencing curriculum

developers or WEOs' C and I experts, who would then have oversight authority over curriculum implementers through voices and compact accountability relationships.

Under the long route, the first accountability relationship is a voice that connects curriculum users and curriculum developers (Di Gropello, 2004; Pritchett, 2015; WDR, 2004). Because of the decentralized primary education system stated in the guidelines (MoE, 2002), I have to deconstruct and re-conceptualize the framework that curriculum users must use either double or alternative voices in addressing their concerns about the implementation of curriculum: the first voice relationship between curriculum users and REB's curriculum developers (V1) and the second voice relationships between curriculum-users and nearest WEOs' C and I experts as (V2). In this case, curriculum users may use their voices through various mechanisms like media, face-to-face communication, and voting. This leads REB and WEOs to hear the voices and respond to the concerns of the curriculum users or the voters' concerns about issues related to school curriculum implementation.

The second long-route accountability relationship is compact (WDR, 2004), which in the context of this study connects both REB curriculum developers and WEOs' C and I experts with curriculum implementers. This relationship is based on the voices they have already heard and their duties and responsibilities. The compact accountability relationship highlights the significance of public school curriculum implementation and advocacy for increased control and accountability (MoE, 2002; WDR, 2004), and is arguably the most influential and advanced. On the other side, there is a continuum of accountability that runs from strong to weak. A strong, compact accountability relationship would have external actors with significant influence, transparent, high-quality communications, and reasonable judgment. A weak, compact accountability relationship, on the other hand, would result in poor communication, poor outside influence, frequent ambiguity, and bad decision-making (O'Loughlin, 1990). This results in weak implementation of the curriculum. However, according to Gonzalez and Firestone (2013), subordinate employees are accountable for adhering to work rules and directives, with rules determining relationships and accounting for subordinates or routine responsibilities. Compliance with rules, supervision, and rewards or punishment are key concepts in accountability measures.

In the context of this research, in Ethiopia, the shared responsibility for curriculum implementation was pronounced by recognizing decentralized educational management. Through decentralization

by devolution, stakeholders would address educational problems in their localities; Woredas have been empowered to carry out the majority of educational activities, including the implementation of the curriculum (MoE, 2002). Consequently, REB's curriculum developers and WEOs' C and I experts have oversight authority over school curriculum implementers to improve the implementation of the curriculum (MoE, 2002). For this reason, I used double compact relationships: the first long route compact between REB's curriculum developers and curriculum implementers (C1), and the second compact between WEOs' C and I experts and curriculum implementers (C2). This accountability relationship can be verified through information (formal reporting, monitoring, assessment, and evaluation).

The short route was considered preferable as it gave direct authority to curriculum users, allowing them to exercise their power over curriculum implementers (Di Gropello, 2004; Lateef, 2016; WDR, 2004). This route has two accountability relationships: curriculum users' power and management. In this case, curriculum users' power refers to the direct influence of curriculum users over curriculum implementers for better implementation of the curriculum. Curriculum users' power can exert influence through participation in the implementation of the curriculum; for example, by joining SMBs (supervisors, PTAs, and school principals), they can play a major role in strengthening the implementation of the curriculum by demanding effective engagement in the curriculum (MoE, 2002).

Fourth is the management relationship, which is defined as the relationship that connects school curriculum implementers and frontline implementers (Di Gropello, 2004; Pritchett, 2015). Carnoy et al. (2003) indicate that management or internal accountability relationships operate at the level of personal responsibility that teachers have for students in their classrooms. This relationship is arguably the most influential and advanced, emphasizing the importance of public school curriculum implementation by connecting SMBs and teachers to improve curriculum implementation (Pritchett, 2015; WDR, 2004). In particular, in this study, based on the information from curriculum users about the implementation of the curriculum and from monitoring progress, SMBs must use accountability elements/mechanisms and management accountability relationships to respond to the curriculum users' concerns.

Moreover, curriculum users are expected to play two major roles in strengthening the implementation of the curriculum: demanding meaningful implementation of the curriculum and

monitoring implementers' performance to achieve the desired goal. Generally, the short route and the long route to accountability are intertwined and should not be viewed in isolation (Dewachter et al., 2018). Pritchett (2015). For this study, this framework is used because I argue that the system of education to provide instructional services works when there is an adequate flow of accountability among education stakeholders (curriculum users, curriculum developers, curriculum and instructional experts, and curriculum implementers).

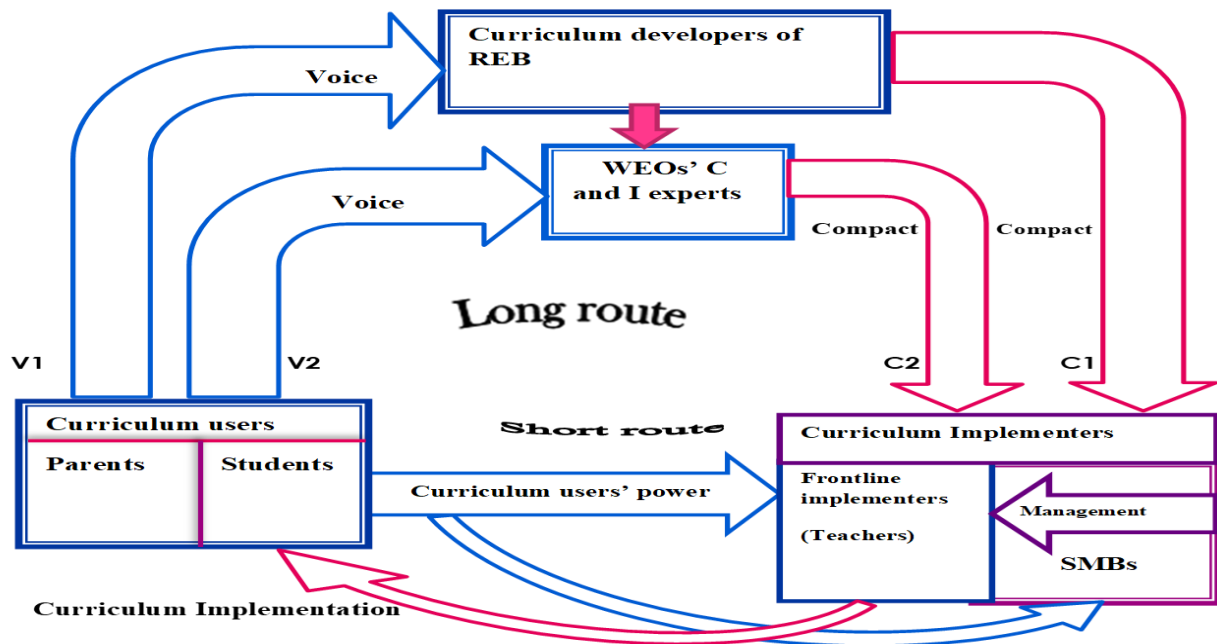


Figure 1: Re Conceptualized Accountability Relationships for the Implementation of the Curriculum (adopted from WDR, 2004, Pritchett, 2015, and Di Gropello, 2004)

Effective implementation of the curriculum needs the involvement of stakeholders from multiple education structures organized in a closed accountability system to minimize blame. The system looks like blood circulation (closed loop) and is viewed as a new wave of educational accountability. The framework is useful for investigating accountability relationships among education stakeholders for curriculum implementation in Ethiopian primary schools. The purpose of the framework is to ensure that curriculum implementation is not just a policy mandate but a shared responsibility with feedback loops. It is argued that weaknesses in any aspect of the accountability relationship between these stakeholders in a closed education system can cause failure to translate a written curriculum into classroom practices and ensure effective feedback.

When applied to curriculum implementation in primary schools in Ethiopia, this framework highlights the roles, responsibilities, and relationships among various actors involved in the education system. The assumption is that, for example, strengthening accountability relationships in primary schools leads to curriculum users' voice (towards curriculum developers or curriculum and instructional experts) and power (towards curriculum implementers) being important dimensions in creating expected behaviors in the implementation of the curriculum. The framework will serve as an effective solution for better changes in curriculum implementation. In other words, a balance between a long route and a short route to accountability is required to generate a positive impact on curriculum implementation. Hence, this conceptual framework has implications for unmasking the voices and powers of curriculum users for adequate implementation of the curriculum in a decentralized education system of Ethiopian primary schools.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces the methodological choices of this study. To be able to conduct research, certain methodological decisions have to be made before and during the research. The same phenomenon can be approached from various points of view, and the purpose of this section is to introduce and explain the approach chosen for this study. The study adopts an interpretive/constructivist approach using qualitative research strategies. The chapter concentrates on the philosophical underpinning, research method and design, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, procedures and analysis, trustworthiness, validity, reliability, and ethical issues of the research.

3.1 Context of the Study

In the early 1990s, Ethiopia introduced accountability, decentralization, and curriculum changes and their implementation (MoE, 1994, 2002, 2005). As stated in Chapter One, the Ethiopian education system, the old guidelines for school organization and management, community participation, and financial management (MoE, 2002) empowered curriculum users to participate and make decisions on issues related to curriculum implementation. Definitely, without taking responsibility for the curriculum, students will be locked into lives of poverty and exclusion, and the children who societies fail the most are those most in need of a good education to succeed in life. Indeed, schools without effective curriculum implementation are a testable waste of precious sources of human capital. Conditions for accountability and curriculum implementation are almost always much worse in developing countries like Ethiopia.

This study is the first of its kind to examine the relationship of accountability for curriculum implementation in the East Wollega Zone Administration. East Wollega Zone is one of the zones of central Oromia, the regional state of Ethiopia. It is located in the northwestern part of Ethiopia. More specifically, it is located in the western part of Oromia, a national state. The main town in East Wollega is Nekemte. The town is about 328 kilometers from Addis Ababa on a highway to Asossa. East Wollega Zone is surrounded by West Wollega Zone and the Benishangul Gumuz region in the western part, Jimma and Ilu Aba Bora in the southern part, West Shewa and Horro Guduru Zones in the eastern part, and the Amhara region in the northern part.

Geographically, the zone extends from 9070–1000 degrees north latitude and 37–380 degrees east longitude. The zone is divided into 18 Woredas with 644 respective primary schools. At the time of data collection, more than 300 primary schools were closed due to the instability of the zone. The zone has 8751 teachers, 644 SPs, 123 supervisors, and 2789737 students. Primary education contains grades one through eight, and its medium of instruction is Afaan Oromoo.

3.2 Philosophical Assumptions of the Study

This section discusses my philosophical perspective as an interpretivist, which informs the choice of research methodology and the methods and strategies adopted to collect empirical data. The interpretive assumption can also be called the constructivist paradigm since it is rooted in the fact that realities are multiple and socially constructed. The adoption of the interpretive approach is based on my philosophical stance that knowledge is socially constructed and must be interpreted and explained from the perspective of social actors (Denzin, 2001; Flick, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

Some researchers have argued that the fundamental goal of any investigation is to answer questions and that the essence of research is to aid in the discovery of intellectual discoveries capable of contributing to, and in some cases transforming, knowledge (Ryan, 2002). Other researchers argue that the answers to research questions are influenced by factors such as the composition and process of creating acceptable knowledge and the nature of reality (Flick, 2013; Johnson & Duberley, 2000). It is against this backdrop that some researchers encourage the choice of research strategies based on their philosophical commitment (Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

3.2.1. Ontology and Epistemology

The behavior and nature of society and the constitution of warranted knowledge have been a source of worry for researchers and have resulted in different philosophical and methodological choices (Duberley et al., 2012; Punch, 2013). A scan through the evolution of academic research dispositions (paradigms) reveals that paradigms are differentiated by the answers they provide to questions and suggests that the two major ways of thinking about research philosophies are ontology and epistemology (Creswell, 2015; Saunders, 2009). The fundamental principle of ontology is based on the question of what constitutes reality and how it is captured (Dobson &

Love, 2004; Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Many ontological positions have been adduced in the literature, but the two extremes are positivism and interpretivism (Blaikie, 2000; Punch, 2013).

3.2.1.1 Positivism

I have to highlight the nature of the positivist assumption and why it was rejected for use in this study. The positivist paradigm generally uses quantitative methods and is deductive (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011). The positivist ontology holds that reality exists independently of social actors or human cognition and that reality resides in the minds of people (Johnson et al., 2006). The positivist perceives the role of research as the provision of universal theories or laws about the world (Gray, 2021; Ryan, 2002). Positivism emphasizes the involuntary response of social actors to external stimuli and the application of nomothetic methodology to construct theory and predict the behavior of social actors while neglecting the subjective behavior of social actors. The epistemological view of the positivist is that knowledge is warranted if it is directly observable (Pather & Remenyi, 2005).

Bell and Bryman (2007) reveal that the epistemological philosophy of positivism is akin to the position of natural scientists who are obsessed with facts, and only see acceptable knowledge (reality) as represented by objects that are considered to be real with a separate existence from that of the researcher (Archer et al., 2013; Bhaskar, 2013). Epistemologically, the positivist believes that truth exists and can be unraveled systematically and scientifically (Bhaskar, 2013; Cassell & Symon, 1994). The positivist epistemologically believes that the data collected must be less open to bias and more objective. Remenyi et al. (1998) also explain that positivists mostly use existing theories to develop hypotheses that can be tested to confirm, refute, or develop new theories using statistical analysis. Positivist epistemologists use highly structured methodological processes in non-interactive environments to facilitate replication (Creswell, 2012; John & Phil, 2002). I believe that the reality about the accountability relationship for curriculum implementation in the primary education system exists in the minds of educational and social actors, and it requires me to grasp the subjective meaning of social action. Hence, I rejected the positivist epistemological stance.

3.2.1.2 Constructivism/Interpretivism

Based on ontology, interpretivists believe that reality is socially constructed and that one cannot gain access to the external world, whether it exists or not (Holloway and Wheeler, 2013). However, the epistemological position of the interpretivist is that researchers could understand the world better by conducting research among people rather than objects in their roles as social actors, and by adopting an empathetic stance (Potter, 2013). I adopted an interpretive philosophical stance in this study for justified reasons. In this case, I argue that the reality of accountability relationships for curriculum implementation exists in the minds of the active players in the primary education system.

As a result, knowledge about the accountability for curriculum implementation could be socially constructed from the experiences and expectations of actors (educational stakeholders in the form of principal-agent relationship) in an interpretive manner. Again, I thought that accountability for curriculum implementation in the primary education system cannot be solved from a positivist standpoint unless the importance of social opinions is recognized. In this regard, I considered myself a part of the wider social world and built relationships with the respondents to understand the accountability relationship among the education stakeholders for primary school curriculum implementation.

This stance allows me to see the subjective point of view of respondents based on the analysis of the empirical evidence. The adoption of an interpretivist perspective permitted me to analyze, interpret, and report exactly the responses and experiences of actors from their perspectives. Hence, the study sought to interpret the views of the actors in the primary school educational structural organizations that affect the environment of accountability relationships and mechanisms, and the implementation of the curriculum. Indeed, the interpretive perspective has been widely used and continues to be used in accountability research (Armstrong, 2008; Baxter & Chua, 2003; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Ryan, 2002).

3.3 Research Methodology

The quantitative research strategy is deductive and is useful in testing theory, whilst the qualitative research strategy is suitable for generating theory and is, as such, inductive (Bryman, 2004;

Cresswell, 2012; Glaser, 2009). Epistemologically, quantitative research strategies follow those of the natural sciences, whereas qualitative research strategies follow interpretivism and constructivism (Bryman, 2012; Holloway, 2013). Ontologically, qualitative and quantitative research strategies are different. While the ontological perspective of the quantitative research strategy follows objectivism, the qualitative research strategy follows constructionism and seeks to build reality mostly from social interactions (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

According to various scholars, interpretivists use qualitative methods to understand social phenomena directly from the perspectives of school actors (Cavaye, 1996; Miles, 2013; Punch, 2013). The subjective aspect of accountability reflects one's genuine desire to be accountable for one's work performance and outcomes, including the wish to follow accountability guidelines. Maree (2010) thinks that qualitative research typically studies people or systems by interacting with and observing the participants in their natural environment and focusing on their meaning and interpretation. As a result, several scholars have emphasized the importance of investigating the subjective experience of accountability (Aalinejad, 2022; Queirós et al., 2017), which helped me to address the research question. Marsh (2007) also adds that questionnaires have been used in several studies, although they rely on self-reported data, so doubt can arise over the authenticity of the responses for the implementation of classroom curriculum practices through accountability relationships.

Thus, a qualitative research strategy was adopted for this research because I desired to view accountability relationships for curriculum implementation in primary school systems as existing in the minds of education stakeholders within the system and as best understood when interpreted from their perspective. Furthermore, the qualitative approach's adaptability allows me to modify the research process as and when necessary to account for any useful new developments that may emerge. The adoption of qualitative research for this study was grounded in the fact that it would allow me to explore the accountability relationships for implementing curriculum in the primary school education system. Because quantitative research predominantly emphasizes the technical issues that neglect the wider primary education system stakeholders' sophisticated views, motives, and opinions, it was not suitable for this research, as it could not have accorded me the opportunity to obtain some of the sensitive and rich information required for this study.

3.4 Research Design

Interpretive researchers implement a methodological design that allows them to conduct a study in its natural setting. Thus, concerning this study, an interpretive case study approach was employed. This approach assumes that accountability for curriculum implementation is socially constructed; hence, it is prudent for me to describe the existing accountability relationship for the implementation of curriculum and explain why such systems exist from the perspective of the affected primary education system actors. It is important to note that case study techniques are suitable because of their ability to accurately represent the views of respondents under investigation for effective reconstruction (May, 2011; Merriam, 2014; Yin, 2011). The technique is suitable in situations where the variables of interest are many and the researcher is unsure of the relevant variables (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2012). It is also useful when multiple sources of evidence are required to complement each other for a better understanding of events (Crowe et al., 2011; Silverman, 2021; Stake, 2013; Yin, 2015).

Another reason for the adoption of a case study was because of its superior contextual analysis (Fowler, 2013). Case study investigations normally occur within the natural and social settings of respondents, which allows researchers to gain a detailed understanding of phenomena and experience reality from the perspective of the researchers (Cresswell, 2012). This characteristic of case studies is in line with the epistemological stance of the social constructivists, who argue that reality is socially constructed and must be obtained through the eyes of social actors, ideally within their natural settings (Blaike, 2000; Grix, 2002; Potter, 2013; Punch, 2013). It provides researchers with a better understanding of systems, practices, procedures, and techniques used within specific organizational contexts (Yin, 2003).

Case-study research is considered inductive because each case offers insight into its natural context. Thus, multiple-case (holistic) design, Type 3 is particularly adopted to improve the reliability of the study, but it is not possible to identify multiple units of analysis when a more holistic approach can be taken (Yin, 2003). A holistic case study is a type of case study that focuses on a single unit of analysis, primary schools. A holistic case study aims to provide a comprehensive and detailed description and explanation of the case as a whole, without dividing it into subunits or subcases. That is the data collected from multiple primary schools, not to compare the findings,

but rather to form a holistic view. According to Yin (2015), there are two circumstances under which a case study design can be chosen: holistic and embedded levels. At the holistic level, it involves an organization (a single case), while at the embedded level, it involves more organizations at the same level (multiple cases). That is, the study's findings are not specific to individual schools but rather generalized to all elementary schools.

Because several examples appear to be more difficult to implement, but the resulting data can provide the findings in this study with higher confidence, multiple case studies were used instead of just one (Yin, 2015). When a more comprehensive strategy can be used, it is not possible to identify several units of analysis because a multiple case study technique is required (say, to increase the study's dependability). In this situation, I may utilize accountability for the implementation of curriculum as a solitary, comprehensive analytical unit, but I must consider several schools (many examples) across some constrained months. The objective of this design is to replicate the conclusion across numerous cases rather than expanding the sample size of primary schools.

3.5 Case Selection and Sampling Techniques

According to Guest et al. (2013), every successful research project must begin with planning the logistics of an interview because it is as important as recruiting the right participants. Thus, it takes more than having a place, time, and an appropriate person to conduct an interview. From another point of view, Creswell (2007a) says that one of the most important steps in the process of data collection is to find people or places to study, as well as to gain access to them so that participants will provide good data. According to him, gaining access to sites and individuals requires several steps, ranging from seeking permission from human subjects to ensuring participants' safety.

3.5.1 Case selection

Selecting a case for case study research involves careful consideration of various criteria that align with the research objectives while ensuring feasibility within broader theoretical frameworks. The East Wollega zone was purposefully selected because I am a resident of Nekemtee town, and I thought it would be convenient for me to repeatedly contact respondents to gather rich data. Moreover, the case study provides a detailed analysis of a real-world situation, allowing for an in-

depth understanding of complex issues, and hence, I have access to repeatedly observe the schools and how they implement the curriculum through accountability relationships. Choosing the zone may allow me to use data triangulation through multiple sources (e.g., interviews, documents, and observations) can enhance the validity of the findings. Finally, considering the practical aspects such as time, resources, and access to participants during data collection and after data collection for member checking is essential for me to select a Zone as a case. Indeed, member checking is of paramount importance for testing the emerging findings with the research participants, to increase the validity of the findings, which may take various forms in my study. It may involve, for example, regular contact with the participants throughout the period of the data collection and analysis, and verifying certain interpretations and themes resulting from the analysis of the data (Curtin & Fossey, 2007).

Due to the violence and fighting in the Woredas, only a few Woredas bordering Nekemte town are safe. Even the district education office had the right information and gave me directions to safe Woredas. As recommended by the Zone Education Office, three (3) Woredas were purposefully chosen for this study of 18 Woredas because they are relatively and partially peaceful and stable areas. The sampled Woredas are Guto Gida, Diga, and Wayu Tuka. Six primary schools, two from each Woreda, were also chosen using the same sampling technique. I chose schools with long experience and proven safety. Selecting those schools (cases) may provide access to experienced teachers, better educational experiences, and recorded documents that contribute significantly to providing rich data for the study.

3.5.1 Sampling Techniques

Creswell (2007a) thinks that in such a situation, one needs to find one or more individuals to study through purposeful sampling, and these individuals must be accessible, willing to provide information, and able to shed light on the specific phenomenon being explored. In addition to this contention, Creswell (2007a) explains that using sampling requires the inquirer to select individuals and sites for the study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon of the study. Purposeful sampling helped to ensure that the researchers would solicit volunteers who had the necessary experience or knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation (Gay et al., 2009). More meaningfully, Patton (2002) noted that this type of purposeful sampling can be powerful because it allows the researcher to detect

commonalities among heterogeneous settings. Any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared dimensions of a setting or phenomenon. Rural primary schools of East Wollega Zone are purposively selected for three reasons: For one, I believe that they often face more significant challenges in implementing curricula effectively, including limited resources, teacher shortages, lack of infrastructure, and less support from educational offices. These factors can impact accountability mechanisms in unique ways.

Secondly, since rural primary schools are located distant from WEOs, ZEOs, and REBs, I think that accountability mechanisms (including community involvement, reporting systems, and school inspections) may operate differently with less support or be less institutionalized there. Investigating how the accountability relationship is employed as a framework for system thinking may necessitate paying close attention in such a scenario. Thirdly, teachers, parents, and local authorities may see and enforce accountability differently in rural communities due to homogenous sociocultural norms. Purposive sampling, where certain characteristics are known to exist, is frequently necessary to comprehend these dynamics.

On the other hand, the selected participants consisted of those individuals who had particular characteristics or experiences that contributed to a greater understanding of the phenomenon under study (Best, 2003; Hennink, 2011). Hence, I selected education stakeholders such as REB's curriculum developers, WEOs' C and I experts, SMBs, teachers, and curriculum users. Two (2) REB's curriculum developers were purposefully selected because they develop and disseminate the school curriculum (students' textbooks and syllabi), and they know and monitor how the implementation is going in the school. Structurally, WEOs' C and I experts have two responsible bodies for curriculum implementation. One is the curriculum expert, and the second is the instructional expert. They have a direct hierarchical relationship with the primary schools of SMBs. Thus, six (6) experts, two from each WEOs, were selected based on their position and expertise responsibilities, and their compact accountability relationship with the implementers of the curriculum.

In this case, SMBs do not belong to a separate body and only have a special agenda to allow them to manage the school. They do have a management-accountability relationship with teachers and a compact accountability relationship with WEOs' C and I experts. Teachers' pedagogical

activities are primarily evaluated by school principals and supervisors. However, the overall primary school curriculum implementation is monitored and evaluated by SMBs, who are structurally positioned at the school level. They are responsible for teachers' careers. They have a direct hierarchical and management accountability relationship with the teachers who implement the curriculum. Thus, 6 principals, 6 PTAs, and 3 CRC supervisors are purposefully selected because of their positions and roles as members of SMBs, because one CRC supervisor is assigned to two sampled schools.

Table 1: Summary of informants who participated in the study

	Oromia Regional Education Bureau	No	Words	WEOs' C and I experts	No	Primary Schools	Supervisor (No)	Principals (No)	PTAs (No)	Teachers (No)	Students (No)	Parents (No)	Total
REB	Curriculum developers	2(M)	Wayu Tuka	Curriculum expert	1(M)	Kolobo	1(F)	1(M)	1(M)	1(M)	1(M)	2(M)	
				Instruction expert	1(F)	Muleta				1(F)	1(F)		
			Guto Gidda	Curriculum expert	1(M)	Gute	1(M)	1(M)	1(M)	1(M)	1(M)	1(M)	
				Instruction expert	1(F)	Boneya		1(M)	1(M)	2(M)	2(M)	2(M)	
			Diga	Curriculum expert	1(M)	Tinfa	1(M)	1(M)	1(M)	2(M)	2(M)	2(M)	
				Instruction expert	1(M)	Burka UKe		1(M)	1(M)	1(M)	2(M)	2(M)	
										1(F)			
		2			6		3	6(M)	6	12	12	12	59

Note that: **M-** stands for male and **F -** stands for Female

In the same manner, 12 teachers, two from each school, were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on their teaching experiences. This is because experienced teachers often have a better grasp of the historical and contextual factors that influence the implementation of the curriculum in their specific environments, including changes in curriculum, policy shifts, and evolving student and parent needs. I believe that experienced teachers possess a wealth of knowledge and insights gained from years of practice. Their understanding of pedagogical strategies, classroom management, education guidelines, and student engagement in curriculum can provide valuable data that less experienced teachers may not have.

Purposive sampling was also used to select 12 students, two from each school, based on their academic achievement and attendance. It is believed that students who attend regularly and are concerned about their learning may have a detailed understanding of the implementation status of the school curriculum. They provide rich and quality data. This means that high achievers and regular attendants often have a deeper understanding of the subject matter, which can lead to more insightful and nuanced responses. Their experiences and perspectives can provide valuable data that enrich the study and can lead to improvements in the implementation of the curriculum. Finally, 12 parents, of whom two (2) parents from each school who had the best experience participating in school issues and following their children's engagements in the school curriculum, were purposefully selected. These parents are likely to have valuable insights and experiences that can provide a deeper understanding of effective parental involvement. They may provide constructive feedback on school guidelines, policies, programs, and curricula implementation based on their experiences, which can be invaluable for educators looking to improve parental involvement strategies. Hence, the subject of the study is 59.

I contend that relevant data to comprehend the primary phenomena might be collected from the individuals and research venues that were chosen via purposeful sampling. In this situation, accountability for curriculum implementation is the main issue. Because it entails selecting individuals with specific characteristics or experience with the topic and who can provide a thorough understanding of research difficulties, purposeful selection can be both deliberate and flexible (Hennink, 2011). I find it useful to choose specific individuals, occasions, or environments for the crucial knowledge they offer.

As can be seen from Table 1, two of the REB curriculum developers are men. Of the six WEOs' C and I experts, two of them were female and four of them were male. Similarly, two of the three CRC supervisors were men and one was a female. Fortunately, all school principals and PTA members were male. However, out of 12 teachers, two of them were female and 10 of them were male. Similarly, out of 12 students, 2 were female and 10 were male. Likewise, out of 12 parents, only one was female, whereas 11 of them were male. Generally, in this study, nine female and 50 male respondents were involved. The subject of the study is 59.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

A hallmark of case study research is the use of multiple data sources, a strategy that also enhances data credibility (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2003). Merriam (2009) opines that data are collected through interviews, observations, or document analysis. The research uses triangulation in the data collection to increase the reliability as well as the internal validity of the research (Merriam, 1998). This is because interpretivists collect qualitative data via various methods. The instruments used to collect data in this study were interviews, non-participant observation, and documents (official and unofficial). The three data sources allowed for triangulation through substantive and in-depth data (Cohen, 2007) and helped to enhance data credibility (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2003). Hence, multiple sources of information were utilized to gain an overall picture of the individuals' perspectives.

3.6.1 Semi-Structured Interview

Interview questions serve as the central data collection tool for this study. According to Baxter and Jack (2008), in the case of study research, the researcher can collect and integrate different sources to create a holistic understanding of the phenomenon. It is necessary to prepare for the data collection, which means that the researcher has to come face-to-face with the sources available for the research. Collections of data using interviews are necessary to allow the researcher to understand the phenomenon from the person's account (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Unlike in a quantitative study, the researcher is the primary data generator (Paisley & Reeves, 2001), and interview questions are central to the process.

Moreover, an in-person interview is widely acknowledged as a suitable technique for qualitative inquiry to seek insights from those who have experienced or are experiencing the phenomenon

(Collingridge & Gantt, 2019; Wimpenny & Gass, 2000). Most qualitative methods use qualitative interviews as data collection methods to explore topics in-depth, and this method is getting more popular in accountability system research (Iyamu, 2018). Hence, this interview helped me get in-depth information from respondents regarding accountability relationships for curriculum implementation. According to Yin (2009a), in case study research, interviews can be more like guided conversations than structured inquiries. Interviews are a very common form of data collection in case study research. Interviews with individuals allow the researcher to attain rich, personalized information (Mason, 2002). Due to this fact, for this study, I prepared and used a semi-structured face-to-face interview protocol with five groups as an important insight regarding my research questions.

The format for interviewing in case study research differs from interviews used for other types of research because case study research allows flexibility in interviewees. These include curriculum users, teachers, SMBs, WEOs' C and I experts, and REB's curriculum developers. It was assumed that these interviewees would provide authentic information related to the study subject. It was expected that curriculum users would also have significant information on how curriculum implementers and other education stakeholders within primary education were discharging their responsibilities for the implementation of the primary school curriculum.

According to Merriam (2002), a semi-structured interview is more open-ended and less structured, but "usually, specific information is desired from all of the respondents... guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored. Accordingly, all interviewees were available and volunteered for a tape recorder, which led me to productive methods of data collection. The interviews ranged from 50 to 65 minutes, and during this time, I recorded initial observations as recommended by Bogdan and Biklen (1997). After each interview, I set aside 20 minutes to add further detail and extend my initial observational notes as described in Halcomb and Davidson's (2006) method for gathering interview data.

To increase the accuracy of what was stated by participants, Yin (2018) recommends that interviews be audio-recorded and transcribed. Hence, the 59 audio files in this study were transcribed verbatim by me, with considerable experience in transcription, to reflect this recommendation. This is because Afaan Oromoo is my first mother tongue, and I taught it for four years at the College of Teacher Education. I had experience in writing various modules in Afaan

Oromoo. Each interview and corresponding transcript were reviewed twice by me and then member-checked by all participants to ensure transcripts were complete and accurate, as described later in the methodology section.

Further, all interviews were conducted in Afaan Oromoo, the language of the region, and served as language instruction for primary schools. Then, all recorded interviews were transcribed into the English language using Google Scholar translator and my experience to allow for analysis, followed by two bilingual teachers (MA) from the department of Afaan Oromoo, Wollega University, to validate the translations of the interview documents. Teachers often have a deep understanding of the cultural nuances associated with both languages. This helps ensure that translations are not only linguistically accurate but also culturally relevant and sensitive to the context of the study. They reviewed translations for accuracy, ensuring that the meaning of the original text was preserved. They identified errors or misinterpretations that automated Google Scholar translators might miss.

3.6.2 Non-Participant Observation

Non-participant observation provided a more nuanced account of group dynamics and contextualized insights into the topic of interest in the middle schools included in the study (Liu & Maitlis, 2010; Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) suggests that "observational evidence is often useful in providing additional information about the topic being studied" (p. 122). Hence, I monitored the interviewees' reactions, including tone of voice, non-verbal behavior, and any other changes observed throughout the interview, and I jotted notes wherever possible throughout the process. I observed school settings that are related to my research themes. To record these data, journal pages for handwritten notes were divided into two categories: "descriptive notes," which include portraits of the participants' dialogue, the physical setting, events, or activities, and "reflective notes," which detail personal thoughts such as feelings, hunches, and impressions" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1997). I hoped that these notes would capture the mood, tone, and activities of the spaces I visited and serve as a protocol as recommended by leading case study researchers (Creswell & Clark, 2017; Yin, 2018). Non-participant observation (Yin, 2009b) was used in addition to documents and interviews to seek convergence and corroboration to draw multiple pieces of evidence.

For my analysis, I used both my descriptive and reflective field notes, which helped me identify new themes and verify previously identified themes through the other data sources (Liu & Maitlis, 2010). For this reason, I analyzed the field notes using an open coding process to identify patterns and regularities in the descriptive and reflective notes and then used axial coding to collapse those categories into themes (Creswell, 2002; Creswell, 2012). I then compared the results of this thematic analysis to the themes uncovered from the interview analysis to verify the findings or add to them. The thematic analysis of observations was used iteratively to re-examine the data collected through the semi-structured interviews.

3.6.3 Document Review

In addition to interviews and non-participant observations, documentary reviews are a valuable source of data (Johnson, 1990). This approach entails the use of secondary data. In this study, documents from sampled schools and education offices were used as data-gathering instruments. This is because many policies and guidelines indicate the duties and responsibilities of education for stakeholders, with particular reference to the implementation of the school curriculum. Although primary data are very critical in answering the principal research questions in this study, secondary sources were also utilized as they broadened the understanding of theories, key concepts, and empirical results. It is also of paramount importance to compare and contrast the Ethiopian education policies and guidelines with the current views and practices of the global educational accountability system.

Document analysis was often used in combination with other methods as a means of triangulation to study the same phenomenon or corroborate pieces of evidence from other sources (Bowen, 2009). Secondary data used in this study include government publications, periodic reports of some of the bureaus, guidelines for education organizations, documents on teachers' continuous professional development, policies, teacher efficiency results, proclamations, regulations, and other reports. Yin (2018) indicates that "the most important use of documentation is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources" (p. 115). As such, document analysis contributes to data triangulation and strengthens the trustworthiness of research findings, although it is important to consider the potential areas of risk when requesting documents.

As suggested by Stake (2010), "methods for gathering data are selected to fit the research question and the style of inquiry the researcher prefers" (p. 89). In this vein, the data sources discussed here were selected to provide a wealth of information regarding the many layers of the education system. I selected and preferred the educational documents published and used for school management, teacher professional development, school improvement, and other unofficial documents that are relevant to my study. The analysis of information obtained from the sources mentioned above helped me obtain the necessary information relevant to the study topic. Document views that comprise the duties and responsibilities of the education stakeholders provide an additional source of information that can validate or challenge findings from interviews. By comparing what participants say in interviews with what is documented in the guidelines and teachers' efficiency rubrics, I can identify consistencies or discrepancies in the practice of accountability relationships. Together, these methods allow me to conduct a more comprehensive analysis of the research question by integrating different types of evidence stated in the documents and viewpoints.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

In the process of obtaining this information, I obtained an official letter from Addis Ababa University to the East Wollega Zone Education Offices and REB. I had conversations with several individuals in each of the selected Woredas listed in the official letters that I had from the Zone education office, and my conversation further extended to selected schools based on the official letters from WEOs. After identifying the potential interview participants, I contacted them face-to-face and via telephone to introduce myself, provide an overview of the study, and gauge their interest in participating.

Interviews were semi-structured, departing from the interview protocol and allowing additional or rephrased questions. The interview protocol was developed and reviewed by WEOs' C and I experts and two peers from Wollega University (one from educational management and one from the curriculum and instruction department), which allowed me to pilot the questions to make sure the wording was clear and precise. Those individuals had experience with the accountability processes and curriculum implementation. I collected the data from November 2020 to May 2021. It took a long time due to the instability of the zone. Members were checked for two months: October and November 2021.

During the interviews, I sought to be a "creative listener" Wolcott (2005, p. 111), becoming more of an integral part of the conversation during the interview, more so than just asking questions. Interviewees became honest in their conversations, and participants seemed to be comfortable speaking with me, at times even using humor in their responses. I had a genuine interest in what participants were saying and in making sure I understood what they were saying. At times, I paraphrased questions to help participants understand what I was trying to find out, as some interview questions were worded in ways that did not connect with all participants.

Before each interview, participants were selected and reminded that they were permitted to speak off the record. I also reminded them that if they shared something and later realized they should not have shared that information, they could make any necessary changes during the transcript review. During the interviews, no participant asked me to speak off the record. So, all participants' voices were recorded for transcription. As a novice qualitative researcher and as an educator with some firsthand experience with the accountability process, I was vigilant regarding my own biases during the interviews.

I acknowledged that subjectivity in my interpretation was part of this research (Peshkin, 1988). To be mindful of my subjectivity, I kept a journal during the data-gathering phase and during the analysis phase to document any possible biases that may have informed the way I viewed the data. At times, I caught myself trying to diagnose problems and generate solutions instead of simply listening for information. I attribute this tendency to my design training. I listen to identify opportunities for improvements in processes relating to communication problems. I noted this observation in my journal, and some of these types of observations became practical implications of the study.

During the interviews, I also made notes to highlight sections or comments that reminded me of other responses, which were starting to show some potential patterns. Additionally, I made notes about materials. I needed to reference them either because participants recommended the resources or because I had already reviewed them as part of my preliminary research on additional documents and artifacts. I reviewed these other materials within two to three days of conducting the interviews.

3.8 Data Analysis

3.8.1 Analytical Framework

Education is a social phenomenon for which an appropriate organizational structure has been developed to enable all concerned bodies, including students, teachers, parents, SMBs, curriculum developers, and experts, to contribute their respective shares in educational work (MoE, 2002). According to Pritchett (2015), instructional delivery (in the context of this study, the implementation of curriculum) failure also occurs due to a poor information network to strengthen the accountability relationship. O'Day (2002) indicates that curriculum users must be empowered with information about their rights by increasing their voice to REB curriculum developers or WEOs' C and I experts and expressing their choices on the implementation of the curriculum to school curriculum implementers. Hence, information is the lifeblood of all accountability mechanisms.

Thus, information generated from the primary education system interconnects actors who have the responsibility for curriculum implementation. In this case, the assumption is that 'information is power' and "transparency will necessarily leverage accountability" Fox (2015, p. 346). Consequently, in the education system, the flow of better and higher-quality information about the status of curriculum implementation is expected to involve curriculum users in making better decisions in terms of their students' engagement and to put pressure on SMBs and teachers to account for translating officially written curriculum into classroom practices.

Recently, increased attention has been paid to the idea that curriculum users play a stronger role in holding curriculum developers, experts, and implementers of the curriculum to account for the implementation of effective components of the curriculum. Hence, a relationship of accountability is like an economist's principal-agent relationship and is of paramount importance to serve as the analytical framework of the study. Principal-agent relationships are ubiquitous in markets and human relationships more generally and can involve a single principal and a single agent, many principals attempting to control a single agent, or a single principal attempting to influence many agents (Pritchett, 2015).

For accountability to be analyzed and understood, the relationship needs to be explored between institutions (individuals) giving and receiving accountability (Roberts & Scapens, 1985). In

considering the relationship between elements of the system, the RISE framework draws on the paradigm of the principal-agent (P-A) relationship. A principal-agent relationship is a model used to describe a situation where one actor (the principal) wants a task accomplished, so they engage another actor (the agent) to complete the task.

So, according to Spivack (2021), the principal sets out what is expected of the agent and how the agent will be rewarded for completing the task(s) the principal lays out; in other words, how the principal will hold the agent accountable. For instance, REB and WEOs want students to be taught, so they engage teachers to implement the curriculum into classroom practices. Though education systems are made up of many actors, in the context of this study, I used a limited actors by considering a decentralized primary education system.

Indeed, school curriculum implementers are accountable to parents not via the school choice and exit mechanisms, but through rights or dialogue within school management bodies. In this study, curriculum users can act as principals influencing agents, REB curriculum developers, and WEOs' C and I experts via voice relationships. Using the power relationship, curriculum users are principals, and teachers are agents for the school's implementation of the curriculum. In a compact relationship, both REB curriculum developers and WEOs' C and I experts are principals, and school curriculum implementers (SMBs and teachers) are agents because these agents were hired by their principals. Finally, SMBs are principals, and the teachers are agents of the management-accountability relationship for the implementation of the curriculum. Thus, the analytical framework of this study is sometimes referred to as the 5x4 or the accountability triangle.

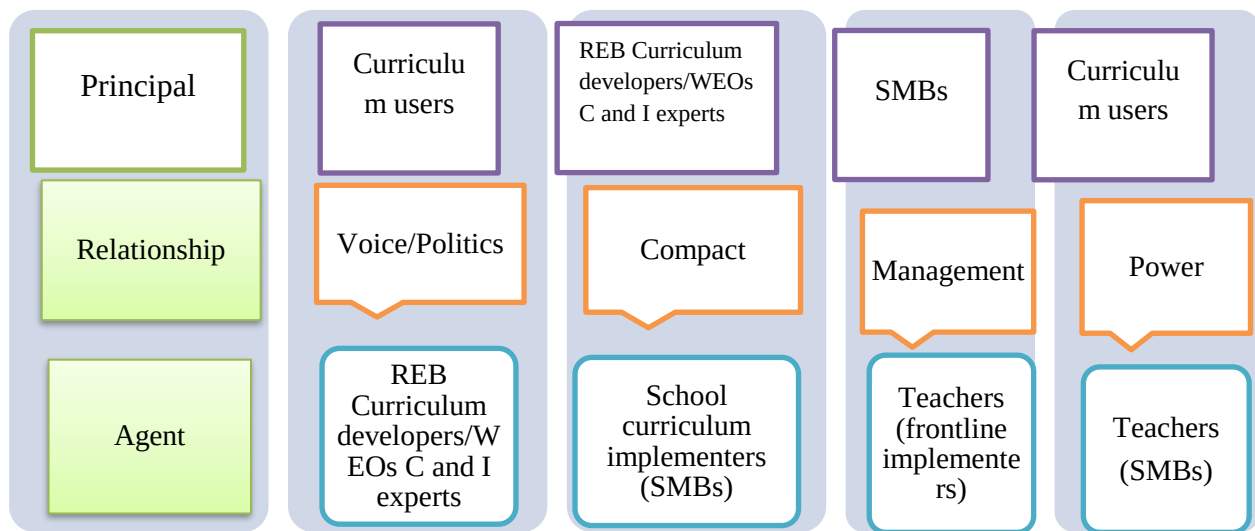


Figure 2: P-A accountability relationship in the education system (Adopted from Pritchett, 2015, and Spivack, 2021).

Scholars suggest that accountability should be explored from the perspective of an agent and principal (Bovens, 2007; Pritchett, 2015; Spivack, 2021). Hence, throughout my analysis, as discussed by (Hooge et al., 2012; Levitt et al., 2008), I used an effective accountability mechanism that consists of three steps. The first is to identify who is accountable for what, which means understanding the relationships between principal and agent. The second is to question the actions of these actors in the education system from their points of view. Finally, it is necessary to refer to established laws and regulations for the appropriate consequences, affirmations, or sanctions that are either formally or informally enforced. This helps me to understand arrangements and procedures to determine how accountability relationships either hinder or facilitate positive changes in the implementation of the primary school curriculum.

3.8.2 Methods of Data Analysis

According to McMillan (1997), data presentation is the method by which researchers summarize and organize research data and communicate information using a variety of techniques, while data analysis is the process of inspecting, analyzing, transforming, and interpreting the collected data. According to Stake (1995), qualitative research data analysis does not have a particular starting point or end. The analysis process takes place at the beginning, during, and at the end of the research project. Stake (1995) argues that analyzing data is a process of dismantling something, in my case, the interview transcripts, to understand it. Stake writes that data analysis is a matter of

giving meaning to the first impression as well as the final compilation, and that analysis essentially means taking something apart.

However, in this study, the obtained data were first transcribed and checked for completeness and errors. Upon completing the data presentation, I proceeded with the data analysis thematically. This is because Braun and Clarke (2006) argued that thematic analysis should be a foundational method for qualitative analysis as it provides core skills for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis. Some scholars have also maintained that thematic analysis is a process used by many qualitative methods; it is not a separate method, but rather something to be used to assist researchers in analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Holloway & Todres, 2003). I argued that thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that can be widely used across a range of epistemologies and research questions in this study. It is a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data collected (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Then the first stage of data analysis began soon after reading the interview transcripts and the documents obtained from the field. There was a need to read and understand the massively transcribed interviews and other sources to get a sense of the data obtained from the fieldwork. Furthermore, it is important to think about the substance of the information and its underlying meaning and to identify important ideas. Meanwhile, thoughts were scribbled on the paper.

After I received the transcripts, I coded each of them using a priori (descriptive) codes based on keywords from the interview questions and the conceptual frameworks of the study. As keywords, I used voice, compact, power, and management. I used Invivo software (Version 10), which provided me with a convenient way to manage the transcripts. It also helps me cluster and categorize the data according to the themes. Lastly, these transcriptions were recorded and analyzed manually to make sense of and develop theories about the data (Henning, 2004). In this regard, Henning (2004) maintains that data analysis ought to be vigorous, systematic, disciplined, and carefully and methodologically documented.

I utilized the color-coding feature to group subunit participants together within and across numbers. This facilitated the cross-sectional analysis of the data for each subunit as well as within numbers. I built the code in the application's code system pod as individual codes and also assets. In this study, the data from documents and non-participant observation were mostly used as a

complement to the analysis of interviews. This allowed me to group codes based on the constructs of my conceptual framework of accountability relationships, such as voice, compact, power, and management. I coded one number at a time, and then I moved through each number specific to the subunit.

A pilot test was made. To analyze the data for this pilot study phase, I used three steps: first, I reviewed and coded individual participants and their responses, looking for anything about the process in each response, second, I compared participants' responses, seeking commonalities, differences, supporting statements (possible quotes), and facts describing the process, and finally, I crafted a preliminary description based on the collective responses. According to Ritchie and Spencer (2002), "the analyst reviews the charts and research notes; compares or contrasts the perceptions, accounts, or experiences; searches for patterns and connections, and seeks explanations for these internally within the data" (p. 321). This was done by theorizing, contextualizing, or decontextualizing the large set of data (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007) according to the conceptual frameworks of this study.

The process of coding included three stages as prescribed by (O'Donoghue, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Open coding involves the process of generating initial concepts by breaking down the data line-by-line or segment-by-segment from the data, axial coding (grouping similar codes into categories or themes), to the development and linking of concepts into conceptual families. Thirdly, selective coding was made by linking categories back to the research questions to formalize these relationships into a conceptual framework. The codes were then divided into broader categories that were visible in the data. The categories that were established to be distinctive were grouped into themes according to Creswell (2007b); (Saldaña, 2021). These themes are used as subtitles to group the findings in the section below. Representative quotes that best illustrate the findings were selected. The selection was distributed across the participants to ensure wider representation across the dataset, which is illustrated by the numbers and abbreviated letters used to code the participants.

After this initial coding, I began theme development. This involves collating all the codes and the relevant data to identify themes that emerge across the dataset. A theme captures something important about the data about the research question and represents some level of patterned response or underlying meaning within the dataset. Once potential themes have been identified

from my qualitative study, the next step is to review and refine them. This helped me to define names and themes, which involves a careful consideration of what each theme captures about the data and how it relates to the research questions and objectives. At last, I finished the piece of writing. The goal of this step is to turn the developed topics into an honest, clear, and engaging narrative. To successfully communicate the findings of the thematic analysis to my intended audience, I attempt to arrange my observations into a well-structured report.

3.9 Trustworthiness, Validity, and Reliability

Trustworthiness describes the level to which a study's results can be trusted, in that the data was collected ethically and the analysis captured the essence of the issue being studied (Merriam, 1998). Triangulation of data sources, member checking of transcripts (validity) to ensure accuracy, and an external audit of the initial interviews. Prolonged engagement is a strategy outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and is used to ensure credibility in qualitative studies. I ensured trustworthiness through extensive engagement in the field. Moreover, it happens when the researcher engages with the participants in the setting long enough and often enough to overcome potential data misrepresentation caused by their presence.

I conducted interviews with all participants at the beginning of the school year and observed different meetings and professional learning activities throughout the year. I interacted several times via phone with participants as I followed up on their interviews or requested documents they referenced in their interviews. These interactions significantly helped me to ensure trustworthiness, as my presence was less likely to impact the behaviors, thoughts, and opinions of the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

According to Amare (2007), several sources of evidence can help validate the trustworthiness of information. Triangulation can bridge gaps in evidence, in addition to its worthiness to test the convergence of information. Hence, I ensured trustworthiness through the triangulation of data sources to examine themes and conclusions from multiple perspectives. Collecting data from individual interviews, non-participant observations, and documents allowed for multiple viewpoints to be captured and increased the likelihood that the convergence of the data describes the reality or truth of the issue (Schwandt, 2001). Data source triangulation also happened within

each case by interviewing curriculum developers, experts, school management bodies, teachers, and curriculum users to increase the trustworthiness of the within-case analyses (Merriam, 1998).

A third strategy to ensure trustworthiness was member checking, where I ensured the credibility of the data collected during semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2013b). I shared the transcripts of each semi-structured interview with the participant to check for accuracy, gather additional thoughts, and identify any missing information (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). Member checking is "the most critical technique for establishing credibility" and is used most often in qualitative studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314). I also ensured trustworthiness with an external audit of the initial interview (Cresswell, 1998; Given, 2008).

I shared the full transcripts from all of the semi-structured interviews with a skilled and knowledgeable qualitative researcher who used an open and axial coding process. I then compared my analysis of the interviews with the resulting codes and categories from the external auditor to verify the credibility of the inductive analysis and evaluate the validity of the findings (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Similarities between the analyses confirmed the accuracy of the analysis, illustrated the validity of the findings, and boosted the trustworthiness of the study. Differences were examined and have been addressed here. While this external audit built trustworthiness in the study, it was based on the positivist assumption that there is one "fixed truth or reality that can be accounted for by a researcher and confirmed by an outside auditor" (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006, p. 3). That is, collecting feedback from other researchers can enhance trustworthiness.

As indicated in the research assumptions, my epistemological perspective was constructionism, which was predicated on the assumption that there is no one accurate answer to the research question and that meaning is developed and constructed through experiences and interactions within a larger social context (Cresswell, 1998; Crotty, 1998). Most of the open codes that the external auditor assigned to the data were similar to mine. However, the categories collapsed by the axial coding process carried out by the external auditor were different than the categories in my analysis. The differences can be attributed to the fact that I was carrying out the iterative data analysis process with additional data sources that the external auditor did not have. This data was from interviews with participants from other schools and school districts, non-participant observations, and documents. An external auditor cannot know the data as well as researchers immersed in the study and may not share the same point of view (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

Essentially, I immersed myself in the investigation and became the key instrument in this qualitative study (Patton, 1999). Because of this immersion, the similarity of our open codes could be interpreted as strengthening the trustworthiness of the study. The discrepancies in the axial coding could be recognized not as a diminishment of trustworthiness but as an instrument to increase my reflection on the data analysis process and improve the articulation of my findings (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Consequently, to improve the research's internal validity and reliability, triangulation was used to obtain the data (Merriam, 1998). Hence, several qualitative procedures were used to establish the validity and reliability of my research. These procedures included triangulating data from various sources, such as document reviews, interviews, and recordings, were led to a more valid, reliable, and diverse construction of realities about accountability for curriculum implementation. Since the issue of accountability was examined for the first time in this district, all the teachers participated with great enthusiasm and enthusiasm during the data collection and addressed their experiences and ideas.

In quantitative research, piloting helps to improve instruments and practices by amending or eliminating them (Amare, 2007). Piloting in this study helps me anticipate threats and problems in advance and reduce being shocked or surprised in the field (P.5). I had discussions with the research supervisor to check both observation and interview questions for specific modifications to fulfill and meet the dissertation's purpose and objectives. The other method used to ensure the instruments' reliability was a pilot study to test the instruments' clarity and readability. First of all, the interview items were tested by practicing with the first participants, who were interviewees at two schools and one Woreda. Some changes were made to a few questions after the first trial, such as modifying the questions and making them clearer to avoid participants' answers of only yes or no. As a result of the first pilot study, more questions were added to reach a deeper understanding of the subject and allow participants to reflect on their perspectives in the study. It helps me to evaluate the feasibility of a study's methods and procedures, and to identify potential issues that could be encountered in the larger study. I believe that this improved the validity of the data.

Additionally, member-checking transcripts were presented to some participants to get relevant feedback (Varpio et al., 2017), and I used them to assess how accurate the qualitative findings were. Hence, the final report was returned to the three teachers, two school principals, and one curriculum and instructional expert of WEOs by calling them through mobile phone so they could make any observations and check if the information they had provided had been appropriately

documented. I have confirmed the truth of the findings from the member-checked participants about the loosely coupled relationships resulting in the incoherence of accountability relationships in the primary school system in education. Lastly, to improve the accuracy of the report, I sought the advice of two senior teachers and two vice school principals from two primary schools who were not involved in the study and who reviewed the data and provided further insight.

3.10 Ethical Issues and Considerations

In conducting the study, ethical issues related to data collection, analysis, and interpretation were observed to the level required. All informants were informed about the purpose of the study, the data collection processes, and the procedures followed, and their consents were verbally secured before the collection of data. Regarding my ethics, the researcher's general behavior of understanding and respecting the cultural values and rituals of the community. In addition to being knowledgeable about the community, data collectors need not be arrogant (Amare, 2007). Thus, the interviews were conducted ethically with respondents in separate and safe places in self-humility and respect (P.4) by giving respect for their voluntary response. The notes taken from the interviewees were written, and most of the interviewees read the written interview results to check and verify whether they were properly listened to and quoted. During data collection, interviewees were assured that their names would not be disclosed on any account during the research and writing process, as many of them were not comfortable with that. Hence, the data analysis was done making use of codes or pseudonyms for safety purposes.

The respondents were told that the data were to be used only for research purposes and that they were all to be kept confidential for the safety of all those who were involved in the study. Finally, all sources of information used for the study were appropriately acknowledged. Moreover, permission to conduct interviews as well as to utilize highly confidential documents for research purposes can be obtained from all participants, especially the REB's curriculum developers, WEOs' C and I experts, SMBs, and curriculum users. They were well informed of the purpose as well as the aims and objectives of the research. Appointments were made in such a way that research activities should not interfere with teaching and learning in the schools. During the interview, only relevant information was discussed and asked. Information has been transcribed and requested from the participants to ensure they are without falsification. Unfortunately, no consent forms were signed.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This part of the dissertation deals with the presentation, analysis, and discussion of data collected from both primary and secondary sources. To make it clear and coherent, the characteristics of the respondents are presented first, and the data collected on the issue are presented, analyzed, and interpreted holistically. That is the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the qualitative data collected through the interview, document analysis, and non-participant observation. However, accountability for curriculum implementation relies heavily on the interviewees' responses on how the accountability relationship between or among stakeholders is exercised for translating written curriculum into classroom practices. Hence, characteristics of respondents, data analysis using coded respondents and other sources, interpretations, and detailed summaries for each sub-section are going to be conceptualized in this chapter as follows.

4.1 Characteristics of the Respondents

The respondents who participated in this research can be categorized as interviewees. The interviewees are categorized into three categories of educational organizations: REB and primary schools. At the REB level, the interviewees are curriculum developers, and they participated in developing the curriculum and implementation of the post-1991 decentralized primary schools curriculum. Their qualifications and work experiences were very high and appropriate for giving necessary information concerning accountability for the implementation of the primary school curriculum.

At the WEOs level, interviewees are structurally responsible bodies for the implementation of school curricula: curriculum experts and instructional experts. At the primary school level, interviewees are SMBs, teachers, and curriculum users. They were selected as informants to collect data on accountability relationships for the implementation of the curriculum, and they had sufficient information in this regard. All (59) participants of the study were coded for analysis.

Table 2: Characteristics of the respondents with respective analytical codes

No.	Categories of organizations	Participants’ name	Code of participant	Number of coded participants for analysis	Total
1	Regional Education Bureau (REB)	Curriculum developers	CM	CD1, CD2	2
2	Woreda Education Offices (WEOs)	Curriculum experts	CE	CE1,CE2,CE3	3
		Instruction experts	IE	IE1, IE2(F), IE3 (F)	3
3	Schools	Supervisors	Sup	Sup1, Sup2, Sup3(F)	3
		School principals	SP	SP1, SP2, SP3, SP4, SP5, SP6	6
		PTAs	PTA	PTA1, PTA2, PTA3, PTA4, PTA5, PTA6	6
		Teachers	T	T1,T2,T3,T4,T5,T6,T7,T8,T9, T10(F), T11(F), T12(F)	12
		Students	S	S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11 (F), S12 (F)	12
		Parents	P	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12 (F)	12
Total Participants					59

NB * F, the highlighted green stands for female respondents at the end of the code, and the rest were male; they should not be cited with codes in the analysis, but to differentiate them during pronunciation in the analysis.

4.2 Findings

There are four accountability relationships involved in the implementation of primary school curricula. One relationship is called voice or politics (in the context of this study, the relationship is between curriculum users and either WEOs or REB). A second relationship is called the compact accountability relationship between the REB's curriculum developers or experts of curriculum and instruction at WEOs and school curriculum implementers. Both relationships are part of log-route accountability. The third type is the curriculum users ' power accountability relationship, defined as a relationship that connects curriculum users to school organizations (Pritchett, 2015). Under this type of accountability, the end users of the curriculum are expected to hold teachers and SMBs accountable for implementing the school curriculum. The fourth is the management accountability

relationship that connects SMBs and teachers. The third type and the fourth type are grouped under the short-route accountability relationship (Di Gropello, 2004; Pritchett, 2015; WDR, 2004).

In general, the long-route and the short-route accountability relationships are intertwined and should not be viewed in isolation by adopting appropriate complementary approaches that lead to the best results (Dewachter et al., 2018). There is no general rule that the long route works better than the short route, as many of the best education systems in the world are almost entirely public. That is, a failure in any one of the relationships can lead to the failure of the entire relationship to implement the school curriculum. For instance, if politicians/curriculum developers are not adequately accountable to curriculum users or voters, the entire system is going to undermine the implementation of the curriculum to address the needs of the curriculum users.

Thus, this part presents the findings on the four major thematic areas of accountability relationships for the implementation of the curriculum: firstly, the voice of the curriculum users; secondly, the compact relationship; thirdly the power/right of the curriculum users; and fourthly, the management relationship through both the long-route and short-route, respectively. Before I start my analysis, I need to highlight the nature of the four types of accountability relationships in this study. The voice for the curriculum implementation is the relationship of accountability between curriculum users and both REB's curriculum developers and WEOs' C and I experts. The range of measures through which curriculum users express their preferences and influence either curriculum developers or experts will be deeply explored.

In the context of this study, there are two lines of voice due to the decentralized approach of the primary education system in the country. One is the voice accountability relationship between curriculum users to the REB's curriculum developers, and the second is the voice of curriculum users to the nearest WEOs' C and I experts that would be examined using the World Development Report Accountability Framework (WDR, 2004). As indicated above, due to decentralized educational structural organizations, I reasonably used double compact relationships. On the other hand, curriculum users' power is alternately considered preferable as it gives direct authority to curriculum users, allowing them to exercise their enforceability over curriculum implementers (Lateef, 2016; WDR, 2004). Based on the information from curriculum users about the implementation of the curriculum and from their monitoring progress, SMBs must use management accountability relationships to respond to the curriculum users' concerns. Indeed,

these accountability relationships can be verified through information (formal reporting, monitoring, assessment, and evaluation).

As an essential element of curriculum implementation, accountability must have the quality of answerability (the right to receive relevant information and an explanation for actions) and enforceability (the right to impose sanctions if the information or rationale is deemed inappropriate). One complication is that voice is not sufficient for meaningful implementation of the curriculum; rather, it may lead to compact relationships through a long route of accountability. That is, in the education system, both curriculum experts and developers should recognize the information from students and parents on satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the implementation of the school curriculum. This information would help them to exercise their expertise in enforcement and pressure to take measurable action to increase the good performance of both teachers and the SMBs in implementing the curriculum.

For the sake of understanding the accountability relationship within this study's conceptual framework, for my analysis, it is necessary to re-highlight the concept forwarded by Levitt et al. (2008) and Hooge et al. (2012) that effective accountability consists of three steps. The first is to identify who is accountable for what, which means understanding the relationships between stakeholders. The second is to question the actions of these stakeholders. Lastly, to refer to set laws and regulations for the proper consequences, affirmations, or sanctions that are either formally or informally exercised as accountability mechanisms.

Effective solutions for better curriculum implementation are likely to be mixtures of these four accountability relationships in the primary education system. The study has generally revealed that the primary education system is failing, with three of the four accountability relationships being loosely coupled and facing various challenges in implementing school curricula as intended. However, primary education systems of accountability relationships are adequately coherent and operational to produce continued progress in enrollment, students' test scores, reducing dropout rates, and the like. Thus, curriculum users' voices and rights have been faced with multiple difficulties in holding account givers accountable for their actions in the implementation of the curriculum. Based on the data gathered, each of these relationships is discussed below.

4.2.1 Curriculum Users' Voice Relationships

In the long route of accountability or voice accountability relationship, curriculum users are expected to influence curriculum developers by, for example, demanding that the government improve the implementation of the school curriculum (Di Gropello, 2004; Komba, 2017; WDR, 2004). Indeed, the voice is only the first part of the long route of accountability. It is also expected that curriculum users are influencing curriculum developers of the REB and WEOs' C and I experts, who would then have oversight authority over curriculum implementers (SMBs and teachers). Moreover, REB's curriculum developers are required to monitor and motivate implementers, SMBs, and teachers to implement the curriculum as planned.

However, it is argued that when REB's curriculum developers and experts of C and I at WEOs are unaccountable to curriculum users through the long route of voice accountability to enhance the implementation of the curriculum is enhanced. Conversely, if the voice accountability relationship becomes weak, then the implementation of the curriculum would not have addressed the needs of the curriculum users. As stated in the conceptual framework of this study, voice accountability relationships of the primary schools of a decentralized education system have two possible lines/routes. Hence, the following analysis of this sub-section shows the voice accountability relationship of curriculum users to the REB's curriculum developers and WEOs' C and I experts in a separate manner.

4.2.1.1 Students' Voice Accountability Relationship to REB's Curriculum Developers (SV1)

Students' voices can be understood as a strategy that engages them in sharing their views on their experiences as students to promote meaningful change in educational practice or policy and alter the positions of students in educational settings (Shapiro & Gross, 2008). Voice alternatives allow students to express preferences and opinions about the implementation of the curriculum. Hence, I argue that the first part of the long route part of the accountability relationship, students' voice (SV1), must be focused on matters that are related to students' experiences as learners, which cannot be solved at school and sometimes at the WEOs level. When students feel that their voices are heard, they are more likely to engage with the curriculum and take ownership of their learning (Mitra, 2004). Yet, existing students' voices are focused on a shortage of education input, weak feedback mechanisms, absence of legal accountability mechanisms, and lack of clear line for

genuine engagement,...traditional voice dynamics (the established educational structure that affects students' voice) and local norms within educational institutions often marginalize student perspectives.

The process of implementing the curriculum was dynamic and impacted by the lack of subject-matter experts in teaching positions. Students have complete access to information on the state of the curriculum implementation in their schools, but they lack access to hold curriculum designers responsible for shoddy implementation. Students provided their perspectives by stating:

To implement the curriculum, I see that there is a shortage of English teachers in our school (S4). We had no mathematics teachers in my school in grade seven (S9). No certified teachers were teaching the subject Gada at my school; instead, the subject was taught by untrained teachers with other specializations. Schools cannot solve this problem... but REB's curriculum developers are far away from the school, even though I have not seen their roles in the schools. (S11)

Students need to address their needs to make curriculum implementation effective. Students always address their opinions about the lack of learning materials and technology-based teaching-learning that are necessary for curriculum implementation to the REB through local politicians. REB's curriculum developers must know what is going on in the school by integrating students' voices into curriculum development and implementation; they can create more effective and engaging learning experiences (Cook-Sather, 2006). However, students highlighted that:

Students lack science-related laboratory space, reagents, and apparatus. Curriculum implementation is not supported by technology. I cannot influence the curriculum developers of REB to make them accountable for providing suitable infrastructure for curriculum implementation (S6). Curriculum developers of the Oromia Regional State act as politicians, and they frequently express their concerns and discuss matters of political stability and peace during the meetings. (S10)

The government designed curricula that do not play a decisive role in the employability of a better-qualified labor force. Curriculum developers do not usually visit the schools to observe and assess how the curriculum is being implemented to address the existing policy. Students said:

Why do I focus on taking courses that will leave us jobless tomorrow? I am unable to learn new talents in the field (S3). It is the education policy that produces jobless graduates from Universities (S5). There are many graduate students in the community (S7). School curricula had no workable and strong objectives, and no one from the REB recognized and responded to the students' concerns. (S12)

Students noted that they were unable to travel to the REB office or have face-to-face meetings with the curriculum developers. As a result, the implementation of the curriculum in schools is not a problem for REB's curriculum developers. Although it is anticipated that the curriculum will be created with students' involvement as its primary priority, REB's curriculum developers have no evidence-based connection with students in the curriculum development process or issues related to the implementation of the curriculum. Respondents indicated that:

I have not seen REB's curriculum developers in our schools talk about our opinions regarding accountability and implementation of the curriculum (S3). I can't use protest or movement mechanisms to hold REB's curriculum developers accountable for better implementation of the curriculum (S2). I am under command-post administration, and I am afraid to talk about the weak implementation of the curriculum (S8). I do not have online communication, and I can't go to their office to request what I need for the implementation of the curriculum. (S1)

In this study's context, cultural norms discourage open communication between students and curriculum developers. A similar argument shows that this can inhibit students from expressing their opinions or concerns about the curriculum effectively (Fielding, 2004). Students explain that local cultures are limited in using their voices to hold curriculum developers accountable.

Our culture does not allow us to blame or to punish. Curriculum developers are intellectuals, and I respect them (S1). Curriculum developers should come and understand our issues and give us a solution. I expect something out of them (S9). I haven't seen that the voice of the student was powerful enough to hold curriculum developers (S6). There is no culture of negotiating with the curriculum developers (S8 and S12). To influence decision-making processes in the implementation of curriculum, I have no chance of voicing my opinions and experiences directly to curriculum developers. (S7)

From the above notion, what should be understood is that the students could not make their voices heard due to powerlessness, cultural barriers, and fear. Also, there are no written laws that hold REBs accountable, and their voices are veiled. Two students explained:

There is no legal accountability approach to hold the REB's curriculum developers to hold them accountable for curriculum implementation failures in the schools (S11). No one tells me about educational accountability procedures in laws or guidelines. So it makes us unable to request in a way that we can pull up to the REB. (S5)

What should be known is that research indicates that meaningful student voice is crucial for effective curriculum implementation (Mitra, 2004). Yet, the existing students' voices reveal that, although there are many problems in implementing the curriculum, the long-route accountability relationship of the students' voices does not bring any solutions to improve the implementation of the current curriculum. This is because curriculum developers do not care to interact with students for the implementation process of the curriculum. According to their responsibility, the curriculum developers of the REB have a weak feedback mechanism to use formal processes to gather information from students about the implementation of the curriculum. By and large, yardstick structural distance and no continuous communication led to the REB's curriculum developer being disconnected from the students' voice. This accountability relationship is extremely weak and inhibits curriculum developers of the REB from being formally or informally accountable for students' voices.

4.2.1.2 Parents' Voice Accountability Relationship to REB's Curriculum Developers (PV1)

Holding REB's curriculum developers accountable for poor implementation of the curriculum is a multifaceted process that involves various strategies and actions by parents. The first Parents' Voice (PV1) accountability relationship connects parents with the government or REB curriculum developers to talk about school education provision in general and curriculum implementation in particular. Parents' capacity to demand transparency and scrutinize operations is essential for developing and expressing informed views that hold REB's curriculum developers to account. Parents' voices are channeled in many ways, from the general expression of public will through election processes and protest movements to specific forms of engagement. In these efforts to

participate meaningfully in decision-making that affects their lives, the lives of their children, and their parents.

It should come as no surprise, then, that parents are dissatisfied with the curriculum's content and its implementation and the roles of the REB's curriculum developers. Parents have a wealth of information on teachers' performance and the various challenges facing their respective schools and children. Respondents said:

There is a massive failure in the implementation of the primary school curriculum. Students often reach grade 8 without knowing how to read and write (P12). I need an efficient curriculum developer and someone accountable for better improvement in our students' engagement in the curriculum (P6). There is a problem with the way schools implement the curriculum. I observed that no one is monitoring and providing consequences for the meager implementation of the curriculum. (P4)

Elections are the most common tool citizens (parents) have to hold governments accountable, creating a formal relationship between policy/curriculum developers and the public (Ashworth, 2012; Mulgan, 2000, 2003). The risk of being voted out is expected to motivate elected officials to respond to the electorate's demands (Gélineau, 2013). Elections must be legitimate to be an effective mechanism if they are free and fair. Through elections, it can be hard to link specific political actions with their eventual impact conclusively. This is especially the case for curriculum implementation. While it is part of most campaign promises, curriculum and its implementation are typically not among the highest-priority items in election campaigns, which means the link between electoral accountability and curriculum implementation issues is somewhat tenuous.

On the other hand, even though parents are unaware of the full details of the existing education policy and curriculum documents, they assert that their child is learning in an environment with poor policy, curriculum, and implementation. Parents voice their concerns to the curriculum developers by saying:

Education is forgotten, and curriculum implementation is not in the right practice... Our students are jobless and hopeless. I prefer better performance in the implementation of the curriculum (P10). I need reform for my child to be engaged with an effective curriculum. (P3)

All respondents, however, indicated common views that:

The current policy has provided a good opportunity for students to learn their language so that they can learn easily (P1). The curriculum and its implementation in the current education policy are weak (P5). The existing policy is not guaranteed to make students creative and ethical (P4). Students cannot read and write, even in grade eight. I had a good curriculum and implementation process before the existing policy (P8). The older curriculum implementation process before 1991 was strong, and the students were also competent (P12). I have not seen any dialogue on issues of the implementation of the curriculum between REB's curriculum experts. (P3)

Parents were unhappy about their school's weak curriculum implementation practices, yet they were unable to assert their voice accountability relationship. Parents assumed that the current education guidelines and school rules, and regulations have led students to unethical behaviors, resulting in weak implementation of the curriculum.

The student does not get control (P7). Students have an unlimited democratic right to learn or not (P9). Students misbehave because we see that there is no punishment and control system... (P8). Students pay attention to being engaged in the curriculum (P10). It's an open floor for students to attend the class or not. It extremely democratizes students' being absent from the class (P1). I need a rigorous policy for better implementation of the curriculum, but no one can discuss it with me. I have no access to participate in the change of educational policy (P2). I don't see any official or legal means of holding curriculum developers accountable. (P4)

Darvas and Balwanz (2014) also point out that the public and media are often more interested in 'visible' education and curriculum issues (e.g., construction of schools, and free school uniforms) compared to "less visible" activities such as teacher professional development or providing remedial learning support to children" (p. 136). To strengthen accountability in any government, the role of the media cannot be underestimated. So, various studies show that free and independent media have great significance for a free and open society in making public agents accountable (Pope, 2005). Parents can leverage local media outlets to highlight issues related to poor curriculum implementation, thereby increasing public awareness and putting additional pressure

on state/REB developers to respond effectively (McCarthy, 2019). Regarding the role of media in their voice, parents shared a similar understanding:

Oromia Broadcasting Network (OBN) is working for the government side to boldly report the government issues (P4). There is no means to address our complaints to the REB curriculum developers (P12). I do not have any communication with an elected representative who carries our message and gives feedback on it. (P9)

Parents do not have access to engage with government media to address their voice accountability relationships with the REB. The same respondents also commented that:

There is also Nekemt Fana FM Radio, which also stands for the government side (P1). If I want to communicate with the media workers, they reject my interest and report on other non-educational issues (P8). I know the significance of the media in promoting issues in the community, and they always report on students' enrollment and promotion rates (P6). Media come to school to report on constructed buildings (P6). Media come to school during holidays, festivals, and ceremonies (P12). No media that reports the voice of parents to the REB's curriculum developers, especially limitations related to the curriculum implementation. (P11)

Organizing petitions or filing formal complaints can be an effective way for parents to demand accountability from curriculum developers when they perceive failures in implementation. The parents' voice relationship includes formal political mechanisms (political parties and elections) and informal ones, such as advocacy groups and public information campaigns (WDR, 2018), to hold REB's curriculum developers to addressing their needs. Nevertheless, the local political system is not mature enough to hear the voices of the parents to provide possible responses. The local politicians are not playing their roles in representing the local electorate. Some parents indicated that:

I have information on the status of schools' curriculum implementation, and I know that I must have a voice either to lobby curriculum developers or make them accountable for better implementation (P3). I cannot use petitions to hold curriculum developers accountable for poor implementation of school curriculum instability issues (P5). Petitions

and formal complaints have a crucial role in holding state curriculum developers accountable for poor implementation practices.

Several parents also addressed their accountability relationships with the curriculum developers of REB by saying:

But, it is dangerous to practice because the East Wollega zone is under the command post (P2 and P5). I have no collaboration with the curriculum developers of the region...even if I do not know them personally to speak my opinion (P6). I cannot put pressure on politicians, policymakers, and curriculum developers because they have the political authority to decide what they like without the involvement of parents (P7). It is impractical to hold REB accountable (P10). They have great authority not to respond. (P8)

In the long path of accountability, parents elect their local representative politicians, who appoint or influence curriculum developers while taking their needs and preferences into account. Parents also said that their broad legitimate voice about their child's education was not accommodated as much as required because they were simply forced by the kebele (parish) leader to vote for a single party representative. They extended their views by clarifying:

Theoretically, it seems that parents are empowered to hold curriculum developers/politicians accountable for the effective implementation of the curriculum through the election (P11). I frequently missed voting, and I was forced to vote for a single party (P2). My voice could not be heard in these elections for further improvement in curriculum development and implementation (P9). I can't punish politicians or REB's curriculum developers for weak curriculum implementation. (P7)

In the long run, parents are expected to exert influence on REB's curriculum developers by demanding that they improve the overall quality of educational facilities in schools, which may result in better curriculum implementation. Yet, the large bureaucracies and embedded politics were expected to ground progress to a halt, making the government largely unresponsive to parents' demands (Edwards, 2012). Even in a well-functioning system, the long route is seen as weak (Lateef, 2016). Some participants indicated that:

I do not have a meeting program with the REB's curriculum developers (P5). I do not have direct communication with REB's curriculum developers (P10). REB's curriculum

developers come to the community only during the election period as a campaign (P2). REB's curriculum developers usually talk about school establishment, road construction, electricity, and other things that can be observed and that people can commonly use (P9). REB's curriculum developers do not have a concern about parents' opinions regarding the current curriculum implementation at school (P11). I cannot articulate my views and concerns to the curriculum developers of the REB. (P12)

As can be seen from the above parents' responses, they have many voices that are useful to improve the implementation of the education system. Their voices accountability relationship is untaken and does not work to hold curriculum developer of the REB due to poor medium of communication, lack of laws and guidelines related to educational accountability, absence of media engagement for school curriculum issues, distance from the REB, fear of the political situation in the Woreda, lack of attention to the voices of parents, impractical advocacy awareness and formal campaigns. ... From this result, I understood that although parents' voices are useful for improving the implementation of the curriculum, the relationships between curriculum developers of the REB are vacant and are not able to solve the problem related to the implementation of the curriculum.

According to the United Nations General Assembly 1949, Article 26 (3), parents have the right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children (Assembly, 1949). Despite this worldwide apparent endorsement, primary school parents' voice accountability relationship with the REB's curriculum development or political representative does not address the parents' demands in the implementation of the curriculum. Hence, parents are handicapped and marginalized from participating in decision-making due to weak concern, superiority, and supervision from the curriculum developers of the REBs.

4.2.1.3 Students' Voice Accountability Relationship with WEOs' C and I Experts (SV2)

The term "student voice" refers to students participating in discourse, discussion, and consultation on topics that affect their education in general, particularly in curriculum implementation. Thus, the idea is both defined and expressed by a variety of phrases and actions that focus on shifting pupils to make it easier for them to interact with the C and I experts at WEOs. Students can use their second voice (SV2) as a tool to express themselves and take part in decisions that have an impact on their lives.

The curriculum is life, and its implementation affects the lives of the students either positively or negatively. But the voice is not as straightforward as an individual speaking words; rather, it may contain many issues related to schooling. In this context, this study argues that different kinds of students' voices would open up very different sets of possibilities for students, teachers, and SMBs as learning communities and for the schools' capacity to engage students with better changes in the implementation of the curriculum.

Students' voice accountability relationships with WEOs' C and I experts are also one of the long-route accountability relationships in a decentralized education system. In the context of this study, this relationship is the closest long-route option that students can easily communicate with the experts in meetings or face-to-face to address their opinions about the implementation of the curriculum. Students' voices have re-emerged because of a call among progressive educators to review the structures, practices, and values that dominate schooling and which contrast sharply with how young people live today (Rudduck, 2007). Student voice has emerged as the single term in the implementation process of the curriculum to encompass a spectrum of initiatives that advocate the redefinition of the role of students in their engagement, which are discussed and analyzed below.

In its modern interpretation, the student's voice is focused predominantly on the design, facilitation, and improvement of learning (Mitra, 2004). Nevertheless, the respondents indicate that the school environment is dominated by political scenarios, resulting in little concern for the implementation of the curriculum.

In a typical academic year, we hold a meeting for two to four days with WEOs' C and I experts and other politicians from the Woreda (S5). The WEOs' C and I concerns are always related to student behavior, peace difficulties, and political situations when they are brought up during meetings (S3 and S7). I think students are seriously concerned about teachers who are unable to teach subjects like Physics, Mathematics, English language... (S4). The curriculum implementation is not a priority for WEOs' C and I experts, and they prefer not to respond to what occurs in the classroom. (S1)

Students who use the primary school curriculum typically notice how important it is to their personal growth and the advancement of their nation. They acknowledged that we do not have a

meaningful life if there is no effective connection with the curriculum. Addressing the importance of the curriculum, students noted that:

In a meeting with WEOs' C and I experts, I tried to inform them about the poor competence of some teachers in implementing school subjects like Afaan Oromoo, Mathematics, English language, and Physics (S1). I do not have adequate progress in these subjects. I requested and preferred to learn those subjects with other teachers. Nothing can be changed (S10). Experts of WEOs did not give any attention to our question raised during the meeting; I do not have the money to go to private schools. (S7)

Cook-Sather (2006) describes the student voice as having a legitimate perspective, presence, and active role. This voice helps WEOs' C and I experts strengthen their compact accountability relationships by giving responses to the students' opinions about the implementation of the curriculum. Students' voices are located within a complex web of school structures and cultures that are expected to be shaped by WEOs' C and I experts. These experts are nominated to make sure that an effective curriculum is continued at the school level with a great accountability relationship. Nonetheless, frequent teacher absenteeism resulted in WEOs' C and I experts placing little emphasis on students' concerns for actual curriculum implementation. Students shared their views with these experts about teachers' absenteeism, no feedback communication, and failure to cover the subject matter according to the school's annual plan. Participants noted that:

Students see that there is repeated wastage of instructional time, and teachers do not cover the missed instructional time (S2). Sometimes teachers do not even enter the classroom while at the school compound...no one asks them to enter the class (S8 and S11). Students said that more than one-third of the school curriculum's subjects (e.g., chemistry and mathematics) are not completed at the end of the academic year (S1 and S12). WEOs' C and I experts do not like to respond to students' voices immediately, and they always suggest discussing the issue with SMBs (S6 and S9). There is no tangible response in this regard. I can't choose private schools in the town due to financial constraints. (S3)

The feedback loop between students and experts of WEOs shows that establishing feedback loops where students regularly share their thoughts on curriculum effectiveness allows experts to address students' needs in the implementation of the curriculum (Mitra & Serriere, 2012). Nevertheless, some students focused:

There are no regular surveys and feedback forms on the implementation of the curriculum (S4). Students have no answers to the questions they ask (S5). Experts do not ask students about problems in teaching and learning.... They are not allowed to collaborate with students (S12). Experts have weaknesses in creating a communication flow between them and students (S7). Experts do not allow students to participate in WEOs' goals for curriculum implementation. (S4)

In this regard, the document analysis demonstrates that it was specifically determined from the teacher's attendance that, annually on average, 33% of class time is typically wasted. It's crucial to remember that primary school instructional time lasts for 40 minutes. There is a weak monitoring role of WEOs' C and I experts to reduce teachers' absenteeism. The consequence is that management accountability connections for curriculum implementation at primary schools are also insufficient concerning instructional loss. This shows that there is weak monitoring from WEOs' C and I experts to ensure that the curriculum is implemented as required at the required time and on the planned date. In this case, one student indicated that:

Teacher absenteeism often happens, but it is not understandable to follow up and report it to the WEO for action (S4). It can be considered unethical to use social media platforms to raise awareness about the issue of teacher absenteeism (S8). I have no chance to go to WEOs to discuss concerns about absenteeism (S12). I have no practice in utilizing media and social platforms to address teachers' absenteeism(S8). Students cannot play an active role in holding their WEOs accountable for addressing issues related to teacher absenteeism effectively and the failure of curriculum implementation in general. (S1 and S10)

During the meeting, the student voices to the WEOs' C and I experts are related to the shortage of school facilities for better implementation of the curriculum. Students made a point of highlighting the importance of school infrastructure for the success of curriculum implementation.

The school lacks instructional resources, including textbooks, internet access, a library, lab spaces, and other facilities that are useful for the implementation of the curriculum (S10). I believe that no one is accountable for providing these facilities (S11). The C and I experts at WEOs are pessimistic and invariably respond by saying "no budget."(S12)

Other students emphasized the importance of school teaching-learning facilities in ensuring the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. They have limited ways of technological communication through their views of WEOs. Students expressed their concerns as,

Schools lack science-related laboratory space, reagents, and apparatus. School curriculum implementation is not supported by technology (S11 and S12). Students do not have curriculum materials like textbooks, internet access, or other facilities. No one is responsible and takes care of fulfilling these facilities. WEOs' C and I experts do not have hope... their response is always no budget. They ignore the student's questions (S4 and S8). No private schools around us... I do not have the budget to learn in private schools by traveling to the Nekemte town (S6). I cannot use social media to express my voice. (S3) There are no online platforms to share my views related to curriculum implementation. (S12)

As I had looked around the schools, there was nothing conducive to teaching and learning. This implies that the student's question is reasonable about the shortage of instructional materials, which makes the implementation of the curriculum ineffective.

There is a lack of laboratory rooms and practice for curriculum implementation at all sampled primary schools in the Woredas, making it difficult for teachers to implement science curricula. There is no technology-enhanced learning or teaching. All schools use chalk and talk, which is guided by the students' textbooks. (Observation, May 10, 2021)

From the above notions, because of the decentralized education system, students and WEOs' C and I experts usually have a series of meetings. However, the meeting will focus on peace issues, students' ethics, the construction of classrooms of male and female toilets, etc. whereas the voice of the students such as about weak teaching and learning, so much political attention to the schools, teacher shortages, absence of laboratory rooms and apparatus and teachers' absenteeism and no access and trained to hold WEOs' C and I experts accountable... had given no attention. The second long route is students' voice accountability relationship to the WEOs' C and I experts is extremely weak, and curriculum implementers and experts can get away with utilizing students' voices to improve the inadequate implementation of the curriculum. Hence, students can not actively engage with experts of the WEOs, fostering a culture of accountability that ultimately leads to better implementation of curricula tailored to their needs.

4.2.1.4 Parents' Voice Accountability Relationship to WEOs' C and I Experts (PV2)

Engaging parents can lead to more tailored educational experiences that meet the needs of students. This relationship can significantly influence the effectiveness of curriculum implementation by holding curriculum and instructional experts of WEOs. The second Parents' Voice (PV2) accountability relationship connects parents with the WEOs' C and I experts to talk about school education provision in general and curriculum implementation in particular. Parents either speak directly to WEOs' C and I experts in meetings or visit their offices to inform them about educational problems. In general, and problems related to the implementation of the curriculum in particular... They need to have a voice in their children's engagement in the curriculum. Those experts are also politicians from the ruling party. They are also expected to serve as a vehicle for conveying school parents' or communities' views to the government. There are many views to be conveyed. Yet under this sub-section, this study focuses on the views of the parents related to the implementation of the curriculum.

In Ethiopia, for one academic year, primary schooling begins in September and ends at the end of June. So the students stay in school for ten months. Parents noticed that the WEOs' C and I experts usually meet with the school community when security problems arise and new issues or orders are issued. In the meeting, parents raised some critical issues such as mass student promotion, inadequate school facilities, and instructional materials, absence of a feedback mechanism, weak and unsuccessful communication on curriculum implementation issues... unfortunate access to hold experts of the WEOs for the implementation of the curriculum. Several parents say:

Why are students pushed to be promoted from grades one, two, and three... to the next? The promotion of students from one grade to the next without the acquisition of foundational reading and numeracy abilities is free (P6). How is a 100% promotion permitted without successfully engaging them in the curriculum? Promoting even non-attending students is typically acceptable (P12). No one from WEOs heard the parents' view (P2). Parents and C and I experts have a weak collaborative approach to deciding together about the implementation of the curriculum. (P2)

By recalling the following, other parents demonstrated their involvement in building school facilities and their concerns about the ineffective control mechanism for the children's engagement in the curriculum. They highlighted that:

To purchase desks and build restrooms, I helped schools build classrooms and school walls (P2). I expect that my money should go toward improving my child's involvement in the curriculum. Students do not single word or sentence that my child writes or reads as appropriately formed (P11). I'm not sure who is to blame for the increase in illiterate students promoted from 7th grade who are illiterate in both reading and writing (P3). Students don't appear to be learning anything, and they are unable to read and write what is written in the book (P6). No person is accountable for the failed implementation of the curriculum. (P8)

Other parents explained their concerns:

Students are spending their time with little engagement in the curriculum. All of the teachers simply rush to and from school (P1). Students are free from any punishment when they do not do homework or classwork, or even when they are absent from school (P5). Students have gotten greater freedom that contradicts the school guidelines (P8). I was a student thirty years ago, and now I am a pastor preaching the gospel. Schools are working outside of school guidelines to make students cripple (P7). Sometimes students go back home without learning (P12). I don't have the opportunity to hold WEOs' C and I experts accountable for enhancing the implementation of the curriculum because their salaries and expertise positions are from the government. (P10)

Regarding the parents' voice accountability relationship, establishing clear communication channels between WEOs and parents ensures ongoing dialogue about curriculum-related matters. Yet, parents said that:

I have not gotten to the WEOs for poor implementation of the curriculum (P12). There is no way to contact WEOs and speak about student engagement in the curriculum (P6). WEOs will only call the school parents if a problem arises (P2). WEOs only come when they want a report...they tell parents to strengthen the school (P10). I have no experience

of going to WEO on foot to inform about the problem of the implementation of the curriculum...But I only meet during school meetings. (P9)

A parent who has experience visiting the WEOs indicated that:

During my observation, I saw that my child was not satisfied with the implementation of the curriculum. As a parent, I could not get a response from WEO's C and I experts in this regard. They are skeptical of the issues raised by parents. I have no laws and guidelines to hold them accountable through legal court. It is tiresome and complicated to punish them. (P5)

On the other hand, a few parents' voices are also concerned about observable school facilities, but are less concerned about what is going on in the classroom. They described it as

Experts of C and I from WEOs usually provide some books to the schools. There is no ICT-related curriculum implementation (P11). I usually ask WEOs' C and I experts to improve the chalk and talk classroom to a technology-based one...their responsibility is no budget (P4). Parents cannot buy computers and other technological materials. Parents are occupied with constructing classroom buildings that are about the implementation of curriculum (P2). Parents' request is not always accepted by WEOs' C and I experts... So there is parents' fatigue. From time to time, I see no improvement in curriculum implementation, and no one has officially taken responsibility and punishment. (P9 and P12)

According to the views of the experts,

It is true that no laboratory practice for curriculum implementation at all primary schools of the Woredas. Except for books and blackboards, no instructional materials are found in the school. We know that students are not engaged with the curriculum effectively without the necessary facilities and instructional materials. WEOs have no budget to fulfill infrastructure and instructional materials... hence, no one is accountable for the shortage except the government.

From my observation,

All sampled schools have no laboratory equipment, apparatus, or chemicals, making it difficult for the teachers to implement science curricula. I saw families repairing and building classrooms. Because the family has been told that the school is theirs, they are participating on their own to construct. (Observation, May 10, 2021)

This implies that no one is implementing the curriculum responsibly by providing the necessary instructional materials. So it is difficult to make implementers accountable for the demanded implementation of the curriculum. Parents always complain about the shortage of textbooks, and WEOs' C and I experts also witness the shortage of books that impede the implementation of the curriculum.

The normal student-to-textbook ratios are 3:1, 4:1, and 5:1, which results in a dearth of books on several subjects (CE2). There is no 1:1 student-to-textbook ratio (CE1). Extremely, there is a shortage of books (SP6). My child has few books (P6), and according to some school principals, who also claimed that there is a book shortage... (SP2, SP5, and SP6)

Generally speaking, the relationship between parents and WEOs regarding accountability in curriculum implementation can fail for several reasons such as limited parental involvement in decision-making, poor feedback mechanism, insufficient communication, accountability system misalignment, no clear guidelines and policy framework for accountability relationship, undermining parents' voices, and parental input was not recognized to address concerns regarding curriculum implementation. It was observed that there was no collaborative structure between parents and WEOs that stands for meaningful implementation of the curriculum. So, parents' reflection shows that their input is not valued within the primary education systems to satisfy their children's needs adequately in the implementation of the curriculum. Because of primary school system is interconnected in terms of addressing parents, I argue that this accountability relationship does not have a significant impact on C and I experts to hold them accountable for the implementation of curricula that meet their needs.

4.2.2 Compact Accountability Relationships

The long-route accountability relationship connects curriculum developers to organizational curriculum implementers (SMBs and teachers). When political unrest happens, this relationship is confusing and has resulted in SMBs and teachers having several immediate supervisors, including both politicians at the WEOs and regional levels, and educational officials at the WEOs and regional levels, who come to schools with many agendas through double compact accountability relationships. However, when applied to this study, REB's curriculum developers and WEOs' C and I experts are charged with various duties and obligations, which are going to be discussed in the analysis part of this sub-section. This relationship implies that curriculum implementers are accountable to both REB's curriculum developers and WEOs' C and I experts for addressing their duties in curriculum implementation.

4.2.2.1 Compact Accountability Relationship between REB's Curriculum Developers and Curriculum Implementers (C1)

In the context of this study, the compact is the relationship between curriculum developers and curriculum implementers that refers to how well and how the responsibilities are communicated. Fiszbein (2005) explains that the compact is the broad, long-term accountability relationship that connects policy/curriculum developers to school implementers. Arguably, if the compact is functioning effectively, curriculum implementation practices will address the needs of curriculum users. This requires a means of assessing a school's contribution to the collective objectives of curricula and creating an environment for schools to innovate in curriculum implementation. The compact between curriculum developers and curriculum implementers creates an enabling environment in which all schools have the means and motivation to implement a curriculum successfully (WDR, 2004). This relationship can be characterized by adequate resources and professional support, clear communication, shared goals, mutual support, autonomy with accountability, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation (Demas & Arcia, 2015; Elmore, 2004b; Fullan, 2015; Pritchett, 2015) through a top-down structured approach.

Most educational accountability systems include some combination of these provisions. Schools' curriculum implementers cannot be made more accountable for the implementation of the curriculum without also receiving sufficient resources. In this regard, WDR (2015) indicates that

the successful implementation of the curriculum needs adequate resources, followed by enforcement. In this respect, teachers, supervisors, school principals, and curriculum developers shared similar views:

I see only books that are given to us to implement into classroom practices (T4). It is certain that no instructional resources, laboratory materials, or equipment (T12). The school principal said that “except for teachers’ salaries and students’ textbooks, no other resources reach the schools” (SP6). REB has a shortage of funds to provide instructional and other resources to all schools (CD1 and CD2). Too few resources (textbooks and syllabi) are allocated to schools. (Sup3)

Concerning this relationship, to achieve successful implementation of the school curriculum, curriculum developers, either based on their monitoring progress or through the pressure from curriculum users' voices, must provide adequate resources (WDR, 2004; Di Gropello, 2004; & Komba, 2017). According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), curriculum developers should also invest in ongoing professional development for curriculum implementers to ensure they have the skills necessary to adapt curricula effectively. Hence, SMBs and teachers cannot be made more accountable for the implementation of the curriculum without also receiving sufficient training and opportunities to build competencies (WDR, 2004). Indeed, training can help create a culture of accountability, which is essential for the operation of the curriculum developers of the REB.

Providing an in-service training program for curriculum implementers is one of the duties of curriculum developers to accomplish effective implementation (MoE, 2002). Therefore, it is the major responsibility of REB to offer induction and capacity-building training for teachers to apply the curriculum before creating an enforcement mechanism to hold curriculum implementers accountable for implementing school curricula. Selected respondents focused on the insufficiency or lack of professional training that prevented curriculum implementers from integrating classroom practices with school curricula in practice:

REB’s curriculum developers cannot train all teachers due to a lack of funds, manpower, and other resources (D2). Curriculum developers sometimes train only a sample of teachers, one subject teacher from each Zone or Woreda. And it is expected that those trained teachers will give training to the rest of the school's teachers. I am not sure that all primary schools get training on the issue of curriculum implementation (CD1). Teachers

also said that they have not seen any training given by curriculum developers or another person on how to implement components of the curriculum. (T1 and T12)

Nevertheless, in a study conducted by Perry and McWilliam (2007), it was stated that such curriculum training would also be useful for professional development and enable teachers to implement the curriculum more effectively. Teachers begin lessons feeling more ready. Similarly, Perry et al. (1990) indicate that when teachers are given pre-curriculum training, their commitment to implementing the curriculum increases. In this regard, one teacher stated that while curriculum implementation in many schools has many difficulties, teachers implement based on their commitments, and they usually expect no one to hold them accountable for translating the written curriculum into classroom practices. A teacher said that:

The new curriculum has arrived at the school every five years with no pre- or on-the-job training, but I am self-directed to implement it using students' textbooks in the classroom. I am committed to performing my duties because I worry about students' engagement with the curriculum. (T7)

Establishing regular meetings between REB's developers and school implementers to discuss curriculum goals, challenges, and feedback has paramount importance in making curriculum implementation more effective (Elmore, 2004a). Teachers witnessed that:

REB does not have any communication on how the written curriculum is translated into practice (T7). There is no meeting or regular communication between school curriculum implementers and curriculum developers (T2). REBs always send rules and regulations rather than having face-to-face meetings with the teachers (T5). I expect a lot from the curriculum developers to get clear direction on curriculum implementation ...they are far from teachers (T8). I have no communication with REB's curriculum developers...I see their printed books...it is my effort to put the curriculum into practice. (T9)

Boosting teachers' motivation is another approach to using compact relationships for efficient curriculum implementation (Cobbold, 2017). The most effective way to hold teachers responsible for following the curriculum is through motivation. Therefore, a functioning accountability framework and motivated implementers are required for the successful implementation of a

curriculum (Komba, 2017; WDR, 2004, 2015). Teachers who are highly motivated can implement the curriculum more skillfully and responsibly. In this situation, a poor compact accountability relationship will be seen, which will lead to low student engagement with the implemented curriculum, if curriculum developers have no role to motivate and inspire implementers (Pritchett, 2015). Many interviewees noted that a lack of motivation inhibits the effective implementation of the curriculum. They addressed that:

REB does not have any single coin or incentive for teachers as a means of motivation other than salary. Teachers have better salary growth than other government workers... REB has no plan for this because the regional education budget goes to teachers' salaries (CD1). Teachers provide an additional tutorial or makeup class for students without any payment for the sake of efficiency (T6). Teachers reflected their common idea that there is no incentive mechanism to differentiate teachers for good or poor practices in the classroom. (T6, T8 and T11)

However, incentives from curriculum developers can make improvements in holding implementers accountable and more responsive to their duties and responsibilities in the implementation of the curriculum. Elmore (1995) contends that weak incentives operate on teachers to change their practices in their daily work routines, despite the extraordinary costs of implementing large-scale, long-term changes in how knowledge is constructed in classrooms. Giving teachers who implement the curriculum some degree of autonomy is another method to establish compact accountability relationships.

The objective of school and teacher autonomy and accountability is to establish a framework in which those responsible for implementing the school curriculum have strong, long-lasting incentives to experiment with new teaching techniques, instructional inputs, and technological applications. Teacher autonomy and accountability are both important components of an education system that can help implement curriculum effectively. The findings of the various studies show that when autonomy and accountability are intelligently combined, they tend to be associated with better implementation of the school curricula (Arcia et al., 2011; Demas & Arcia, 2015). Respondents highlighted opposing viewpoints by stating:

I believe that teachers have unviolated autonomy. However, I do not have complete information about this (CD2). I have tiresome routine roles beyond the classroom and little freedom to accomplish many top-down activities, like making school conducive, reducing drop-out rates, and improving students' test scores, that are set by curriculum developers (T3). Curriculum developers of the REB exert pressure through WEOs' C and I experts via SMBs in the school system for better examination results (T6). Teachers do have a little autonomy to decide... But, of course, in the classroom, they have more freedom in our instructional practices. (T9)

Numerous primary school principals shared that:

School principals have too little autonomy to manage schools, encourage staff, and hold teachers accountable for poor performance in the implementation of the curriculum (SP1 and SP6). REB's curriculum developers do not provide school principals with any hiring and firing guidelines for weak implementation of the curriculum at the school/classroom level (SP4 and SP5). School principals have no budget to employ and hire better teachers. (SP3)

The enforcement made by curriculum developers for teachers who are unable to implement the curriculum as planned was also emphasized by the WEOs' C and I experts and supervisors. They frequently argued:

Teachers who are assigned to grade seven or eight students about inadequate classroom curriculum procedures cannot be fired (IE1 and IE3). Instead, school principals move teachers to the lowest grade level where they can continue to teach without losing salary. Moving unable teachers to the lower grade level has received the informal support of curriculum developers, who think it might be perceived as punishing teachers. (Sup1 and Sup3)

The above assertions imply that compact accountability relationships are impeded by a lack of full autonomy for SMBs at the school level to hold the frontline curriculum implementers accountable, and hence contribute to students' poor engagement in the curriculum. As the main body for the primary educational system, curriculum developers responsible for school curriculum

implementation may have a primary role in enforcing frontline curriculum implementers and holding them accountable by conducting closer monitoring. There is a general tendency to use data more frequently to hold curriculum developers accountable. Therefore, the original goals of accountability measures (to enhance achievement) have been widened to include reducing achievement gaps and directing schools toward specific methods of curriculum implementation. As the actual compact accountability relationship, several respondents stressed the following:

REB had no practice of individual teachers being subjected to sanctions like hiring or firing. This is because there is no compact agreement between curriculum developers and SMBs or teachers (CD2). REB, in collaboration with WEOs' C and I experts, is working on changing the position of school principals and supervisors in the teaching profession if a poor annual report is observed (SP4). It is not common practice to close schools for failed implementation of the curriculum; it is politically dangerous (CD1).

Other respondents focused on:

REB focuses on the preparation of countable reports (e.g., number of publications and distribution of textbooks) rather than classroom implementation of the curriculum. There is also a great focus on reports obtained from the school on the distribution of student textbooks, which is the students-to-textbooks ratio (CD2). If a curriculum is not properly implemented in the primary schools, the curriculum developers of the REB have nothing to do with accountability measures. (T4 and SP1)

Scholars argue that a compact accountability relationship is also required for curriculum developers to apply balanced, clear, and efficient top-down monitoring and enforcement over curriculum implementers (Pritchett, 2015; WDR, 2004). Some scholars also highlight that curriculum developers should monitor the responses of schools and educators to sanctions and rewards (Elmore, 2004b; Hamilton & Stecher, 2004). Because there may be insufficient information on which sanctions and rewards are most effective, it is important to monitor the effects of consequences on schools' and teachers' performance. If the long route of accountability is functioning effectively, the implementation of the curriculum will match the curriculum users' needs, and the curriculum implementers will be held accountable for the improvement of the implementation. The same respondents indicated that:

There is no way to hold the teachers responsible for carrying out the curriculum because REB has a great interest in the expansion of the schools (SP6). REB gave authority to the C and I experts of WEOs when it comes to monitoring, evaluating, and using sanctions and rewards (CD1). REB pays attention to educational facilities; many classes, schools, and teachers were built to the government's requests for reports on them. (CD2)

The implication is that such hardware is a bad driver for poorly implementing education, and curriculum designers tend to gravitate to it all too quickly since they seem straightforward, simple, and inexpensive. Here, we evaluate both their judging and developmental roles. Because of this, curriculum developers are much more concerned about observable and reportable school facilities than they are about how the curriculum is translated into classroom practices. This is because professional monitoring practices are not in place to keep an eye on what is happening in the classroom between teachers, students, and the curriculum. The tight accountability relationship between curriculum developers and curriculum implementers was also highlighted by all WEOs' C and I experts and some teachers as follows:

Sanction is used only in terms of school inputs and reports, not for what is going on in the classroom related to components of the curriculum (CE1 and CE3). I have not seen any pressure exerted from the curriculum developers' side to hold teachers accountable for putting the curriculum into operation (T9). Curriculum developers of the REB have no idea how to take measures of accountability through monitoring a new curriculum's implementation. (T1)

It is also important to note that, concerning a close monitoring system, an external monitoring mechanism by REB's curriculum developers should seek the internal operations of the schools to implement the curriculum as intended. This approach, by its very nature, seeks to influence, from the curriculum developers' side, what goes on in the school regarding how the written curriculum is translated into classroom practices (REB, 2009). Moreover, it is assumed that the compact accountability relationship, as an external force, can play a determining role in making changes or improvements in implementing school curricula (Di Gropello, 2004; WDR, 2004). All school principals and one curriculum developer added that:

REB's curriculum developers do not like to monitor our rural schools; rather, they need ready-made reports through WEOs (SP5). WEOs' C and I experts have no interest in or capacity to monitor classroom practices; rather, they focus on school facilities, classroom construction, and textbook distribution (SP3). Because of human and resource constraints, REB cannot address monitoring all schools in decentralized primary education (D1). REB delegated the nearest WEOs' C and I experts to monitor primary school curriculum implementers.(CD2)

The compact accountability relationship could be informed by curriculum implementers based on the voices of the curriculum users. Voice is only the first part of the long route of accountability, accompanied by a compact. That complicates its impact on the implementation of the curriculum since the impact also depends on the compact relationship between curriculum developers and curriculum implementers. In this case, if the compact accountability relationship is weak, a strong voice may fail to make the implementation of the curriculum meaningful, but the reverse is true (WDR, 2004). The assumption is that this sub-section process involves the regional government in terms of curriculum developers after receiving voices from the curriculum users, so that they can use a greater compact accountability relationship to enforce curriculum implementers for improved implementation of the curriculum. According to one respondent's view:

Either directly or indirectly, I know here that students have a shortage of textbooks, resources, and the absence of apparatuses and chemicals (CD2). I heard that parents also raised their voices about the lack of textbooks, teachers' poor commitment, lack of capacity of teachers to teach, and students' promotion without being capable... I have not practiced integrating the voices of students and parents into our plan for enforcing school curriculum implementation for better implementation of the curriculum. This is because no such trend has been practiced. (CD1)

Largely, the universalization of student performance serves as the foundation for a further compact accountability approach. The agreement between REB's curriculum developers and implementers places a strong emphasis on performance evaluations as a method for evaluating the effectiveness of curriculum implementers who put written textbooks and syllabi into practice in the classroom. Standardized tests are a relatively important tool for measuring progress, but national evaluation systems are crucial for assessing educational attainment. Assessments can measure changes in

students' performance and eventually reveal how engaged they are in the curriculum implementation (WDR, 2004). These are also mechanisms through which curriculum developers should monitor how schools and teachers respond to sanctions and rewards in the implementation of the school curriculum. PISA has sparked debates about the best systems across the world, where curriculum developers try and learn about successful curriculum reform strategies in their countries and how to replicate their success in their implementation (Ehren & Baxter, 2021). However, respondents from the REB and WEOs declared that:

REB does not tend to use the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) mechanism to hold schools or teachers accountable by comparing our curriculum and its implementation with global students. No individual schools or teachers are held accountable through this mechanism (D1)...REB uses tests and exams locally/school level prepared by subject teachers (D2). To facilitate international comparison, REB has no PISA survey performances or any other internationally standardized exams in the schools to hold curriculum implementers accountable for curriculum implementation. (CIE2 and CI3)

The debate in response to the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) has pressured curriculum developers to take immediate action to improve performance (Tillman & Tillman, 2008) and protect public trust in the school system. Mechanisms for monitoring implementation performance, such as performance evaluation, were introduced in the hope of allowing for more informed and evidence-based decisions in improving teaching quality while also being a more effective means of effect (Ehren & Baxter, 2020). PISA league tables inadvertently served as an accountability instrument, conveying the information that teachers and SMBs were collectively doing a good or bad job, thus easing the national and regional-level pressure to apply more accountability measures to curriculum implementers. In the context of the study, the trend is that even though Ethiopian primary school students have not taken the PISA, the local exam results do not bring any firing consequences for curriculum implementers. Respondent said that:

If students score low marks, it is assumed that teachers failed (T6). If students fail, it is assumed that school principals have failed (SP4). For student failure, no one has experienced job loss or demotion...rather than blaming and treating teachers and SMBs. (SP6)

One way to strengthen the compact relationship between curriculum developers and curriculum implementers is to develop a measurement and reporting system that allows the investigation of effective components of curriculum implementation. This serves as a tool for them to monitor the progress of curriculum implementation as intended. Then, followed by enforceability (the right to impose sanctions if the information or rationale is deemed inappropriate) comes into play when the compact also specifies the rewards (and possibly the penalties) that depend on the implementers' actions (WDR, 2004). However, this relationship was given little consideration to compel curriculum implementers to improve curriculum implementation; rather, this relationship served as a tiger for countable reports. In this regard, the REB's curriculum developers focused on clearer targets:

REB gives attention to the number of established schools, the number of enrolled and promoted students, the number of established schools, the number of books sent to schools, and other inputs (CD2). REB has no idea about the international standardized examination to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum implementation and to use rewards for good results and sanctions for bad ones. (CD1 and CD2)

This accountability relationship between REB's curriculum developers and school curriculum implementers is crucial for effective curriculum implementation. However, the dichotomy has two forces. The strong and the paralyzed. The strong and working accountability relationship is just to collect countable reports of urgent student-related and school inputs. Whereas, there is a paralyzed and bullying part of the accountability relationship that has weak power to hold school curriculum implementers accountable for poor performance in the implementation of the curriculum. Curriculum developers can not hold curriculum implementers accountable for curriculum implementation because of a poor enabling environment, poor professional support, insufficient information, little autonomy of curriculum implementer, weak motivation and incentives from REB no feedback loops, absence of shared vision on developed curriculum, no monitoring and evaluation process from curriculum developers, clear line of communication, and limited focus of REB to distribute books and pay teachers salary.

4.2.2.2 Compact Accountability Relationship between WEOs' C and I Experts and Curriculum Implementers (C2)

The compact accountability relationship between WEOs' C and I experts and school curriculum implementers is crucial for the effective implementation of educational curricula. It is closer top-down accountability relationship than C1 for the implementation of the curriculum. In the primary education system, this relationship is also broadly seen as part of the long-route relationship of accountability that connects the nearest WEOs' C and I experts and schools. They must oversee the implementation progress of the curriculum and take remedial actions according to the duties and responsibilities of curriculum implementers stated in the guidelines. The existing compact accountability relationship is very strong for collecting data related to curricula document distribution, school-wide average students' test scores, promotion rates, enrollment rates, and dropout rates... whereas compact failures for curriculum implementation were observed because of unclear and politicized roles and responsibilities exercised by the WEOs' experts, poor monitoring and feedback mechanisms, absence of collaborative professional development, imbalance of autonomy and accountability

As explained by experts on the curriculum at WEOs, their roles and ways of using enforcement mechanisms to hold curriculum implementers accountable are essentially focused on the distribution of books. In this regard, experts explained a similar argument:

WEOs receive students' textbooks, teachers' guides, and other teaching-learning materials from REB's curriculum developers via Zone education offices to distribute to the school (CEI3). WEOs also force schools to distribute those books to students on time (CE1). WEOs warn schools' curriculum implementers to use those books carefully until the curriculum changes. WEOs are also eager to collect data on schools' needs for textbooks to make reports to the REB. Based on the directions given by REB, if books are not distributed and kept clean, the role of the experts is to hold schools accountable. (CE2)

Concerning this accountability relationship, in developed countries like the USA, individual schools are held accountable through the mechanisms of establishing standards and evaluating the performance of students and subgroups of students on annual standardized tests. So, failing schools (i.e., schools that fail to demonstrate adequate yearly progress, as evidenced by students' scores on these standardized tests) are subject to sanctions. These sanctions range from relatively minor

actions, such as providing tutoring, to major actions, such as reforming the school staff and administration or having students transfer to other schools (Itkonen & Jahnukainen, 2007).

In most cases, government efforts to measure the outcomes of students and schools are based on students' test scores (an international large-scale assessment system, usually administered by an external body), and to provide explicit rewards and punishments based on these measures (Harris & Herrington, 2006); however, in this study area, the issue of school accountability is highly focused on collecting data on schools or students' test scores than school curriculum implementation. The regional ministry examination for grade eight is prepared by the Regional Education Bureau. These tests and exams are not standardized and are traditional. In these cases, schools are forced to be ranked by their promotion rate and the average school-wide student's scores. Some WEOs' instructional experts commonly highlighted that:

WEOs collect the data from schools on students' results, and individual schools are held accountable through the mechanism of observable data, such as students' test scores on regionally prepared grade 8 ministry exams. (IE1 and IE3)

It is important to note that the compact accountability relationship is focused on students' enrollment and drop-out rates. The compact accountability relationship is easy to exercise because the target is to collect numbers related to students. Respondents highlighted that:

The REB has given an enrollment plan through official letters, which shows the number of students to be enrolled. WEOs force schools to reach the given plan. WEOs divide the target number of students in the school to teach the maximum level. Schools should give priority to reaching the expected number of students to meet the plan (IE3). WEOs' C and I experts generally see enrollment as an expert task to hold schools accountable if the plan is not met (IE2). WEOs are not concerned with which schools effectively implement the curriculum. WEOs often set several enrollment limits for schools, so schools should be grateful for the overcrowded with students. Student dropout rate is also another mechanism to hold curriculum implementers accountable, as one of the school ranking criteria. (IE1)

Regarding this accountability relationship, instructional experts emphasized that:

Failing schools are relatively unranked schools that have failed to demonstrate yearly progress in enrollment rate data by grade level and gender, and are subject to sanctions in a haphazard manner (IE1). Accountability sanctions are likely to remove school supervisors and principals from positions and assign them to the teaching profession (IE2). Poor curriculum implementation does not result in firing from the job. (IE3)

Concerning this compact accountability relationship, when WEOs' C and I experts come to schools, they are more concerned about ranking issues based on the students' results than how students are going to be engaged in the curriculum. Hence, participants described that:

Teachers do not have a meeting on issues related to the implementation of the curriculum and how to implement it effectively (T12). WEOs enforce schools and teachers by saying that all students should be promoted. Improving students' results is a target for schools to be ranked, that is, as well as WEOs to be ranked, ZEOs to be ranked, and REB to be ranked among other regions, and finally, MoE will get funding from international donors (T7). Schools are motivated to adjust students' results to fulfill the needs of the WEOs. WEOs' C and I experts encourage schools to regulate the students' grades so they are appreciated by their political bosses. They do not like to hear about students' failure. (T10)

Rather than translating written curriculum into classroom practices, WEOs' C and I experts frequently used their compact relationships with schools' curriculum implementers to make schools' facilities that serve as ranking criteria. Teachers frequently asserted that:

Schools' curriculum implementers are extensively evaluated and held accountable for school facilities such as sports fields, clean water, latrines for boys and girls, sufficient classrooms, and students' tables and desks (T4 and T9). WEOs' C and I experts have not put any pressure on schools or teachers for what is going on in the classrooms among students, teachers, and instructional materials. (T5 and T12)

Another compact relationship is just to trust the top-down commands that cannot be escaped. These commands are specified as emerging informal activities of school functions, with various types of checklists from REB via ZEOs to the WEOs and to the schools. SPs and teachers shared similar insights about informal school embedded roles in the implementation of the curriculum (such as

students' promotion by 100%, increasing students' scores by 10%, increasing enrollment rate, reducing drop-out rate...) in classroom practices by saying:

Teachers have plans, and SMBs have also planned to implement the curriculum. ..WEOs' C and I experts forced curriculum implementers to participate in many informal activities via telephone with central politicians and curriculum developers regarding student textbook ratios, student and chair ratios, and student and classroom ratios, which violates the duties and responsibilities implementers of school curricula (SP1). WEOs use compact relationship accountability to compel curriculum implementers to participate in additional informal activities beyond the implementation of the curriculum (SP5)... Of course, politicians have goals other than implementing the curriculum effectively that divert school curriculum implementers' focus from classroom implementation of the curriculum. (T6)

One of the components of a compact accountability relationship, performing the clear roles and responsibilities of the WEOs' experts, helps in understanding who is accountable for what aspects of curriculum implementation (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000) is of paramount importance in the implementation of the curriculum. Moreover, implementing professional systematic monitoring, evaluations, and feedback loops ensures that ongoing assessments are crucial for the effective implementation of educational curricula (Hattie, 2009). However, experts have weak, compact relationships with teachers in the implementation of the curriculum. So, participants recognized that:

Although it is not good to make hasty generalizations about the WEOs' C and I experts, they are afraid to enter the classroom to evaluate teachers and give feedback about teachers' performance. They have no interest in playing formal evaluation roles as experts for the implementation of the curriculum (T2). There is no way to make teachers accountable for poor implementation of the curriculum. Even the language of the WEOs' C and I experts does not smell of educational expertise; they come to school for the sake of their presence. They are reluctant agents. Teachers are not lucky enough to expect professional support from such experts. (T5)

Another teacher also explained that:

I report individual test scores to students and parents. However, for the general public, the WEOs report scores and rankings on a school-by-school basis using school-wide averages. No one reports which teachers are effective and which are ineffective at implementing the

curriculum. No accountability measures differentiate individual teachers' performances in the implementation of the curriculum. (T10)

Although WEOs' C and I experts are positioned as professional experts, teachers explicitly suspect their expertise because they come to the school with the opinion that focusing on varying degrees of political friction is inappropriate. The political nomination has the most powerful authority because it directs the compact accountability relationship between the WEOs' C and I experts and the curriculum implementers to focus on the political issue rather than improving the implementation of the curriculum. Participants emphasized that:

I know that WEOs' C and I experts do not know how to give teachers professional development support and evaluate the implementation of the school curriculum, and even if they did, they have no practice in observing how students learn and how teachers teach (T4). Experts were teachers who could not teach their students properly; they were pulled to the office (T10). I know that they are positioned as experts based on important criteria: political membership of the ruling party, and they have relatives among the top politicians to be nominated (T11). Indeed, there is no transparent and merit-based competition to select those experts. I see that they usually come to school with a political agenda and a collection of non-curricular reports. (T4)

In this regard, other teachers highlighted that:

Experts come to school to collect information about the political views of the school community in general and the teachers' and students' views in particular... who supports the ruling party and who shows resistance to this party (T1). Experts are concentrated on uncovering hidden political agendas, and they have many structural connections to the community outside of the school (T4). Experts are often called by the teachers as "data collectors." They are far from knowing the curriculum and its implementation. Implementing a curriculum is commonly left to the teacher alone. (T11)

School principals were worried about the future generation because WEOs' C and I experts have always used strong, compact accountability relationships for political concerns. Explaining this issue, they painted that:

I see that the implementation of the curriculum is politicized, and students are not effectively engaged in the school curriculum (SP2). SMBs and teachers are busy with unnecessary routine activities (SP3). Curriculum implementation has a priority agenda in the twenty-first century, but schools are failing to implement the curriculum as intended (SP2). Experts force school curriculum implementers to data-driven issues rather than curriculum leadership roles for curriculum implementation. (SP1)

Collaborative professional development that fosters joint training sessions through a compact accountability relationship for experts and school curriculum implementers can build a shared understanding of curriculum goals and strategies to implement the curriculum as intended (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; WDR, 2004). This training helps educators understand the curriculum deeply and equips them with effective teaching strategies. Yet teachers highlighted that:

I have not seen any short-term training regarding curriculum implementation that leads to accountability for the failure of curriculum implementation (T9). No one from the WEOs comes to school and gives capacity-building training... hence, in case the curriculum is poorly implemented, teachers aren't subject to sanction. (T5)

To support school curriculum implementers in meeting expectations of curriculum implementation, Experts often provide ongoing professional development opportunities. Other teachers stressed that:

The curriculum is developed at REB, and I am forced to implement it without the necessary training (T8). I have no clear line of communication with experts for classroom curriculum practices (T4). There is no school-based professional development regarding the implementation of the curriculum... and hence, no one can hold teachers accountable for classroom practices. (T2)

Monitoring the implementation where Woreda officials regularly monitor classroom practices through observations, assessments, and data analysis to ensure that the curriculum is being implemented as intended (Hill & Grossman, 2013; MoE, 2002). Experts would analyze the observed data to evaluate whether curriculum implementers are meeting educational goals tied to

curriculum implementation (Hamilton & Stecher, 2006). This observation result helps experts exercise accountability measures to hold curriculum implementers accountable for the implementation of the curriculum. Yet teachers addressed,

I have never seen any experts enter my class to tell me the weak and strong (T8). No classroom observation by experts; they come to school for another purpose (T4). Experts are afraid to enter the classroom to give constructive comments, followed by accountability measures...because they are not positioned by professional competition (T1). There is no feedback and no accountability actions because monitoring is not functional. (T10)

International studies show that the accountability relationship between experts and school curriculum implementers needs to balance autonomy (Ben-Peretz, 2012; Canning, 2013). Thus, without sufficient autonomy, it may be challenging for implementers to implement curricula as expected (Pekince Kardaş, 2019; WDR, 2004, 2018). When implementers are held accountable for subordinate roles /schooling without being given the autonomy to make decisions about how to achieve those roles, it can lead to frustration and disengagement (Elmore, 2004a). Regarding teachers' autonomy, they declare that:

I leave class work and run with extra work (T3). I have no right to violate what the experts say (T2). If experts say to bring a student, I will go to the countryside and find a student for a week or more (T1). If experts force me to make registration of a new student, I will go and look for a student (T4). If they say to raise the students' test scores beyond the normal achievement, I add some amount (T10). If principals force me to increase students' exam scores by a certain percentage, I have no authority because I lose efficiency points (T12). I am working beyond my professional responsibilities to find students... my role is to teach, (T11)

School principals and supervisors also add that:

Schools are competing in the district, and experts told school principals to increase students' scores (SP1, SP6, and SP3). Experts use enforcement by saying that schools must increase students' exam results and reduce dropout rates to improve their school standards (Sup2 and Sup3). I do what the experts order me to do. I have no right to refuse (Sup1).

The extra work of preparing reports is the game that inhibits school principals from implementing the curriculum effectively (SP2 and SP5). I have no autonomy to ignore the top-down command, even for extra work. (Sup2)

One can argue that there are two approaches to a compact accountability relationship. These were the technically powerful and the collapsed ones. The first one shows that experts used the influential compact accountability relationship to enforce school curriculum implementers to count reports through technical and political procedures that shift the implementers' focus away from the implementation of the curriculum as planned. This accountability chain focused on the essence of competition and strong consequences. Experts were tasked to hold curriculum implementers accountable for manipulating reports to be collected from the schools related to school facilities and student enrollment rate, dropout rate, which may be used for the sake of ranking schools, WEOs, and REBs. Yet such compact practices have a hidden agenda that benefits the experts, curriculum developers, and politicians too, that limits the practices of school curriculum implementers to schemata beyond the classroom curriculum practices.

The second is the collapsed compact accountability relationship due to unclear communication of duties and responsibilities, poor monitoring and evaluation, absence of collaborative professional development, and insufficient autonomy... followed by shallow control and accountability measures for implementing the curriculum. The implication of this study indicates that the compact is not working in the right direction to lead SMBs and teachers to implement the curriculum professionally. This accountability relationship of the primary education system has problems that lead to eroded professional roles and responsibilities of curriculum implementers that resulting in resistance, hesitation, and conflict among the teachers, supervisors, school principals, and experts. I believe that such local system-based specific compact practices are bad for the proper implementation of the curriculum and will hinder future improvements in the implementation process.

4.2.3 Curriculum Users' Power Accountability Relationships

The third type of accountability is the curriculum users' power relationship, defined as a relationship that connects parents and students to school organizations (WDR, 2004). Under this type of accountability, the end-users of the curriculum are expected to hold curriculum

implementers (teachers and SMBs) accountable for implementing the school curriculum. Schools are institutions that foster and broaden a child's intellectual capacity; schools are at the core of helping to develop caring individuals who are capable of making sound choices and solving problems fairly and equitably (Kohn, 1993). Students have a right to get appropriate teaching-learning support from teachers and to have their performance evaluated (MoE, 2002).

Teachers and SMBs must be accountable to curriculum users for identifying and meeting the needs of individual students responsibly and knowledgeably based on professional standards of practice and for continually evaluating how well their practices are meeting the needs of students in translating written curricula (Darling-Hammond, 1991). This can be done through a power-accountability relationship. Significantly, power provides core concepts for redefining the nature of students' control and their relationship to the classroom curriculum implementation process, and strengthens transparent communication with the SMBs. Thus, the following analysis will indicate the practice of curriculum users exercising their powers or rights to hold curriculum implementers accountable for the enhanced implementation of the curriculum through the communication of SMBs to meet the needs of students.

Indeed, the long route to accountability must therefore be complemented by the short route, in which parents mobilize at the local level and interact with SMBs and teachers directly to express needs and demands and obtain a better implementation of the curriculum. The assumption is that the curriculum developers may not specify all actions of SMBs and teachers in the compact. Curriculum users must reveal to SMBs and teachers their demands for the implementation of the curriculum and monitor the teachers' roles during the implementation of the curriculum. Hence, the analysis of students' and parents' power accountability relationships with primary school curriculum implementers will be discussed as follows.

4.2.3.1 Students' Power Accountability Relationships

Since C and I, experts at WEOs, cannot specify all actions for curriculum implementation in the compact accountability relationship, students must exercise their power accountability relationship to increase the role of SMBs to monitor teachers' roles. Students are the primary stakeholders to exercise their right to improve the implementation of the curriculum. Students' powers are viewed as an emerging and complex concept that refers to students engaging in dialogue, discussion, and

consultation on issues concerning their education, particularly in the implementation of the curriculum (McEachern, 2008). Under this sub-section, the student tried to exercise their power accountability relationship about the shortage of teachers, incompetent teachers, lack of instructional materials, and wastage of instructional time...

However, the empirical result of the study highlighted that the existing power accountability relationships were not enough to improve the implementation of the curriculum and were challenged by local norms, little information, the absence of an accountability policy, poor feedback from SMBs, weak dialogue on the implementation of curriculum, students' disappointed behavior, fear of political conditions, and teachers' superior behaviors against students' rights.

Concerning students' understanding of educational accountability, they have limited details on how to hold teachers accountable for effective curriculum implementation in the classroom. This was brought up by Participant S8:

I know whether a teacher is present or absent on any given school day. I know how much time the teacher devotes to tasks, and I know whether the classroom appears purposeful and well-organized to me. While implementing the curriculum, I observed whether the teacher treated me kindly or rudely. I respect my teacher, and this is our norm. I think that I have limited information to influence teachers' behaviors for better implementation of the curriculum.

When students have access to information about the status of curriculum implementation in their schools, they are more likely to be able to hold curriculum implementers accountable for better curriculum implementation. Nonetheless, S1 also explained:

Students are always informed about what they do regarding their behaviors, but not about what teachers do. I don't have a clear strategy or accountability policy to increase the accountability of teachers for curriculum implementation.

Students made numerous requests to the SMBs through their power accountability relationships. Monitoring by SMBs should improve accountability for better implementation of the curriculum. In practice, SMBs have paid little attention to open opportunities for collaborative discussion using

management accountability relationships with teachers. Elaborating on this issue, students mentioned common views:

Students observe that some teachers are absent from the classroom and do not complete the assigned subjects (for example, chemistry, biology, and others) within the time frame specified in the annual plan. If a teacher wastes education, SMBs don't care (S2 and S3). Students know about their right to learn, but they are ill-informed to hold both teachers and SMBs accountable for the implementation of the curriculum (S5 and S6). There is no formal space for meaningful dialogue among students, teachers, and SMBs on accountability issues for curriculum implementation. (S10 and S12)

Students devote time to education to ensure that the curriculum is implemented correctly. Listening to student rights may be used by students in the school to establish power relationships and persuade others. Students genuinely want to talk to them about how the school curriculum is being poorly implemented. Students expressed their unhappiness, affirming:

Through our classroom monitor, I communicate issues concerning teachers' pedagogical and content knowledge. I am not satisfied with the instructional methods used by English and mathematics teachers. The SMBs remain silent and reply with no response, and sometimes they claim that they lack the authority to punish or fire teachers for poor performance. Teachers are trained and employed to teach by the government. Teachers' salaries are from the government (S7). SMBs don't want to get involved in classroom matters with teachers (S10). No hope from SMBs to address my problem....Only quiet learning will save me. (S11)

In terms of this power-accountability relationship for increasing curriculum implementers' accountability, students are demotivated and hopeless about their education, and they are less concerned with holding teachers accountable for curriculum implementation. Several respondents highlighted:

To earn money and survive, I simply need to complete Grade 8 and become a licensed car driver. I dislike continuing my education at secondary school and University. This is because I notice a large number of unemployed graduates around us. I've been discouraged from exercising my right to hold teachers accountable to improve curriculum

implementation (S5). ...unemployment is high; I do not like to put pressure on teachers and school principals. (S12)

The student is more probably learn in a comfortable school environment. A learning environment that is right for students to feel connected with teachers and SMBs, and take responsibility for exercising their power and accountability relationship. They can also express their opinion without fear (MoE, 2002). Conversely, poor communication with SMBs was evident on the part of the student due to frustration. This frustration was due to the frictional force of the political situation that lowered the rights of the students. Students noticed:

The political spirit has polluted the school environment. It is not secure. I dislike reporting deficiencies in curriculum implementation to SMBs or teachers. I'm afraid to bring my concerns to the appropriate body. I do have very limited power to challenge (S4). If I raise a question, SMBs will tell me that you want to disturb... I am afraid. (S10).

Other participants stated as well:

Our curriculum is designed to kill time rather than create jobs, resulting in an unemployed graduate. So, in the current risky political environment, I have not participated in debates, protests, or movements against the failure of curriculum implementation. I'm unable to express my opinion because it might be politicized (S2). I am afraid to use technology platforms within the school to express problems related to the curriculum... for it may cause unexpected consequences against me. (S12)

As part of the essential responsibilities and roles of a teacher in a school, teachers sincerely and regularly attend classes. In contrast, one student highlighted the practical reality:

I am usually afraid to notify SMBs when I see teachers are wasting instructional time... Some teachers use shrinking their faces as a personal revenge mechanism against students. SMBs are more concerned with school construction, facilities, and maintenance than with classroom curriculum implementation. (S6)

One more student emphasized the waste of their classroom instruction by saying:

When teachers are absent and wasting instructional time, I communicate with school principals through the classroom monitor. The principal is aware of this and warns students to be quiet in the classroom. (S4)

Teachers are primarily accountable to the students (Maphosa et al., 2012). However, when the implementer lacks basic knowledge, skills, and experience, it is difficult to successfully implement a curriculum (Mokhele, 2012; Olamo et al., 2019). Students mentioned that there were few chances to learn from more qualified teachers and to hold them accountable. Students made it clear:

I was usually in charge of informing SMBs about teachers' limitations in implementing the curriculum in the classroom, particularly in physics and chemistry... The school principals' response is always that the school didn't have any other qualified teachers (S6 and S9). Principals cannot choose and hire qualified teachers (S12). SMBs cannot meet the teacher's needs...they are usually skeptical of teachers' classroom practices. Nobody can monitor or hold teachers accountable for their performance in the classroom (S9).

Regarding the issue of teacher competence, students' opinions were not easily and readily heard by SMBs. Another respondent also addressed that:

I come across teachers who lack subject knowledge. I notified the SMBs. They do not like to punish teachers, and they ignore my request. To be honest, SMBs are more concerned with additional classroom construction than with my needs for what is going on in the classrooms. (S7)

The power of the students was overlooked by SMBs regarding failure in curriculum implementation, which was associated with management accountability relationship failure to communicate with teachers. According to some students,

I repeatedly requested more qualified English teachers. If you ask SMBs, they will tell you that the government trained teachers at the College of Teacher Education and sent them to schools as if they were capable graduates ...there is nothing that I can do... Who is responsible for using sanctions to improve curriculum implementation? (S3). I usually report poor curriculum implementation related to teachers' weaknesses to the SMBs... they do not treat it as a serious issue (S5). SMBs don't want to fight with teachers who show poor performance (S11 and S12). Both SMBs and teachers use the principles that I do not touch you and do not touch me, let the curricula be implemented anyway. (S8)

The power accountability relationship between students, teachers, and SMBs is crucial for fostering a positive learning environment for implementing the curriculum as intended. However,

one can argue that teachers and SMBs cannot address the needs of the students through power accountability relationships by fostering respect, collaboration, and upholding students' rights, engaging students in democratic decision-making processes related to curriculum implementation may promote accountability. As can be seen from the analysis above, timely student dialogue is not advocated to influence curriculum implementers because students do not get the opportunity to adequately exercise their powers in a democratic manner as necessary. Fear of the political environment, domination of local norms, the superior character of teachers and SMBs...lack of regular follow-up and monitoring for the implementation of the curriculum are the main challenges that affect students to express their rights..

4.2.3.2 Parents' Powers Accountability Relationships

Parents can have a significant role in this accountability relationship to hold curriculum implementers accountable. According to WDR (2004), the short-term focus indicates that reforms have the potential to improve the implementation of the curriculum. Such models focus on building a direct relationship between parents and other community members and schools and address many of the problems encountered by systems emphasizing the long route of accountability. Examples of short route-focused reforms like decentralization by devolution lead to empowering parents to participate and make decisions, to hold the accountability of schools and teachers. So, according to the reform of MoE (2002), along with improved accountability, the benefits of parents' control include greater parental ownership and involvement for better implementation of the school curriculum.

Parental rights enable parents to monitor SMBs' decisions and actions in the implementation of the curriculum. Since parents are taxpayers and one of the financial resources of the schools, it is fairly straightforward for parents to assess whether the teacher is present and not abusive to students. This makes teachers accountable for their performance when parents are more closely involved in the activities of the schools. Here, no one questions the importance of parental involvement. No one suggests that there is enough parental involvement. Parental involvement must go beyond traditional forms of participation, such as attending school functions, parent-teacher conferences, homework help, and fundraising activities. Through the parents' accountability relationship, it was observed that weak involvement of parents, narrow practice of school choice, insufficient performance and commitment of teachers, inadequate information and

feedback mechanisms, and cultural norms... have inhibited parents' participation in holding teachers and SMBs accountable for the curriculum implementation.

Participants noted that:

I have gotten strong benefits from having a school that is accessible in terms of reducing transportation, time, and costs; it has expressed pride, and I sense ownership. I participated in the maintenance of the school facility and contributed money to support school construction (P1). I trust that teachers would have to implement the curriculum according to their duties, and SMBs also act accordingly by involving parents...But I usually observe that students are not learning well (P6). I can't get access to monitor teachers. I participate in school community meetings and financial contributions. (P10)

Having more options for schools would give parents more influence over whether to send their children to school or not, which would encourage parental power accountability to hold SMBs. According to Potterton (2020), parents have the option to choose schools for their children based on performance metrics such as test scores or graduation rates. This choice creates a competitive environment where schools must implement curriculum effectively to attract families. Parents have the right to choose which school their child will attend and to transfer the child to another school of their choice in case they are dissatisfied. The regional state does not provide a budget for students who are attending a poor-performing public school to transfer to a better-performing private school. There is no such nation. Parents indicated that:

Parents have no choice between public schools because they are almost similar and governed by the same policies and curriculum (P4). Public schools are similar, so families educate their children nearby (P8). Rich families can take their children to private schools. (P10)

Regarding the choice of school and teachers, other parents said that:

Only a few rich parents send their children to private schools in Nekemte town by traveling more than 30-40 kilometers (P5). Students from poor households are more likely to remain in the public schools (P2). School choice has no overall impact on the quality of school

curriculum implementation because schools are highly crowded with poor parents (P11). ...public school teachers' salaries are not collected from the parents but rather from the regional government... So, I cannot choose other teachers and hold poor performance accountable (P9). Unfortunately, there is no market-based accountability policy that corresponds to policies providing parents with greater school choice. (P7 and P8)

Through the power accountability relationship, the majority of the parents raised concerns about weak performance and commitment of teachers who do not engage students with the engagement in the curriculum. They highlighted that:

I heard from my child that some teachers are absent from the school and they do not have good subject area knowledge, skills, or ways of thinking for effective instruction in various subjects, such as Gada, Chemistry, and Physics. I have a strong preference for teachers who can improve my child's performance... (P5). SMBs have little attention and weak management accountability relationships to punish teachers (P4). ... SMBs cannot choose competent teachers and cannot fire teachers for poor performance in the implementation of the curriculum (P1). SMB cannot make any adjustments related to teachers hiring and firing (P11). The REB simply sends graduated teachers to the schools with a salary (P12). If the parents raise the problem of curriculum implementation related to the teacher, SMBs respond that "the school has no more competent teacher." (P2)

Regarding communication, participating parents emphasized that:

Regular communication between parents and teachers, and SMBs (P11). If parents don't have any information, teachers have low commitment and performance. Parents have nothing to use in holding teachers to account (P2). Parents have not seen any reports of rewards or sanctions for accountability relationships from the SMBs for teachers who did better or engaged students less in the curriculum. (P12)

Even though regular communication between parents and SMBs can help ensure that teachers are aware of parental expectations regarding curriculum engagement, some parents additionally responded that:

Parents do not have any formal parent-teacher agreement or communication book, which leads me to hold teachers to account for their roles in putting the curriculum into action (P3). Parents essentially have limited power in communicating and correcting teachers' behavior to meet the needs of their children for curriculum implementation. (P4 and P6)

Parents have limited information to participate directly in observing curriculum implementation at the classroom level. Several parents indicated that:

During family meetings, SMBs focus on student discipline, donations, and classroom repairs... to hide their deficiencies, but do not mention the shortcomings of the education system (P4). Families who have the opportunity to enter the classroom are not allowed to see how students learn (P3). I have unclear information on how to hold teachers and school principals accountable if my child does not engage in the curriculum effectively (P10). At the meeting, no one told me the procedures for expressing my power accountability relationship (T9). SMBs force me to contribute money and construct school buildings. (P12)

Some parents said:

I know that I must have more rights to speak up when making decisions about the status of the school curriculum (P10). ...I have not gotten a chance to monitor teachers' performance. I think they have to be trusted, but they also have to be accountable (P1). SMBs do not like to provide full information on how parents hold teachers accountable for students' engagement in the curriculum (P6). Most of the time, SMBs limit their participation to overseeing the implementation of the curriculum rather than providing materials and finances (P2). Schools do not always provide adequate opportunities or channels for parental involvement in issues related to curriculum implementation. (P11)

Parents are culturally expected to respect teachers as they appropriately perform their responsibilities. Parents consider their cultural norms in the power accountability relationship to save teachers from further firing. So numerous parents commented:

Parents called through PTAs to attend meetings on school issues (5). It is our norm to respect teachers... (P9). In meetings, I do not like to expose them to the SMBs. I do have higher expectations for teachers to implement the curriculum according to their duties (P10). I prefer to work with teachers in a coordinated manner and to be involved in their teaching processes and making decisions... to advise them for better performance. But I do not like their dismissal from the job as a result of their weakness. (P4)

In this regard, other parents stressed that:

I have never pressured teachers to be punished and fired except by giving constructive comments (P12). It is better to advise teachers than to fire them because there are not enough teachers in the schools (P1). I think teachers should be counseled rather than fired. (P10)

The implication is that parents have limited access to monitor the teaching-learning process, lack information on accountability issues and mechanisms, and exercise local and traditional norms that direct them to blindly respect and trust curriculum implementers as if they are capable and responsible. This local norm led them to be afraid of blaming curriculum implementers for not being punished and dismissed. Hence, as direct participants and intended beneficiaries of the implementation of the curriculum, parents have inadequate practices in using parental power to hold curriculum implementers accountable for the improved implementation of the school curriculum.

With the parental power accountability relationship, school staff/teachers are held accountable for satisfying parents' demands in the implementation of the curriculum rather than focusing on reporting numbers (number of enrolled students, classrooms, committees, dropped-out students, books...). In reality, teachers are often held responsible for meeting the needs of the individual child in the implementation of the curriculum, despite inadequate resources that require tradeoffs. Although parents show their effort, the short route of accountability relationship is still weakened by SMBs' unresponsive effort to hold teachers accountable based on parents' requests for enhancing the implementation of the curriculum. SMBs and teachers themselves have little or no autonomy to formulate a valuable response to parents' complaints. PTAs are simply a means of

mobilizing additional resources for the school rather than responding to the curriculum users' concerns on curriculum implementation issues.

4.2.4 Management Relationships

Management accountability relationships can play a great role in the enactment of the school curriculum. Internally, it is the close relationship between the SMBs and frontline curriculum implementers, who are teachers, that engages in the actual implementation of curriculum components. It is multidirectional and is focused more on the internal accountability approach, in which teachers have personal responsibility for engaging their students with the curriculum. Through management accountability relationships, accountability is fundamentally implemented in schools as a command tool for teachers to do urgent and additional work quickly. Teachers' view about school accountability indicates that:

Accountability is a directive to intimidate teachers (T4 and T6). Accountability is usually used to compel the teachers (T8, T10, and T12). Accountability is used when any message from the WEOs comes to the school to enforce teachers (T7 and T11). Accountability is used to keep the teacher busy. It is useful for reporting urgently needed student-related reports, not for what is being done in the classroom (T1 and T3). Accountability is a tool for ordering additional work (T5 and T9). I think accountability is a tool thrown from the top down to make the teacher work in fear. It is a confusing task for the teacher to stay calm and not complete the classroom curriculum practices in a given plan. (T9)

To highlight the management accountability relationship, SMBs oversee the evaluation of teachers and programs in the implementation of prescribed objectives. Besides, they should be offering ongoing guidance, assistance, and feedback to facilitate curriculum implementation, and a specific process should exist by which teachers are held accountable to students and parents through SMBs for meeting specific curriculum objectives. On the other hand, several school systems have seized the opportunity to transform their accountability systems, recognize teachers as integral parts of constructive accountability, and use their systems to provide positive and meaningful feedback (Reeves, 2004).

The management accountability relationship serves as a mechanism for effective curriculum implementation by providing teachers with enabling environments such as adequate in-service training, resources, information, motivation, and others (Pritchett, 2015; WDR, 2004). If teachers lack that enabling environment, no accountability approach can succeed (Smith & Benavot, 2019; UNESCO, 2017). In the context of this study, the empirical evidence shows that management accountability relationships for curriculum implementation were extremely linked with many emerging themes such as enabling environment, students' test scores and students' rate of promotion, students' dropout rate, and students' enrollment rate, wastage of instructional time, and autonomy of both teachers and SMBs that are going to be discussed one after the other. The management accountability relationship in the sampled government schools appears to be uniform because the schools are governed by the same zone education office under the same guidelines. Because of this, respondents address almost similar reflections. Regarding school enabling environments, scholars argue that no accountability approach can be effective if teachers do not have an enabling environment for exercising internal management accountability relationship (clear information, motivation, resources, and capacity building) or are ill-equipped to meet their responsibilities as intended (Fullan, 2000; Olson, 2014). In practice, school principals discovered:

I do not like to punish teachers who are in the school and classroom because they may have many deficiencies in implementing the curriculum as expected (SP3)...the results of on-the-job training, capacity-building programs at the school level, language improvement programs, low teacher salaries, no house allowance, market inflation, remoteness of the school, and a lack of incentives can affect me to hold teachers accountable (SP2). With the school budget, SMBs cannot afford the necessary support for teachers to successfully implement the curriculum. (SP4 and SP1))

Parent-teacher associations recognized that parents and students expressed dissatisfaction with the curriculum implementation during a meeting with the school community. They claim that poor curriculum implementation is caused by teachers' poor performance, even by calling their names and the subjects, and the grades they teach. However, they assumed that typically, they do not have the authority to hold teachers accountable for classroom curriculum practices for several reasons. They emphasized that:

Based on comments from parents and students at the meeting, SMBs contact teachers and meet with them to give clear directions to frustrate them (PTA1). Formal accountability mechanisms are difficult to use...I have not seen any report from the school principal (PTA6). I cannot use accountability measures such as hiring for good and firing for bad because this is not the current role that is exercised in the schools (PTA5). I cannot hold teachers accountable due to salary payments are not made by the schools (PTA3). Intervention from WEOs cannot allow us to exercise a high-stakes accountability mechanism (PTA2). I have no authority to punish teachers for weak implementation of the curriculum... This may cause conflict. (PTA4)

PTAs play a vital role in fostering communication and collaboration between parents. Yet, PTA3 highlighted his argument as,

Accountability for holding teachers usually fails due to employment laws and agreements between the schools and the teachers. I focus on creating a collaborative environment where teachers, parents, students, and school principals work together to enhance the implementation of the curriculum.

In this regard, I observed that sample schools have more teachers in one or more subjects and fewer or no teachers in other subjects (e.g., for example, physics and English). If the class is covered by a teacher, the concern about accountability relationships from SMBs will get little emphasis.

A biology teacher was assigned to teach English subjects to cover the shortage of English teachers, which resulted in ineffectiveness in putting the curriculum into effect. So no one can hold this biology teacher accountable for the poor translation of the curriculum into classroom practices. The same is true for other subjects, and I even saw a teacher teaching two different classes to cover the shortage of teachers. In this case, accountability for curriculum implementation is overemphasized. (Observation, February 24, 2021)

If there is no link between incentives and performance in the management accountability relationship between SMBs and teachers, it allows excellent teachers working under adverse conditions to be paid the same amount as those who never show up. This lowers the morale of good teachers and forces them to abandon effective classroom practices to implement the

curriculum (WDR, 2004). For curriculum implementation in the classroom, all teachers are confined to a single accountability box. One teacher emphasized that:

SMBs have little or no capacity to provide professional development and other capacity-building training for teachers on curriculum implementation. That is, teachers' workloads and pay are not differentiated based on performance. There will be no financial incentives if there is no performance pay after the evaluation. Rewards and sensations cannot be used to determine whether or not the curriculum is implemented as intended. SPs evaluate teachers' instructional practices during a formal evaluation period (once per semester) as a superficial strategy to rate and assess teachers' efficiency. Evaluation is made for the sake of formality. Teachers place a low value on... (T4)

The assertion is that there is a lack of performance-based pay, motivation, and professional training that helps to distinguish teachers' roles to exercise management accountability relationships to hold teachers accountable for poor curriculum implementation. Along with the teachers' assertions about management accountability relationships, several parent-teacher associations give more details:

I was elected by the school community to work with other SMBs. I am a volunteer, and I do not have a salary or government employers to hold teachers accountable through formal educational structures (PTA2). I invest my money, time, and energy in the curriculum to make it effectively implemented. I do have a meeting on various school issues: parent involvement, teachers' performance, funding, making the school attractive, and observing student learning, behavior, and the like (PTA3). Based on the report from school principals, I decided to collaborate with school committees on teachers' absenteeism and poor performance, wastage of time, and conflict between teachers and students (PTA1). Unfortunately, there is no reliable, well-documented data on the rate of teacher absenteeism and wastage of instructional time in the study area. (Observation, February 24, 2021)

Concerning students' test scores and rate of promotion, according to the Ethiopian primary education guidelines, teachers should be held accountable for their duties and responsibilities to effectively implement the curriculum in the classroom (MoE, 2002). When asked about this accountability relationship, however, all respondents emphasized the importance of students' test scores, promotion, dropouts, and enrollment as the most important reasons for SMBs to operate a

management accountability relationship to hold teachers accountable. Numerous teacher respondents commonly remarked on similar fashions that were exercised in the schools:

Now and then, we do have a meeting with SMBs on issues that violate the education guidelines. The big issues are enhancing students' results and promoting all (100%) students to the next class (T4). The issues of students' promotion are directly linked to teachers' evaluation and efficiency results, as an instrument that holds teachers accountable (T1). Teachers are evaluated and held accountable by the number of students promoted. (T10)

SMBs use student promotion as an additional management accountability relationship to evaluate teachers. In this case, WEOs' C and I experts evaluate the school principals and supervisors, and the efficiency result is linked to the efficiency of the school principals. Concerning student advancement, school principals and supervisors stressed that:

I am aware of my duties and responsibilities as outlined in the guidelines... top-down enforcement manipulates my leadership roles (SP2). The guidelines do not state that the schools must promote all students, but WEOs told the school to do so (Sup3). If schools do not promote all students, they would be out of rank among the Woreda schools punished (Sup1). If schools have high promotion school principal will get the promotion (Sup3). WEOs' C and I experts have commanded school principals and supervisors to hold teachers accountable for promoting students because all students are expected to be promoted to the next class to increase the rate of promotion (Sp1 and Sup4).

In addition to the above views,

I use evaluation rubrics for teachers to perform well and promote all students, and sometimes I informally enforce them to improve students' results by adding some marks (SP6). I encourage teachers to uniformly increase the students' exam results. This is helpful for the school's overall evaluation, among others. (SP5)

Fullan (2011, p.153), on the other hand, warns against unintended consequences that may occur when policymakers/curriculum developers rely too heavily on students' test scores to punish teachers, even though these are important but "wrong" drivers of curriculum implementation. In

practice, school management accountability relationships are primarily used to hold teachers accountable for students' test scores, and teachers are held accountable for many SMBs' questions. In this regard, some teachers have an overlapping and groundbreaking view, and they reported that:

Even SMBs evaluate teachers by raising questions like, "Why is this number of students' test scores lower?" or "Why did this number of students not score high?" ... and teachers are implementing a curriculum under the hard pressure of SMBs (T11 and T4). SMBs are only interested in holding teachers accountable for statistics and figures to satisfy the needs of their bosses, WEOs, or MoE, but not for the genuine practice of the curriculum in the classroom (T9). SMBs put pressure on teachers to improve students' overall test scores from the previous year because they have the desire to be liked, popular, and blessed in front of the WEOs. (T8 and T2)

Every person is accountable for his or her behavior, but not for what other students do. Teachers must be held accountable for what they do as teachers, but not for what their students do as learners. Students are responsible for their learning (Frymier, 1998). However, holding teachers to improve by a fixed percentage or number of students' results is a serious issue that teachers are forced to address. Several teachers sadly highlighted their common trend in enhancing students' scores by saying:

MoE seriously needs improved students' test scores to beg for funds (T11). Improving student results is a tedious and time-consuming task for teachers because teachers are held accountable for what students do. For example, if the cumulative average of students' scores from last year is 60%, a teacher will be held accountable for improving the students' mean score by 65% to 70% for the next year (T2, T8, and T10).

In the management accountability relationship, the focus is on the easy increment of the students' exam results, which forces them to practice with their students. Teachers also underlined that:

Increasing students' marks by a fixed number or more than 10%, which is given as a plan by school principals, has been the common and usual practice in primary schools (T8, T6, and T9). SMBs force teachers to improve students' test scores by 5% to 10%, and they are

looking to report to the WEOs (T1, T3, and T7). Teachers were forced to emphasize enhancing students' test scores as their primary duty. (T11 and T6)

Evidently, from a document review of teachers' annual plans given by SMBs, one of the expected roles of the teachers is to improve students' results by 10% from the previous or last year's average score. The implication is that SMBs were exercising their management accountability relationship to hold teachers accountable for enhancing students' results by giving less emphasis to the role of teachers in the classroom. The sensation in this case is that it lowers teachers' efficiency results. There was also an approach in management accountability relationships to that mythical association between teachers' efficiency results and students' results, as strong accountability vis-à-vis successful curriculum implementation. As a result, teachers are blindly accepted to be held accountable for improving students' test scores through whatever means they consider to achieve a high level of efficiency. Teachers reported that:

SMBs assumed that if students' test scores improved, they generalized as if the curriculum was effectively implemented in the classroom (T1). If students' results do not show improvement, then our efficiency result, which is used for our career advancement, must be lowered (T11 and T12). It is assumed that good teachers have good test scores that are manipulated (T8 and T9). Bad teachers who have normal test scores in students' achievement should be held accountable for lower efficiency results. (T1, T3, and T6)

According to the MoE (2002), teachers are responsible for ensuring that students' test scores and examinations are properly administered; results are recorded, filled out, and handled by the appropriate bodies. In addition, students are promoted from one grade to the next based on the promotion guidelines. Accountable teachers are aware of how frequently they use assessments to grade student work and tests. Nonetheless, T6 emphasized his point of view by explaining:

In practice, my role is to implement the curriculum as intended, but not to force students to pass the exams. I dislike recording students' results for the sake of the school's rank. I have a responsibility to produce acceptable outcomes and well-disciplined citizens, not simply to satisfy top education officials with outcomes. The better teacher, in my opinion, has more confidence in deciding on various issues of the curriculum implementation

process. Many accusations were made during the meeting, and personally, for failing to raise, manipulate, and improve students' test results.

Similarly, various school stakeholders are dissatisfied and point the finger at teachers even when students are detained and perform poorly. One teacher specifically stated:

If students failed, they would not be satisfied; if students failed, parents are not satisfied; if students failed, SMBs in general and SPs in particular, are not satisfied; if students failed, WEOs' C and I experts are not satisfied; if students fail, curriculum developers of REB are not satisfied; and if students fail generally, the government/politicians are not satisfied. (T4)

The same respondent elaborated on his point by asking the following questions:

How can I satisfy all of these stakeholders while remaining accountable? Why should I not be held accountable for what happens in the classroom? How can I tell the difference between accountable and non-accountable teachers when it comes to curriculum implementation? Are teachers held accountable if they meet the needs of all stakeholders? A teacher also argued that it is my responsibility to teach the students, while learning and passing the exams is the responsibility of the students, and it is difficult for me to predict how many students will pass the exam. Holding me fully accountable for students' advancement is therefore inappropriate and unfair, and it undermines my credibility that this does not help, as it works to the detriment of my work. (T4)

The interpretation is that this accountability relationship has harmed teachers' ability to be held accountable for what happens in the classroom. However, SMBs would rather put pressure on teachers to hold them accountable for improving student outcomes to meet the needs of stakeholders. The saddest and worst part is that there is no solid evidence that these approaches to raising students' results and accountability are linked to teachers' work to manipulate students' exam results. Management accountability relationships are also actively functional concerning the issue of school rank by improving student results. Several respondents frequently stated that this accountability relationship emphasized students' outcomes as informed by SMBs via top-down

accountability relationships via WEOs' C and I experts to deprofessionalize teachers. They remembered:

SMBs make enforcement on teachers to manipulate numbers to raise students' results to be ranked among schools in the Woreda or Zone education office to get rewards (T9). This is essentially linked to the REB to be ranked (SP2). Ideally, high test scores are assumed to be high-quality learning practiced in the school (Sup3). If teachers ethically record students' tests according to students' performance, they must be blamed and warned by SMBs (T2). This is an internal management accountability relationship that violates teachers' professional practice to implement the curriculum as intended. (T5)

Additionally, the management accountability relationship has attracted special attention to students' dropout and enrollment rates, in holding teachers accountable. The number of dropouts and enrollment rates is also another amazing and chronic issue, which means that SMBs initiated monitoring teachers to search for those dropped students. Some participants observed that:

The majority of students do not like to attend school regularly (T3). They do have little hope for their future careers (T12). Students may drop out if they get a survival income (T1). Teachers travel from village to village on foot to search for dropped-out students, and the assumption is that teachers are evaluated and held accountable for that; no one is accountable for wasted classrooms. (T2 and T4)

This management accountability relationship is highly emphasized and operational for reducing students' dropout rates, which is a criterion of teacher evaluation, without taking variables related to it in general and students in particular into account. Some school principals discuss their school experiences:

Students generally dislike going to school regularly, and they see this as a democratic issue (SP4). Students are not held accountable for their attendance or classroom activities (SP2). Students do have side jobs that supplement their daily income (SP6). Students assist families in a variety of agricultural activities (SP1 and SP5). Students assumed that learning was for the jobless. (SP3)

The corollary is that SMBs are usually implemented to improve exam results, reduce dropout rates, and increase enrollment rates to be blessed in front of WEOs' C and I experts. That is why SMBs exercised management accountability relationships to hold teachers accountable for students' dropout rates and enrollment rates, rather than the implementation process of the curriculum. However, schools without a ranking, on the other hand, were not subject to sanctions such as principal dismissal or school closure.

The existing management accountability relationship was also strongly exercised to hold teachers accountable for informal and political messages and reports. This relationship has given less emphasis to holding teachers accountable for elements that make the implementation of the curriculum unsuccessful, such as classroom practices and wastage of instructional time. Much of the work of accountability gets built into or embedded in everyday practice in the implementation of the school curriculum. SMBs understand the nature of internal accountability, or personal, professional, and collective responsibility (Sahlberg, 2010). However, several school principals and supervisors seriously highlighted the ideological incompatibility of political innervation with education guidelines as a serious issue.

There are politically top-down messages about dropouts and enrollment data that are ultimately passed through SMBs to teachers. It usually contradicts the written guidelines for school management (MoE, 2002), which indicate that schools are secular from politics (SP1 and Sup3). The top-down messages through compact accountability relationships come through the telephone in their hidden form and oral speech in meetings that influence the management accountability relationship (SP3 and Sup2). Teachers are evaluated and held accountable accordingly based on either formal or informal, urgent, reported duties. (SP2 and Sup1)

Thus, there is every reason to be discouraged in the current political climate for teachers who want to see themselves as frontline curriculum implementers. According to one participant's view:

The implementation of the curriculum is politicized due to many overlapping political responsibilities or activities of higher educational officials and SMBs to hold teachers accountable for reducing dropout rates and increasing enrollment rates. Monitoring the classroom and holding teachers accountable for classroom practices like lesson plans,

content, skills, instructional arrangements, and evaluation procedures has received less emphasis. (T3)

In this regard, teachers worry about many embedded roles other than classroom curriculum implementation that divert them from effective roles to putting curriculum components into operation. Teachers pinpointed the issue:

... the top-down accountability relationship that is also exercised by management is boring and cannot be tackled (T4). Multiple tasks given through management accountability relationships (e.g., making schools a conducive environment) consume a good deal of teachers' time and energy (T1). These tasks can usually demotivate and divert teachers' practices from putting the curriculum into operation according to their responsibilities. (T9)

The WEOs' C and I experts mistakenly derived SMBs to exercise management accountability relationships to hold teachers accountable for roles other than what is going on in the classroom. Other educators explained:

SMBs serve as a channel for any message from top political experts...(T1). Except for PTAs, both school principals and supervisors are appointed based on their political affiliation with the ruling party, rather than on merit for curriculum implementation (T6). As a result, rely on decisions made by higher educational officials to carry out what is expected of school teachers. (T5 and T6)

My observations also revealed:

I also observed that while I was interviewing one respondent, the school principal, he told me the problem of top-down commands or directives is very serious, and ultimately tears came to his eyes. (Observation November 4, 2020)

Some interviewed supervisors summarized their arguments by saying:

I do not have any updated, clear guidelines or policy to use accountability sanctions for an instructional practice that is not practiced effectively (Sup1 and Sup3). I have never used accountability measures for teachers' classroom practices. (Sup2)

Wastage of instructional time is another issue that weakens the role of SMBs in holding teachers accountable for better implementation of the curriculum. According to my observations, the management accountability relationship has a limited relationship with teachers in terms of reducing instructional time waste. However, one of the main duties and responsibilities of SMBs is to avoid educational wastage in general and instructional time in particular to promote effective implementation of the school curriculum (MoE, 2002). CI is defined as regular involvement and repeated interaction between students and teachers over a set period. Yet, teacher absenteeism also remains an issue that cuts across the study area in the zone. Indeed, I came across the wastage of instructional time in primary schools as a serious issue that indicates a weak accountability system for students' engagement in the curriculum.

In one school, critically, I saw a teacher teaching two different classrooms by covering for other teachers who were absent and wasting their period in the third period of instructional time. I also observed that students shout and disturb when the teacher leaves one class and enters the other, and vice versa. I came across learner indiscipline in schools. (Observation, February 17, 2021)

The implicit assumption is that SMBs have placed little emphasis on curriculum implementation. They pay little attention to the wasted time of schooling, even if they hold teachers accountable for implementing curriculum components. As a result, I argued that the internal management accountability relationship is weak for curriculum implementation to meet the needs of students and parents. Regarding management relationships, many developing countries, including Ethiopia, have suffered significant losses in instructional time to implement school curricula as intended (WDR, 2018). In this case, data revealed that SMBs are not autonomous in using school-based sanctions for teachers' absenteeism; rather, they report to WEOs' C and I experts. Hence, school principals witnessed that:

There is indeed no single day when all teachers are present uniformly in the classroom. This is due to social problems, personal problems, and transportation problems (SP5). I

report to WEOs' C and I experts to fine up teacher salaries if they are absent for three or more consecutive days for no reason (SP3). If teachers are absent for one or two days, I can do nothing other than force them to replace the wasted instruction time (SP2). I cannot use disciplinary measures for wasted instructional time... there are no clear guidelines for this issue. (SP1)

From the document review of the teachers' attendance, I reviewed and calculated that annually, on average, about 33% of instructional time is usually wasted. It is important to note that in primary schools, one instructional time is equal to 40 minutes. The interpretation is that, in connection with instructional wastage, management accountability relationships for curriculum implementation are sluggish. The management relationship between SMBs and the teachers was weakened, resulting in poor implementation of the curriculum. In this case, school principals and supervisors reasoned about instructional time wastage from various perspectives and did not invite SMBs to hold teachers accountable for missed instructional time. They claimed:

Extended time of admission for one to two months; extended time of vacation taken by students themselves (SP4); extended time of harvesting crops for more than three weeks (SP1); extended time of holidays taken by students. (SP6)

The students themselves were absent from school for a week or two, which resulted in a waste of instructional time. This wastage of instructional time cannot be corrected by punishment. Participants said:

If I use the principles of the school's guidelines properly for students' absenteeism, I will lose all students, and then the school will be empty (SP2). ...the guidelines are used for threatening students but not for actual use (SP3 and SP5). If a student is punished, they immediately disappear from school and start their own business. (SP1 and Sup3)

Surprisingly, through management accountability relationships, SMBs have the authority to take appropriate disciplinary action against teachers who fail to fulfill their duties and responsibilities (MOE, 2002). The regulations, on the other hand, have been heavily focused on academic form. Respondents emphasized:

These were teachers' poor content knowledge (Sup2); teachers' absenteeism (SP3); weak teachers' pedagogical approach (Sup1); and poor assessment techniques (Sup3). While

available in school, teachers are often not in-class teaching (Sup1). There is no clear direction policy on how to hold teachers accountable for poor classroom curriculum practices (SP2). In my professional experience, I have never seen any teachers fired for poor curriculum implementation (Sup1). For teachers who are unable to teach grade seven, I try to transfer to grade three or grade two. No more corrective measures.... The government trained them and sent them to schools because they were efficient. (SP3)

In management accountability relationships, SMBs can't hire and retain good teachers who come to schools every day; it is most likely that schools fail to use accountability measures for the unsatisfactory implementation of the curriculum. There is no strong accountability for which SMBs adapt with daily reinforcement on important problems related to teachers' practice, related to the curriculum. Parent-teacher associations said that:

If teachers are physically present in the school and if they come late, I see a waste of instructional time and students disturb the class (PTA3). So, some students and parents complain about teachers' related problems, but I cannot fire them (PTA1). I invited teachers who have problems teaching to meet with SMBs to get advice (PTA4). Teachers cannot implement the curriculum in the classroom properly; I give a piece of advice and an oral warning again and again rather than giving formal punishment. (PTA6)

The same respondents emphasized that:

I encounter teachers who do not properly implement the curriculum, and I discuss issues and transfer them to the lower grade level by providing necessary advice (PTA3). I am not authorized to punish teachers by dismissing them from their professional positions. This is because the government trains and employs them (PTA5). Teachers' dismissals are not decided at the school level if they fail to implement the curriculum properly. (PTA1)

Concerning the autonomy of both teachers and SMBs, according to Ingersoll and Merrill (2011), teachers who have a high level of autonomy and decision-making enjoy more effective curriculum implementation and stay in the profession longer than teachers who have no say in school-based decisions. To effectively implement a curriculum, autonomy must be combined with

accountability. As a result, teacher autonomy in classroom tasks consistently emerges as a success factor (WDR, 2004). Some teachers highlighted the importance of freedom:

SMBs give a strict, formal letter requiring us to travel from village to village on foot to search for students who have been dropped from their education (T9). There are additional roles given to teachers to perform, like improving students' results, making the school environment attractive, etc., beyond the classroom practices (T3). Teachers are directly accountable and subject to low results in efficiency if they do not perform additional roles to implement the curriculum. (T7)

Through management accountability relationships, SMBs have autonomy over teachers. This was associated with improved student engagement in the curriculum, and higher levels of autonomy and accountability led to improved implementation of the curriculum (Frink et al., 2008; MoE, 1994; Woessmann, 2007). Moreover, according to Frink et al. (2008), SMBs' autonomy makes accountability relationships more effective for the better implementation of the curriculum. However, all school principals explained their practices for using accountability sanctions for teachers who do not discharge their roles in curriculum implementation in the classroom by saying:

I should provide professional advice to teachers who demonstrate poor performance in curriculum implementation regularly (SP5). I give suggestions and comments again rather than punishing (SP3). I have no clear policy and autonomy to use accountability consequences to dismiss them; rather, I tell them to cover the wasted class (SP1). Even if the teacher is sluggish and lacks sufficient knowledge of their work, there is no dismissal practice because the government sends teachers to teach. (SP4)

However, the international practices in this relationship show that the effectiveness of sanctions and rewards is dependent on the stability and credibility of these policies. That is, educators must believe that rewards and sanctions will happen (Fuhrman, 1999b). Conversely, school principals say that the accountability mechanism of rewards and sanctions is not tied to individual teacher performance. If a teacher shows a deficiency in putting the curriculum into operation, he/she does not automatically invite any punishment other than suggesting further improvement. So it is unfair to say that accountability for curriculum implementation is exercised in the study area.

As a result, if SMBs are given decision-making autonomy, they must be held accountable for better curriculum implementation. Increases in autonomy should be accompanied by interventions to improve curriculum implementation (Baum et al., 2014). One principal discussed his school's experience with curriculum implementation and the associated sanctions and rewards. Selected school principals stated that:

There are no clear rules or regulations in place to punish teachers who fail to implement the curriculum (SP1). There are penalties such as a series of oral and written warnings, fines, salary reductions, and the like (SP2). School principals use them in the code of ethics for other poor performance behaviors, such as absenteeism (for more than three days without legal evidence), smoking, and having an expected relationship with students. (SP4)

Additional school principals also added a similar way of thinking:

I am not responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of all subject matter specialists to be taught in the school; rather, I am a school leader. I see only teachers' pedagogical practice and appropriate usage of instructional time and students' management (SP1). It is difficult to hold teachers accountable if they show failure in the implementation of the curriculum because there has been no such practice (SP5). If a teacher has poor teaching, he/she does not automatically invite any sanction like dismissal or job loss (SP3). There are no laws and guidelines that indicate the low performance of the teacher in the class to convert to accountability measures. (SP5)

For classroom implementation of the curriculum, the actual accountability measures are soft, and an informal accountability mechanism was exercised. This accountability approach overemphasizes enforcing teachers on classroom curricula practices. In this case, teachers indicated that:

For poor performance instructional practice, teachers will be advised to improve their practices (T4 and T6). If teachers cannot teach, they will transfer to the lower classes (T3 and T5). If teachers have weak content knowledge, they will get oral warnings or written warnings (T1 and T4). No dismissal from the job for the poor practices of teachers in the implementation of the curriculum. (T2, T9 and T12)

On the other hand, there are penalties such as a series of fines of up to three months' salary, downgrading, and dismissal from the job that are applicable as high-stakes management accountability relationships in the internal practices of schools. In this regard, teachers highlighted that:

If teachers have addictions like drinking alcohol or smoking that inhibit them from teaching, they will be downgraded or dismissed from the job (T1 and T3). When teachers are absent for three or more days without reasonable evidence, they are subject to fines on their salaries. (T2 and T4)

This accountability relationship is bounded by the large bureaucracies comprising the school's internal process to select, train, motivate, administer, and evaluate teachers to better address the implementation of the curriculum. It is actions that create effective teachers within the schools. However, the results show that the failure management accountability relationship is associated with compact failures, in which SMBs fail to communicate clear responsibilities for meaningful implementation of curriculum and fail to hold teachers accountable for their professional practices. Conversely, this relationship is powerful enough to hold frontline curriculum implementers accountable for data-driven subordinate roles (for teachers)/schooling (schools, WEOs, REB, and MOE (students' enrollment rate, dropout rate, promotion rate, manipulating students' test scores...) that drive teachers' focus from the actual implementation of the curriculum as intended. Hence, from the empirical evidence, the management accountability relationship of the primary school system is structurally unsuccessful for the implementation of the curriculum due to unclear communication roles and responsibilities, an inadequate enabling environment, weak authority, limited autonomy, political intervention, and commandment.

4.3 Discussions of the Findings

4.3.1 Curriculum Users' Voice Accountability Relationship to REB's Curriculum Developers

Voice accountability relationships would provide positive results when students are included in the curriculum planning process. Evidence from the respondents indicates that the consequence of not involving the student is another factor in supporting the argument for the student's voice, because of the limited oversight authority of the curriculum developers. To support this position,

the findings of the study reveal that curriculum perspectives of REB have historically recognized the absence of students' voices in curriculum implementation. Similarly, Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) clarified that because of "an ideology of immaturity" about students' opinions and feelings, the voice of students about the implementation of the curriculum was either marginalized or habitually suppressed (p.13).

Yin and Lee (2008) argued that student involvement could lead to the success of curriculum implementation and reform in the 21st century. In this century, many countries have emphasized curriculum implementation, and the voice of the students is always taken seriously. Nevertheless, the findings of the study reveal that students are still outside the gates of discussion on important issues like curriculum development and the implementation process. Students lacked the power or platform to influence curriculum developers directly. It is the role of REB's curriculum developers to observe what is going on in the classroom and address the demands of the students in this regard. Yet, the results of the study show voice failure because REB's curriculum developers tended to overlook students' views rather than promote their concerns for better implementation of the curriculum. The results of the study indicate that the voice of the student to hold REB's curriculum developers accountable for the weak implementation of the curriculum was marginalized by unclear lines of communication, lack of information, and local culture.

Previous research results describe that students can organize campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of effective curriculum implementation to hold curriculum developers accountable through utilizing social media and petitions (Holquist, 2019; Mitra, 2012). The result of this study conversely depicted the zone's political immaturity, restricting students to using protests and movements... to address their voices to be heard through long-term accountability relationships. This accountability relationship seems to be very far away for students to hold REB's curriculum developers accountable. This is because students couldn't exercise their voice accountability relationship through formal political mechanisms (political parties and elections) and informal ones (students' movement and public information campaigns) to hold the REB's curriculum developers accountable.

For elections to function as a reliable check on REB's curriculum developers, they must, in theory, be legitimate. The purpose of parents' voices is to describe their interaction with the curriculum developers as well as to express resistance to the current curriculum as portrayed by various student

organizations. The objective of curriculum implementation for students is congruent with the new definitions of accountability, relationship, and voice. In the primary education system, implementing a curriculum involves collaboration between curriculum developers and implementers, instructors, schools, and SMBs, in addition to being a concern for teachers and SMBs. The study's findings indicate that the electoral linkage connecting accountability for curriculum implementation to voting behavior is also weak because local representatives do not have a formal role in elections.

O'Day (2002) analyzed accountability systems more broadly and found that a key component of success was the ability of education stakeholders to communicate across units. Hence, in the long route of the voice accountability relationship, establishing open and effective communication channels between parents and REB's curriculum developers is crucial in maintaining accountability for curriculum implementation. However, the findings of this study indicate that weak communication channels can significantly impact voice accountability relationships to hold curriculum developers of the REB accountable for curriculum implementation problems.

The findings of several studies in developing countries showed that the voice accountability relationship of the parents is very concerned about observable school facilities but less concerned about what is going on in the classroom (Galabawa & Agu, 2001; Komba, 2017). Similarly, the findings of this study also depict that the parents' voice accountability relationship is more focused on the lack of instructional facilities, students' massive failures, shortage of teachers' incompetency, and blaming the policy.... rather than holding REB's curriculum developers accountable for roles and activities to be done in the classroom. Arguably, demanding accountability from REB's curriculum developers requires that they fulfill their responsibilities by providing curriculum implementers with the instructional material necessary to implement adequate implementation of the curriculum adequately to satisfy the demands of their children.

Parents can leverage local media outlets to highlight issues related to poor curriculum implementation, thereby increasing public awareness and putting additional pressure on curriculum developers to respond effectively. Nevertheless, the finding of this study indicates that government media has an invisible role for parents to address their voices. Curriculum implementation aims to give parents a voice in how their children engage with the curriculum to meet their interests and learning needs. For elections to function as a reliable check on REB's

curriculum developers, they must be legitimate. Yet, the findings of this study show that parents could not hold curriculum developers accountable to improve the implementation of the curriculum through the long-route accountability relationship because of a lack of structurally democratic discussion, the absence of official accountability policies, and non-responsiveness from curriculum developers that mask their voices.

4.3.2 Curriculum Users' Voice Accountability Relationship to WEOs' C and I Experts

Students are aware of the curriculum implementation they encounter daily, and as a result, they have displayed a variety of implementation-related behaviors (such as inefficient use of class time, poor teaching-learning environments, teachers' skills, and absenteeism). Based on the results of the study, students were aware of their daily experiences with curriculum implementation, and as a result, they expressed their voices in meetings by demonstrating a diverse range of implementation aspects (e.g., wastage of instructional time, lack of teaching-learning facilities, weak teachers' ability, and absenteeism) that helped them hold experts accountable for discharging their responsibility for meaningful implementation of the curriculum.

Even though students' voices can help identify problems in curriculum implementation and suggest potential solutions (Arnot & Reay, 2004; Mitra, 2003), the study indicates that experts of C and I at WEOs have frequently given little attention and undermined the students' voices by linking their weaknesses to their authority. The long route of accountability relationship, a voice was not working due to the weekend compact accountability relationships, and then the implementers of the curriculum got away with engaging students with the curriculum. Through voice accountability relationships, students have few opportunities to hold the curriculum and instruction experts at WEOs accountable for poor curriculum implementation.

The bureaucratic nature of educational systems, the politicized landscape of the school, weak monitoring and evaluation programs, and the absence of feedback mechanisms can create barriers that make it difficult for student voices to reach decision-makers or result in meaningful implementation of the curriculum. There is no doubt that the voice of students is crucial to their engagement in curricula. Edwards (2005) stated that students' concerns, inputs, and reflections are important in all aspects of the implementation process, but students' voices to hold WEOs' C and I experts accountable for value-added curriculum implementation were insufficient. Voice and

compact are both long-route accountability and can be linked together, and voice can drive the compact. On the other hand, the breakdown of the long route can result in a weak voice, which leads to inadequate curriculum implementation, and students' voices can strengthen the compact accountability relationships (WDR, 2004).

Further findings show that in practice, relationships between WEOs' C and I experts and school curriculum implementers played an insignificant role in influencing both SMBs and teachers' behaviors through the use of compact accountability relationships and enforceability (direct interaction) to enhance the implementation of the school curriculum. This study supports the findings of Komba (Komba, 2017), who discovered a weak voice accountability relationship between curriculum end users (students) and policymakers, or curriculum experts in Tanzania.

Parents' voice refers to the active participation and contribution of parents in the educational process, including decision-making in school curriculum implementation. It is referred to as the lengthy route to accountability. It entails parents electing their representative politicians, who then appoint or have influence over curriculum developers, who in turn create policies that take into account the needs and preferences of parents. The compact accountability relationship holds curriculum implementers in schools accountable for carrying out the curriculum. Decentralization through the devolution of the educational system would allow stakeholders to solve educational issues in their local communities. Hence, WEOs have been given the authority to handle the majority of educational tasks, including curriculum implementation (MoE, 2002). Although there have been meetings with the WEOs' C and I experts, there may be a problematic arrangement that also creates confusion when responding to pertinent questions that determine the key aspects of accountability for curriculum implementation. Examples of these relevant questions include the following: Which WEOs' C and I experts are accountable for good or bad school performance? Should parents hold such bureaucratic experts accountable for the poor implementation of the curriculum?

Indeed, parents showed their concerns by speaking out to WEOs' C and I experts, such as about students' mass promotion, weak students' learning, poor teachers' performance, weak school facilities and instructional materials, and insufficient roles of schools to educate students...for the implementation of the curriculum. The findings of the study indicate that parents' voice accountability relationship holds WEO'C and I experts accountable for addressing their needs due

to ineffective communication channels and poor advocacy, limited parental engagement in curriculum implementation rather than school construction, experts' focus on collecting reports about school peace and security issues, and school data with limited transparency than classroom curriculum implementation.

This notion indicates that the long-route accountability relationship of the primary education system links between parents and the WEOs' C and I experts, and thus appears to be loosely coupled. This is because WEOs' C and I experts were not the direct representatives of the elected politicians to address the views of the parents. The only option left in this case is to use the direct short-route of power accountability, using market accountability models to hold teachers and schools (SMBs) accountable for greater curriculum implementation.

4.3.3 Compact Accountability Relationships (C1 and C2)

The relationship between curriculum developers and curriculum implementers is crucial for ensuring the effective implementation of the curriculum. According to REB (2009), curriculum developers should provide adequate resources, incentives, capacity building, and professional autonomy to enable the school environment to implement the curriculum effectively. However, the findings from the World Development Report show that the quality of curriculum implementation can be low because of low capability, weak motivation, and a lack of complementary inputs and resources, which lead to greater difficulty in holding implementers accountable (WDR, 2004). The result of the study depicts that the curriculum developers failed to provide the school with an enabling environment, formulate clear performance indicators, and foster full autonomy for schools so that SMBs can play a strong monitoring function. These are key determinants for effective school curriculum implementations that were not working together, and hence, it was challenging to hold curriculum implementers accountable through compact accountability relationships.

In this study, it was observed that the compact accountability relationship that connects curriculum developers' pressure through implicit and explicit contacts with curriculum implementers is collapsed to satisfy the needs of the curriculum users. According to the information received,

REB's curriculum developers were not in the right professional techniques to create enabling conditions that improve the implementation of the curriculum. Yet, above all conditions, Fullan (2007) highlighted that there should be great pressure and motivations or incentives to become innovative, and this resulted in many schools adopting curriculum reforms that they did not even have the capacity (individually or organizationally) to put into practice. Moreover, in this subsection, the compact accountability relationship between REB's curriculum developers and curriculum implementers through this long-route accountability relationship did not work for what was going on in the classroom, but rather this relationship worked for urgently collecting reports related to local school facilities and students' data.

Various studies indicate that a strong, compact accountability relationship fosters collaboration and shared responsibility while providing necessary support structures that empower educators to effectively implement curricula aligned with educational goals (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Elmore, 2004a; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). Yet the empirical evidence of this study reveals that without professional training, motivation, and autonomy for preparing reports, and instructional materials... compact accountability relationship between curriculum developers and curriculum implementers was strongly exercised for additional classroom construction, distribution of books, and preparation of reports related to students.

Regarding sanctions, the study's findings show that in the USA, schools and curriculum implementers are held accountable through establishing standards and evaluating student performance. Failing schools face sanctions, ranging from minor tutoring to major reforms, staff and administration reforms, school closings, and student transfers (Itkonen & Jahnukainen, 2007). However, the findings of the study generally demonstrate that compact accountability failures with meager accountability measures were practical to hold curriculum implementers accountable, as stated in the proclamation. The finding indicates that curriculum developers of REB had nothing to do with accountability measures, and curriculum implementers did not encounter any intervention or sanction resulting in shallow practices of compact accountability relationships to improve the implementation of the curriculum.

According to the Ethiopian school management guideline, curriculum implementers are accountable to policymakers or curriculum developers of the REB for the performance related to the activities of the curriculum implementation (MoE, 2002). Hence, investigating effective

approaches (monitoring and evaluation) to classroom curriculum implementation is one technique to improve the compact accountability relationship between policymakers and curriculum implementers for the continuous improvement of curriculum implementation. Nevertheless, the findings of this study disclose that curriculum developers exercised their authority through compact accountability relationships to hold curriculum implementers accountable for collecting subordinate reports to the curriculum implementation (e.g., on-time book distribution, improving students' test scores by a certain percentage from the previous year, improving students' enrollment rate, reducing students' dropout rate, improving students' promotion by 100%, keeping school conducive, and the like) to get rank and funding from foreign donors rather than for the implementation of the curriculum.

I appreciate that politics in the education system is inevitable and an important part of a healthy democracy. Indeed, Ranson (2007) views politics as a necessary part of the democratic process that should provide grounds for representation and dissent, and Silberstein (2020) perceives politics as an integral part of the accountability relationship that produces the implementation of the curriculum. Conversely, the study's result indicates that curriculum developers or policymakers at REB experienced a politicized compact accountability relationship with the schools' curriculum implementers to address the hidden political agenda of the ruling party by violating their professional responsibilities.

Likewise, according to WDR (2018), political challenges compound technical ones, resulting in policymakers having different interests, again beyond the implementation of the classroom curriculum. However, compact accountability relationships on politically attractive reports and observable school facilities satisfy the needs of their boss or respective principals rather than focusing on classroom curriculum implementation. Similarly, the study conducted in Ethiopia showed that WEOs were more accountable to their respective principals for schooling and not for learning outcomes. They have successfully active players to increase enrolment, reduce the dropout rate...(Amare et al., 2024). Monitoring the classroom and holding curriculum implementers accountable for classroom practices like lesson plans, content delivery, instructional arrangements, and evaluation procedures are often missed.

A compact accountability relationship is the right driver for the adequate implementation of the school curricula. Yet in this study, the compact accountability relationship between curriculum

developers of the REB and school curriculum implementers is weak for curriculum implementation. Indeed, this relationship is structurally far distant in holding curriculum implementers accountable. Regarding the second compact accountability relationship between experts and curriculum implementers (C2), it is obvious that primary school curriculum implementers are accountable to WEOs' C and I experts for their performance in the curriculum implementation (MoE, 2002).

Hence, investigating effective approaches (monitoring and evaluation) to classroom curriculum implementation is one technique to improve the compact accountability relationship for the continuous improvement of curriculum implementation. Scholars emphasized that an accountability system that contains test scores alone without the context of additional accountability information about teaching-learning practices or curriculum implementation is incomplete and the wrong drivers for school curriculum implementers for the curriculum implementation process (Fullan, 2011; Reeves, 2004).

Nevertheless, the findings of this study disclosed that the politicized roles and responsibilities of experts had given them a good opportunity to exercise their authority through influential compact accountability relationships to hold curriculum implementers accountable for gathering politically advantageous and subordinate reports (e.g. on-time book distribution, improving students' test scores by a certain percentage from the previous year, improving students' enrollment rate, reducing students' dropout rate, improving students' promotion by 100%, keeping school conducive, collecting both students' and teachers' political views and the like) to get rank and fund from foreign donors than for the implementation of the curriculum.

Accountability for curriculum implementation has been seen as a way of keeping schools under control by creating pressure on schools through rewards and penalties (Elmore & Fuhrman, 2001; Mazzeo, 2001; Reeves, 2006). In the context of this study, WEOs' C and I experts are empowered to make curriculum implementation effective through compact accountability relationships as given by Ethiopia's decentralized education system (MoE, 2002). The findings of the present study indicate that compact failures were observed, in which experts failed to monitor and evaluate, communicate their clear responsibilities, and conduct collaborative and shared training... for curriculum implementation to hold implementers accountable.

Because of these failures, consequences exercised through the compact are easy-going measures like transferring the teacher to the lower class, as well as removing the school principals and supervisors from the position and returning them to teaching. This is due to experts highly emphasizing the commandments and directions given by REB's curriculum developers rather than performing their professional duties and responding to the voices of the curriculum users.

4.3.4 Students' Power Accountability Relationships

The students have the right to ask, learn, and use educational materials, and they have the right to hold teachers accountable for their duties in the primary education system (MoE, 2002). Pritchett (2015) highlights that students know their teacher's presence, time on task, classroom order, treatment, understanding, and progress, as well as their ability to complete lessons. They also have an idea of their progress. The findings of this study disclose that students were challenged to exercise their power of accountability in holding teachers accountable for the weak implementation of the curriculum. This is due to a lack of updated educational accountability

policies and guidelines, and students were ill-informed, afraid of teachers, frustrated with politics, and they were demotivated (hopeless). Many students are not adequately informed about their rights, the contents of the curriculum, or the roles and responsibilities of education officials. Students who raise concerns about curriculum implementation may fear victimization or negative consequences, such as punishment from teachers or school principals, which discourages them from engaging in accountability measures. This finding is in line with WDR findings (WDR, 2004), which show that the power-accountability relationship between students and teachers is a weak force in the public school system and is hampered by specific interests. It has little impact on holding teachers and SMBs accountable for their actions.

The empirical evidence shows that the weakness of the compact accountability relationship also had little impact on the management accountability relationship in driving SMBs to focus on students' concerns, because SMBs do not like to take risks based on monitoring progress through management accountability relationships. SMBs have given less emphasis to students' power on issues related to weak practices of teachers' pedagogical and content knowledge and wastage of instructional time to improve the implementation of the curriculum, rather their focus was on the construction of additional classrooms, maintenance of tables, chairs, and other school facilities.

This result is consistent with a study by Galabawa and Agu (2001) and Pritchett (2015) that show that the management accountability relationship between SMBs and teachers focused on schooling or necessary conditions (general education services, including textbooks, teachers, policy advocates, preparation of report for the consumption of media and construction) is not sufficient condition (teachers' lesson plan, classroom instruction, methodology, assessment...) for the implementation of the curriculum. The results of the study reveal that students often face significant challenges in influencing school curriculum implementers through power and accountability relationships, which can hinder the effective implementation of curricula.

These were local norms, poor interest, little information, weak dialogue, frustration... Similar studies show that students' voices within schools such as feedback mechanisms (Conner et al., 2024), cultural norms (Hofstede, 2001), accountability pressures (Keddie, 2015), lack of awareness among students (Cook-Sather, 2006) about their potential roles all contribute to limiting their ability to influence curriculum effectively for better implementation outcomes.

As a result of the short-route accountability relationship, SMBs had to remain silent to respond to the students' concerns and preferred not to hold teachers accountable for required curriculum implementation; rather, their primary concern was school input. Generally speaking, SMBs rush to the subject of educational infrastructure, overlook the expected issue of curriculum implementation, and prioritize their perspectives over students. The students were deprived of the opportunity to use their power and accountability relationships to make the school system workable for the adequate implementation of the curriculum. So students' power accountability relationship embraced the management accountability relationship as required, and could not answer the students' demands. Ultimately, the students were not able to hold curriculum implementers accountable properly.

4.3.5 Parents' Power and Accountability Relationships

Parents can play a significant role in holding curriculum implementers accountable for their children's engagement with the curriculum. Parents have the potential to improve the implementation of the curriculum through market-based school choice systems (WDR, 2004), and my analysis highlights how parents experienced their power to hold curriculum implementers. Such models focus on building a direct relationship between parents and other community members and schools and address many of the problems encountered by systems, emphasizing the long route of accountability. Examples of short route-focused reforms like decentralization by devolution lead to empowering parents to participate and make decisions, to hold the accountability of schools and teachers.

So, according to the reform of MoE (2002), along with improved accountability, the benefits of parents' control include greater parental ownership and involvement for better implementation of the school curriculum. Parents are taxpayers and one of the financial resources of the schools; it is fairly straightforward for parents to assess whether the teacher is present and not abusive to students. This makes teachers accountable for their performance when parents are more closely involved in the activities of the schools. Yet, the genuine evidence of this study shows that parents' power accountability relationship was not influential because of limited access to monitor the teaching-learning process, lack of information on accountability issues and mechanisms, no regular communication, local cultures or norms (blindly respecting and trusting all educators as if they are capable and responsible), no access to school choice... Hence, as direct participants and

intended beneficiaries of the implementation of the curriculum, parents have inadequate practices in using parents' power and accountability relationship to hold curriculum implementers accountable for improving the implementation of the school curriculum.

The findings of this study indicate that SMBs had diverted the interest of the parents towards school facilities and reporting numbers (number of enrolled students, classrooms, committees, dropped-out students, books...) rather than meeting the needs of the parents in the implementation of the curriculum. Although parents show their effort, the results of the study show that the short route of accountability relationship is still weakened by SMBs' unresponsive effort to hold teachers accountable for better implementation of the curriculum. SMBs and teachers themselves have little or no autonomy to formulate a valuable response to parents' complaints. PTAs are simply a means of mobilizing additional resources for the school rather than responding to the curriculum users' concerns on curriculum implementation issues. Schools are adopting an exam-oriented approach to teaching, with less emphasis on responding to the needs of the parents.

Teachers and SMBs are held accountable for satisfying parents' demands rather than satisfying the WEOs' C and I experts. With market accountability, the system of accountability depends on the pattern of actions of an individual parent holding (or not holding) SMBs and teachers accountable. Through market accountability, parents are regarded as indirect consumers of education, and schools are subjected to market competition and parental choice. Hence, the right of children to exit from their parents can create markets in education. In actual evidence, withdrawing a few students from school by a few parents does not affect SMBs or teachers' accountability. Because schools are crowded with many students and the majority of parents have no choice but to send their students, they see public schools as an opportunity. Yet parents' power accounts for the accountability relationship does not work exclusively through market-like mechanisms.

4.3.6 Management Accountability Relationships

SMBs have to hear and understand any information about the implementation of the curriculum from students, parents, teachers, and from their personal and leadership evaluation practices. Due to decentralization by devolution (D by D), SMBs have a mandate to take the necessary accountability measures from simple to rigorous when failure in curriculum implementation is observed. The indication is that they should be assuming increased responsibility in this area.

SMBs are responsible for general administration (including budget) and hiring and firing of teachers and even school principals themselves (Stückler, 2005). They exercise management relationships through monitoring, enforcing, and using accountability measures based on justified evidence. Moreover, accountability requires appropriate reporting mechanisms for adequately monitoring and evaluating relevant performance processes (Levitt et al., 2008).

Accountability is seen to be a means of implementing curriculum effectively (Reeves, 2004). However, teachers conceived that accountability is the most powerful instrument exercised by SMBs to hold teachers accountable for routinizing the teachers' role. Accountability in teaching involves a commitment to fostering a positive learning environment and enables teachers to exhibit professional behaviors in school processes (Öztuzcu Küçükbere & Balkar, 2021). Nevertheless, the findings of the study indicate that accountability is a tactic used to intimidate and press teachers, often used when WEOs visit schools. It helped report student-related data, but not for classroom activities. Accountability is also used to place extra work orders and make teachers fearful, as maintaining patience when deviating from the prescribed schedule is challenging.

In primary schools, teacher accountability is bound to lead to attaining quality instruction. There is a strong focus on the activity of teachers in classrooms. However, to divert teachers from classroom time, there is a problem across the globe. In a study prepared for the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), (Chisholm, 2005) was found that there are many international studies involving countries such as Australia, Korea, Mexico, Brazil, Chile, and Egypt... that were conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on educators' workload. The study revealed that despite increased workloads, the percentage of working time spent teaching as opposed to other activities, such as administrative or additional activities, is larger than 50% in only a minority of countries.

Similarly, the study indicates that pressures from the inside were driven by the authoritative pressure from the external bureaucratic or compact accountability relationship to drive teachers to report student-related data and numbers. Regarding the study's context, enhancing students' enrollment rate and reducing the dropout rate are also the exceptional role of the Ethiopian teachers' accountability that diverts teachers from putting the curriculum as intended.

In the same way, the findings of the study revealed that SMBs were exercising their management accountability relationship to hold teachers accountable for administrative roles and paperwork,

namely enhancing students' enrollment rate, reducing the dropout rate, improving students' results, and promotions by giving less emphasis on the role of teachers in the classroom. The qualities of the teachers were narrowly defined by the reportable numbers rather than enhancing the practice of the classroom curriculum. The sanction in this case is lowering teachers' efficiency results, which diverts teachers from the actual implementation of the curriculum. As such, all teachers are likely to say that they have too much administrative work, but this cannot be an explanation for not implementing it in the classroom, as paperwork time is not classwork time. In other words, when the teacher is in the classroom and teaching, administrative work should not be done. The administrative schedule is outside the classroom, so the explanation of too much form-filling is not an explanation for why the curriculum is not being implemented in the classroom.

Accountability is something that is traditionally done to teachers. Tradition means to carry out the orders of the central education office in the school teaching-learning process to make teachers busy (Reeves, 2004). A strong focus on what is relevant to exams and generating test data. The results of the study also indicate that the roles of SMBs were manipulated by the politicized roles and responsibilities of the WEOs' C and I expert's strong hierarchical accountability relationship and they exhibit management problems such as a lack of working with the school management guidelines, limitations of leadership and managerial capacities, problems of coordination and communication, lack of trust between them and teachers and rigid internal structure to simply drive teachers wrongly by bullying them with evaluation or efficiency results.

Recently, scholars have highlighted political pressures and data-based accountability mechanisms as important variables influencing English language teaching practices (Ali & Hamid, 2020; Gholaminejad & Raeisi-Vanani, 2021) to divert their pedagogical practices. SMBs are the political leg of the ruling party to be manipulated with the top-down orders that satisfy the needs of the REB and MoE to put pressure on teachers to work on student-related data as a traditional accountability relationship. For MoE, the intention is to increase students and receive funding from foreign donors. Indeed, politicized implementation of the curriculum has the power to divert teachers' role through management accountability relationships by removing their responsibility to implement the curriculum as intended (Chisholm, 2005; Reeves, 2004).

The results of the study conducted by the World Bank show that political or technical procedures that shift the focus of the curriculum implementers away from the implementation of the

curriculum as planned may be the reason why the management accountability relationship isn't working (WDR, 2004, 2018). Increased accountability pressures make it more difficult for teachers to create very positive relationships and trust in learning environments. The findings of the study disclosed that the management accountability relationship between SMBs and teachers is observed to be a weak force that was technically working to divert teachers' roles out of the implementation of the curriculum, by generalizing that good student-related attractive numbers report implies good teachers' evaluation.

An increase in report-driven loads from the WEOs (members of the government politics) via SMBs often leads teachers to be diverted from their effectiveness and minute time to meet the major teaching duties, such as designing their duties for productive implementation of the curriculum. Indeed, the study shows that teachers have experienced pressure depending on the SMBs and the nature of the contextualized reporting school environment.

Teachers face considerable and increasing pressure in their working lives. Hence, the management accountability relationship has harmed teachers' ability to be held accountable for what happens in the classroom. However, the study conducted by Baidoo-Anu and Ennu Baidoo (2024) shows that teachers feel pressure from head teachers to raise students' scores. Similarly, the findings of this study depict that SMBs have exercised their management accountability relationships and put pressure on teachers to hold them accountable for improving student-related reports (eg, informal addition of marks) to meet the needs of school stakeholders. The saddest and worst part is that there is no solid evidence that these approaches to manipulating student-related reports and accountability are linked to the teachers' duties and responsibilities in the classroom. In the present controversy over the management accountability relationship between SMBs and teachers, the prevailing allegation is that student-related numbers are hard data, whereas curriculum implementation practices are easy and the implication, less worthwhile. Such a dichotomy is unproductive and false to divert teachers from the actual practices of classroom implementation of the curriculum.

Alike to the above findings, the study conducted on Governance, accountability, and the datafication of early years education in England, shows that when teachers rely on preparing numerical data through increased pressure, numbers, and data become increasingly significant in framing the working lives and experience of teachers (Ball, 2015) that do not directly guide their

pedagogical decisions and classroom curricula practices (Bradbury & Roberts-Holmes, 2017; Holloway, 2019). Overall, if there is anything to be learned from these findings is that primary school teachers' accountability is narrowly defined by the preparation of numbers or reports, while improvement is defined as increasing these numbers, rather than improving curriculum practice. Hence, student-related reports create the illusion of precision, but the best practice for SMBs is to hold teachers accountable through oppression mechanisms with the teachers' efficiency results.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter presents the main conclusions, recommendations, and direction for further studies as well as the proposed school-based accountability model.

5.1 Conclusions

Despite the Ethiopian (Oromia Regional State) government's commitment to enhancing accountability as a means of improving the implementation of curriculum, sadly, the general highlight of this study concludes that accountability relationships in the decentralized primary education system for the implementation of curriculum were fragmented, not promising, and affected with multiple of challenges. Conditions for the WDR 2004 accountability framework with the P-A relationship in the primary education system are almost always much worse to bring significant behavioral changes in the implementation of the curriculum in line with the demand of curriculum users. It is also realized that system inconsistency leads to curriculum implementation failure. This means that the primary education system's key stakeholders fail to consider the ways that interactions and feedback loops produce a significant implementation of the curriculum. Hence, the following section provides a detailed conclusion of the findings for the questions raised in Chapter One.

5.1.1 Curriculum Users' Voice Accountability Relationships (V1 and V2)

Students' voice is an instrument of change for better implementation of the curriculum, and students can dream and set goals for the future while being inspired in the present to make changes in the curriculum implementation to reach those goals through their voice accountability relationship. Yet, this study's finding reveals that curriculum users were systematically or intentionally prevented from decision-making practices, and accessing opportunities and resources... through accountability relationships for better implementation of the curriculum. It was also concluded that students have no means (face-to-face, online, visiting the office, using protest...) to communicate their voices to hold REB's curriculum developers accountable for what is expected from them in the implementation of the curriculum.

Concerning this accountability relationship, it can be concluded that the relationship between students and REB's curriculum developers is difficult for students to identify the authority

responsibly and give an account of their performance to hold them accountable, because they did not give any account to improve the implementation of the curriculum. The students' voices were not applicable since the government/REB's curriculum makers did not require schools to take part in inspections for the question of how the curriculum is going to be implemented in line with the needs of students. This study depicts that REB is often at faraway hierarchical structures that can marginalize students' voices. Students frequently feel that their input is undervalued or ignored within school governance systems, making it difficult for them to influence the implementation of the curriculum.

The study found that parents' voices are critical for holding curriculum developers accountable for poorly developed curriculum and its failed implementation; however, the result of this study shows that the parents' voice to hold REB's curriculum developers for better curriculum implementation was assumed to be shallow. The study also indicates parents' loss of confidence in REB's curriculum developers for engaging students in the curriculum as intended. The findings of the study reveal that parents have limited voices for correcting forgotten educational practices in general and poor implementation of the curriculum in particular. Their voice accountability relationship was completely affected by the immaturity of the political structure of the country, which did not bring any change in the implementation of the school curriculum. Indeed, it was determined that curriculum users typically lack the political power and influence over REB's curriculum developers through voice accountability relationships. Even though elections are the most common tool that parents have to hold REB's curriculum developers/politicians, curriculum implementation is not typically among the highest priorities during the forceful election of a single party to look into parents' views.

It was also observed that parents have no means or approach to holding REB's curriculum developers accountable for the shortage of resources, limited monitoring progress, and broken rules of schools... conversely; curriculum makers highly concerned about the expansion and establishment of new schools were as parents eagerly talk about students' poor engagement in the curriculum (their students' illiteracy). In this case, strictly government media does not work toward reporting the parents' concerns about the implementation of the curriculum. This accountability relationship remains weak and struggles with sophisticated challenges, resulting in little experience to hold curriculum developers accountable for improved, satisfactory implementation of the curriculum. Although parents have a vested interest in the implementation of the curriculum

that their children receive, the study concludes that parents faced limited access to information, power imbalance, variability of parental engagement level, and no parental involvement in policy changes with political shifts... that hinder them to hold curriculum developers accountable through the voice accountability relationship.

Regarding the curriculum users' voice accountability relationship to experts of the WEOs (V2), enhancing students' voices in a way that results in improved implementation of the curriculum. However, the study reveals that even though there was no effective implementation of the curriculum (from student voices), students were politically frustrated/ threatened during discussions in meetings, and their voices were restricted to bringing changes in the implementation of the curriculum. The study has generally revealed that students' voice accountability relationships were inadequate and resulted in poor implementation of the curriculum.

The concept of curriculum implementation does not have a consistent function in the primary school system without involving students in accountability relationships. Nevertheless, the finding of the study generally discloses that the triangular accountability relationships for curriculum implementation among students, WEOs' curriculum and instruction experts, and school curriculum implementers were loosely coupled. That is the failure of the students' voice and power accountability relationship was observed due to system failure or compact accountability failure, which was associated with management accountability failure.

Despite the Ethiopian government's commitment to enhancing accountability as a means of improving the implementation of the curriculum, the study concludes that few efforts have been made to establish a strong foundation in educational accountability relationships. It is also determined that Ethiopia lacks actual accountability flows, policies, and mechanisms, contributing to students' dissatisfaction with classroom practices and the curriculum. The study reveals that effective curriculum implementation does not take place in schools where students are despised as powerless to exercise their voice and power accountability relationship functions, and both long and short-route accountability relationships have not worked as expected in the primary education system.

Students attempted to address their curriculum failures in implementation with the WEOs' curriculum and instruction experts, who were empowered and delegated to oversee curriculum implementation and address student concerns (MoE, 2002). However, this study shows that

WEOs' C and I experts had difficulty in providing resources and addressing student concerns for meaningful curriculum implementation. It is also concluded that, through the long-route accountability relationship, students were politically frustrated during discussions at meetings, and their voices could not be expected to yield much in terms of holding the WEOs' curriculum and instruction experts accountable for better implementation of the curriculum and in driving these experts to use a compact accountability relationship with school curriculum implementers.

Precisely, although students addressed their problems about the implementation of curriculum to WEOs' C and I experts, however, experts used weak compact accountability relationships to increase school curriculum implementers' behaviors to meet the needs of students. It was also concluded that through the long-route accountability relationship, students were politically frustrated during discussions at meetings, and hence their voices could not be expected to yield much in terms of holding WEOs' C and I experts accountable for better implementation of the curriculum. The study indicates that parents have little chance to exercise their voice, and they are extremely worried and hopeless about the promotion of students, without acquiring the necessary skills. The shortage of teachers, incompetence of teachers, and poor use of school regulations, teachers' professional practices, and the controlling system... resulted in weakening the values and norms of the schooling system. It was revealed that school guideline has big limitations in inviting parents to exercise voice accountability relationships.

On the other hand, although WEOs' C and I experts were well-informed about curriculum implementation problems and the worries of parents, they were largely skeptical and underestimated the voice of the parents for better implementation of the curriculum by saying the "slogan school is given to the community" (i.e. the government covers only textbook and teachers' salary). In his relationship, there were no transparent discussions between WEOs' C and I experts and parents. Sadly, parents had insufficient practices of voices to hold these experts accountable for the implementation of the school curriculum in the second long-route accountability relationship of the decentralized primary education system.

5.1.2 The Compact Accountability Relationships (C1 and C2)

The study findings in this regard reveal that lack of adequate resources, incentives, resources, capacity building, appropriate reporting, absence of contractual employment agreement form,

professional monitoring, and evaluation....have collapsed the role of REB's curriculum developers to exercise compact accountability relationship to hold school curriculum implementers accountable for demanded implementation of the curriculum. The routing part of the compact accountability relationship was not working for the processes that consist of putting the officially designed curriculum into classroom activities. This may be because of poor ownership, low commitment, genuinely believing implementers are responsible, and a lack of clear information about the system accountability relationship of primary education.

It can be concluded that REB's curriculum developers delegate their roles and responsibilities to WEOs' C and I experts using compact accountability relationships, which is something wrong and makes it insufficient in the implementation of the curriculum. But this relationship was operational for one that is easily counted as a politically attractive role. Indeed, the findings disclose that the compact accountability relationship showed failure, in which REB's curriculum developers failed to communicate their clear responsibilities to primary curriculum implementers. This led them to fail to enforce any responsibility for what was going on in the classroom practices. Accountability for curriculum implementation has been seen as a way of keeping schools under control by creating pressure on schools through rewards and penalties (Elmore & Fuhrman, 2001; Mazzeo, 2001; Reeves, 2006). However, control from the REB's curriculum developers was very shallow and often extremely weak in holding school curriculum implementers accountable for the implementation of the curriculum.

Concerning the compact accountability relationship between C and I experts of WEOs and school curriculum implementers, collecting students' test scores (reports) alone is an insufficient indicator of effective curriculum implementation because it represents the effects of many important variables (Reeves, 2002). Nevertheless, the findings of the present study indicate that experts had no interest or capacity to monitor and use sanctions and rewards for teachers' related classroom curriculum practices.

Their compact accountability relationship was not visible, and pushed problems to be solved by WEOs' C and I experts to be transferred to SMBs to take corrective action for the weak implementation of the curriculum. This relationship is powerful in using technical and political procedures through oral, telephone, face-to-face, and other technological means for the improvement of schooling or subordinate roles for school competition such as students' test scores,

dropout rates enrollments, school constructions (classrooms, sports fields, toilets for girls and boys... that are easily reported), textbooks, and students related ratios... considered as fundamental variables. The good reports of those variables were considered as if the curriculum is effectively implemented and hopefully trusted to be used for school rank and then for ranking WEOs, Zone education Offices, and REB for getting rewards or funds from international donors.

Consequently, WEOs' C and I experts use superior commandments for SMBs to accomplish routine activities related to enrollment, dropout, and textbook distribution, level of school stability, the political background of both teacher and students; and test scores... which divert SMBs and teachers focus to give little emphasis to what is going in the classroom. The study concludes that the compact accountability relationship between WEOs' C and I experts and school curriculum implementers is loosely attached and incoherent around the implementation of the curriculum. This is because of the embedded inadequate professional capacity, poor communication, inadequate motivation, the politicization of experts' responsibilities, and weak information about the interaction among education stakeholders.

As disclosed through the findings, the compact accountability relationship of politically nominated experts had politicized their expertise roles to observe and collect the political views of teachers and students rather than the implementation of the curriculum. The result revealed that this accountability relationship had the practice of using informal accountability mechanisms as formal accountability mechanisms for failing schools, changing the position of school principals and supervisors in the teaching profession. If a school is ranked based on the subordinate roles, scholarships, promotions, and certificates...would be provided for school principals and supervisors, without looking at how the curriculum is implemented in the classroom. If the PTAs refuse to work properly because salaries are not paid by the government, proper punishment is changing them, by replacing them with school community-elected ones with no more disciplinary penalties that lead to inadequate implementation of the curriculum.

5.1.3 The Power Accountability Relationships

Students have gained the ability to hold curriculum implementers accountable since 1991, and many schools have become more autonomous and decentralized, as well as more accountable to students for translating curriculum into classroom practices (MoE, 2002). However, the study

concludes that the short route of students' power accountability relationships was strained for three primary reasons: due to the high unemployment rate among university graduates, these students were hopeless and demotivated to use their power relationships. They went back to their daily lives, saying that learning was a waste of time. Second, this relationship was meaningless for the students because SMBs had shown a very limited response to students' requests, and skepticism put pressure on teachers for curriculum implementation failure through the management accountability relationship. SMBs did not welcome students' requests, and students did not want to be involved in more debates with SMBs. Even if SMBs recognize students' requests about curriculum implementation problems and wish to address them, they often lack an appropriate range of intermediate responses. Thirdly, the practice of power accountability relationships masked students' rights because of political pollution, which leads to frustration.

Even though students have the right or power to use their own experience or other information to put pressure on curriculum implementers to meet norms of appropriate behavior (MoE, 2002), the study revealed that teachers were not subjected to any accountability sanctions by SMBs if they were physically present in the school and classroom because the REB hired them to teach. SMBs lack autonomy in selecting qualified teachers, leading to a porous sanction component in schools. Management accountability relationships are less effective, and students lack meaningful power accountability relationships, marginalizing them from holding curriculum implementers accountable for better-quality implementation.

Concerning the parental power accountability relationship, the detailed analysis of this study identified that schools had three heterogeneous parents: for one parents who never know what is going on in the classroom, simply send their students, secondly, some parents who simply participate in meeting school construction; and thirdly, some parents amplified their views to the teachers or SMBs for their children's engagement in the curriculum. Under this scenario, the study findings in this regard reveal that even though there was no formal agreement between teachers and parents, parents believe and trust teachers and SMBs as they perform their roles to implement the curriculum. Parents had full information from their children, but some parents do not like to expose curriculum implementers at school community meetings, as guided by local norms (respecting educational professionals by calling them masters) for less demanding implementation of curriculum.

The study found that only a few educated and economically advanced parents are better able to use parents' power accountability relationship to hold teachers and SMBs accountable for the implementation of the curriculum at primary schools resulting in changing teachers from upper-grade level to lower grade level as a punishment strategy without practicing any rigorously disciplinary penalties like fine up salary and dismissal from a job. It was observed that SMBs did not provide the necessary information for parents to follow up, control, and evaluate teachers' performance in the classroom, resulting in parents' power being controlled as powerless. Parents were increasingly demanding and expecting more answers and explanations for the school curriculum implementation processes. Therefore, parents have little influence to hold both teachers and SMBs accountable for what is going on in the classroom. They do not influence teachers' terms of employment, or accountability mechanisms in terms of sanction or reward their day-to-day performance behavior for curriculum implementation.

Evidence gathered demonstrates that there was little parental information or awareness on how to hold teachers or SMBs accountable for the implementation of the curriculum. This leads to protecting the parents' power accountability relationship to hold teachers and SMBs accountable for the weak implementation of the curriculum. It is channeled into narrow interests from SMBs to act on it, and willing to act skeptically, which has little impact on satisfying the needs of parents as curriculum users. Accordingly, it can be concluded that SMBs are relatively weak in holding teachers accountable for the students' engagement in the curriculum.

It was understood that since public primary schools are crowded with large numbers of students from rural areas, choosing private schools had no impact on changing traditional bureaucratic and professional accountability relationships among curriculum developers, experts, SMBs, teachers, and curriculum users. In this accountability relationship, primary schools have been much more reluctant to exercise the market accountability model in the implementation of the curriculum due to a lack of legal accountability or competition policies.

5.1.4 Management Accountability Relationships

The findings of the study conclude that management accountability relationships were overemphasized to hold teachers accountable for the effective implementation of the curriculum. This is because of a lack of an enabling environment where SMBs had been handicapped in

providing professional development, incentives, and necessary resources that motivate teachers to implement the curriculum with a sense of responsibility; and the great attention of PTAs to funding, school construction, and solving conflicts in the schools rather than classroom follow-up to hold teachers accountable for improved implementation of the curriculum.

From the study's findings, it can be concluded that poor curriculum implementation was observed due to management accountability relationships being loosely linked to teachers to avoid the annual waste of 33% of instructional time. It was understood that teachers' physical presence in the school compound was sufficient to excuse them from accountability for wasting instructional time and, ultimately, poor curriculum implementation. This leads to a lack of accountability measures, which renders school curriculum implementers missing professional accountability.

In spite of the combination of autonomy and accountability improving curriculum implementation by requiring teachers to perform their duties, the study shows that the management accountability relationship was inhibited by SMBs' lack of autonomy to hold teachers accountable for their classroom roles. These mostly collapsed the role of SMBs in exercising accountability systems, including formal mechanisms (reward/punishment) to hold teachers accountable for expected practices of curriculum implementation. Indeed, there were no tangible consequences for the performances related to the implementation of the classroom practices, but guideline-based consequences procedures (MoE, 2002) have been applied for misbehavior observed in the schools.

This study also concludes that management accountability relationships were more operational for holding teachers accountable for subordinate initiatives to curriculum implementation, such as student promotion (100%), improving students' scores by 5% to 10% from the previous year's average score, increasing enrollment rate, reducing dropout rate, etc. Finally, the current study concludes that those reports have mythical associations with teachers' efficiency results, which seriously drive teachers in the wrong direction toward these overlapping and subordinate activities of major disruptive forms of external pressure or political interference, as if the curriculum had been successfully implemented.

The study concludes that this accountability relationship highly promotes the competing culture of school systems to benefit from the improvement of the students' results through some manipulations or adjustments. Even though teachers have full autonomy in classroom teaching, it was observed that reportable numerical data derived from teachers was wrongly out of their

professional practice due to the eroded and violated autonomy they have at school. It can be argued that the management accountability relationships promoted the practice of having good subordinate reports (e.g., test scores), as responsible teachers and irresponsible teachers who did not have attractive reports beyond the practices of the curriculum components.

Voice is precious. Making one's voice heard is a serious matter. In other words, acts like stabbing represent a desperate attempt to make one's voice heard when there is no one to listen or respond, creating a significant problem or gap. Curriculum users have no means to hold curriculum developers and experts accountable for the implementation of the curriculum. On the other hand, students and their families face limitations in holding teachers and SMBs accountable for exercising their rights. Hence, the study concludes that accountability relationships for curriculum implementation in primary schools, viewed through a systems framework, were exercised in totally broken (voices), partially broken (powers), solid compact and management accountability relationships, and "half-winged" education systems. *In other words, the exercise of accountability relationship in implementing curriculum in the primary school system was found to be like flying a bird with one wing or an airplane landing with one wing.* The nature of the arrows that connect education actors indicates the existing accountability relationship of the primary schools of the zone.

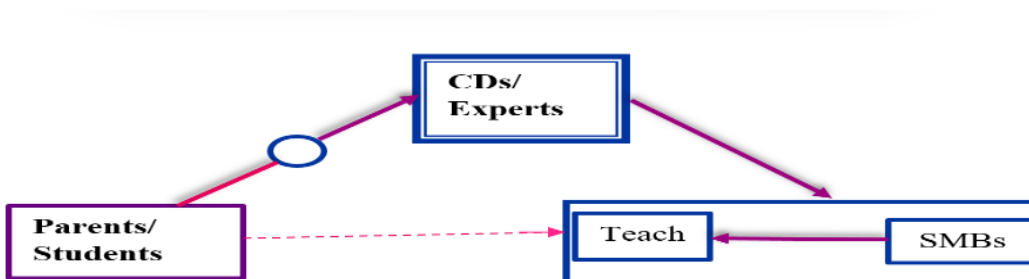


Figure 3. The existing accountability relationships in the primary education system of the East Wollega Zone (author's construct based on findings)

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions made, the following recommendations are forwarded to the concerned bodies as valuable input.

5.2.1 Voice Accountability Relationships

In the 21st-century education reform, many countries have emphasized voice accountability relationships for curriculum implementation. Hence, there should be a clear and working system of voice accountability relationship that will involve assigning responsibilities to major curriculum developers while ensuring that there are well-established mechanisms to ensure an enabling environment to achieve the implementation of the curriculum as intended. The findings of the study indicate that no guidelines or framework exist to indicate the roles of the curriculum users to strengthen their voices to the REB. Therefore, REB should give clearer responsibilities and expectations that help curriculum users articulate their real voice in what they are going to embrace, the curriculum developers' roles, and responsibilities. This is because students' voices have become the clarion call for the effectiveness of curriculum implementation about what is needed in the way one can understand, respond to, and work with students in primary schools.

REB's curriculum developers should have the professional and political will to analyze school-level students' voices and need to establish stronger accountability policies for meaningful implementation of the curriculum. REB should strive to equip schools more fully with the resources they need to produce products required by society, and thus meet the expectations of both students and parents. There should be strong accountability mechanisms so that REB's curriculum developers can respond to the voices of the students. Further, curriculum developers should be accountable to students and should give responses through compact accountability relationships to hold school curriculum implementers accountable for the weakened implementation of the school curriculum. REB should design new guidelines with an accountability framework through which curriculum users' voices would be heard clearly.

One of the main roles of REB is to develop the primary school curriculum and coordinate, support, and mobilize the government and community for the successful implementation of the school curriculum (MoE, 2002). However, the findings of the study indicate that multiple numbers of

parents' voices were marginalized by the absence of communication channels, weak involvement in decision-making, unclear accountability frameworks, or poor feedback loops. Indeed, REB's curriculum developers should have the political will to enhance alternative communications to address the parents' voices on the issues of curriculum implementation. The study recommends that REB's curriculum developers should work on: establishing feedback mechanisms where students and parents can provide input on curriculum effectiveness directly to curriculum developers, and establishing regular communication between schools, parents, and curriculum developers to ensure transparency in curriculum changes and implementation.

Involving curriculum users in decision-making by creating platforms for their involvement in the curriculum implementation process to ensure their voices are heard, developing clear accountability frameworks that outline the roles and responsibilities of all education stakeholders in the curriculum implementation, offering training programs, leveraging technology platforms that facilitate ongoing dialogue about curriculum expectations and student progress and fostering community engagement initiatives that bring together various stakeholders to discuss educational goals and challenges related to curriculum implementation and the like.

The study recommends that WEOs' C and I experts must be accountable to students for the curriculum implemented at the Woreda level by ensuring that students' decision-making processes rely on the best available knowledge and the interests of the student, and evaluating the subsequent effects of the curriculum implementation... There must be the development of democratic governing bodies and educational structural organizations that are essential for students to address their influential voices about hindering factors for the implementation of the curriculum. The study recommends that democratizing accountability relationships in the primary education system plays a great role in the implementation of the curriculum, so that students should get freedom but not be frightened of addressing their school's democratic rights. So, WEOs' C and I experts should be accountable to students' voices for the provision of school facilities and capacity-building training for the successful implementation of the curriculum.

Parents were seen to be talking about school problems relative to the implementation of the curriculum constructively to the nearest WEOs' C and I experts. The findings of this study reveal that through usual face-to-face meetings with those experts, parents had strongly voiced the shortage of instructional facilities, weak student and teacher performances, and free promotion

without sufficient implementation of the curriculum. It is advised that the experts had better use the knowledge, skills, and experience of parents to improve or maintain standards for primary school curriculum implementation. The standards of quality of curriculum implementation will be determined by the quality of the accountability relationship within the primary education system.

The study further recommends that, beyond the election, there must be an influential accountability policy and framework through which WEOs' C and I experts recognize parental voices for improved changes in the implementation of the primary school curriculum. Generally, as the findings of this study reveal, the voice accountability relationship to hold curriculum developers of the REB and C and I experts of the WEOs accountable for their duties does not work as expected. Hence, it is recommended that REB should create a culture of empowering curriculum users through transparency and accountability so that the voices of the curriculum users can be critically heard. Finally, the study suggests that promoting curriculum users' voices through formal and democratic political mechanisms or informal advocacy, public information, and champions would be valuable in shaking and mobilizing experts and curriculum developers to fulfill their duties.

5.2.2 Compact Accountability Relationships

A compact accountability relationship between policymakers and school curriculum implementers is vital for ensuring effective implementation of primary school curricula by establishing expectations, fostering collaboration through communication channels, utilizing data-driven approaches for accountability, creating feedback mechanisms, and engaging in shared accountability frameworks...Nevertheless, the findings revealed that the compact accountability relationship between the REB's curriculum developers and implementers deviated from key elements as sufficient conditions of accountability elements for implementing curricula, such as monitoring, feedback mechanisms, transparency and communication, and data-driven decision-making.

The study indicates that compact accountability flow was characterized as strong for the necessary conditions of schooling for the implementation of curriculum, distributing books, collecting observable data, constructing buildings, and deploying teachers to the schools. Therefore, based on the system framework application for primary schools, curriculum developers should focus on

sufficient conditions of accountability elements that can be considered for implementing a curriculum. It is recommended that REB's curriculum developers should design clear accountability frameworks that define roles, responsibilities, and expectations that lead to better implementation of the curriculum. In addition, a contractual compact accountability system between the two parties is necessary. This is because a contractual form of compact accountability relationship helps both curriculum developers and implementers to discharge their responsibility for the implementation of the curriculum effectively.

The study's findings disclose that compact (C1) accountability relationships have a nearly similar character to that of decentralized and nearest compact accountability relationship (C2) to the school curriculum implementers. That means the source for the compact accountability relationship is the same, but based on the structural authority, they are a little different in flow. Hence, the study recommends that WEOs' C and I experts give priority to compact accountability relationship that changes implementers' behaviors (monitoring, enforcement, answerability...) to enhance the implementation of the curriculum rather than crude use of students and school-related data and ratios (for instance, these usually serve as a ranking issue).

This is because WEOs' C and I experts had limited themselves and escaped to enforce and hold both curriculum implementers accountable through formal accountability mechanisms, and experts push every problem to SMBs to hold teachers accountable for their actions. This creates mistrust of the compact accountability relationships. Indeed, the lack of trust between stakeholders in the system renders the system powerless and dysfunctional (Van Der Berg et al., 2016). The study further recommends that WEOs' C and I experts should engage school curriculum implementers in collaborative goal-setting processes that align with school curriculum objectives while considering the needs of the curriculum users. This helps them to make their compact accountable, free from political responsibilities, and to apply reasonable enforcement to school curriculum implementers.

Relating to compact accountability relationships, WEOs' C and I experts should use formal evaluation roles that impact what curriculum implementers will be held accountable for, translating written curricula into classroom practices. Holding curriculum implementers accountable for the implementation of the curriculum through standardized examination and a risk-based school inspection is mandatory to put the curriculum into practice effectively. Importantly, REB would

redesign the long-route accountability relationship by establishing an independent quality assurance institution/office that acts to monitor the employment of teachers and SMBs in the regions by visiting schools, pointing out mistakes, writing reports, and submitting reports to the government.

This is because experts of WEOs' C and I have limited professional knowledge about the implementation of the curriculum and educational accountability so they were afraid to adopt supportive leadership practices and create feedback mechanisms that empower curriculum implementers to monitor and evaluate their roles and exercise an accountability mechanism for what is going on in the classroom. This helps the REB easily use accountability sanctions for bad reports and rewards for good reports. By and large, addressing the failure of compact accountability relationships, this study recommends that for better curriculum implementation, REB should make enormous investments in enhanced communication, opportunities for professional growth, transparent accountability platforms, cooperative goal-setting, data-driven decision-making procedures, encouraging leadership styles, and productive feedback systems.

5.2.3 Power Accountability Relationships

Despite various complicated challenges in the schooling system, as professionals, teachers must be accountable for identifying and meeting the needs of individual students, who are the front-line curriculum users in satisfying their needs. There should be training given by all education stakeholders about the value of the curriculum that empowers students to actively participate in holding the accountability of both teachers and SMB for engagement in the curriculum, so that students will have the right to choose the best teachers based on their roles in the implementation of the curriculum.

Today, students are guaranteed to be the transformers of the future of Ethiopia; therefore, they must be provided with full freedom from school political conflict for not to be frightened in the school compound. They should also have the power to hold teachers/SMBs accountable for their engagement in the curriculum. It is recommended that SMBs have the right to take appropriate and prompt responses to students' demands and should take an appropriate measure, "the measurement could be dismissal from work," MoE (2002, p. 34) against teachers who do not discharge their duties and responsibilities in translating written curricula into classroom practices.

This study also recommends that REB should design a guideline or policy document that allows transparent and accessible grievance procedures to address the concerns of curriculum users in a way the implementation of the curriculum is effective. This procedure helps maintain an affair and a consistent approach to resolving problems related to the implementation of curriculum in a closed-loop manner. This can involve appointing a designated staff member or committee responsible for handling grievances, conducting thorough investigations, and providing appropriate remedies through a coherent accountability relationship.

The findings of this study reveal that involving education stakeholders in discussions about accountability issues for curriculum implementation was missed. So, it is recommended that REB's curriculum developers, WEOs' C and I experts, and SMBs should mobilize curriculum users for accountability actions so that they can effectively exercise their power relationship to hold teachers and SMBs accountable if weak implementation of the curriculum is observed. This is because SMBs are the main body in which parents and students can use their power. SMBs and teachers are usually held accountable for better implementation of the curriculum, not only by the government but also by parents and students. When parents are empowered, their power is increased, and they have greater direct influence over the schools and front-line curriculum implementers. This empowerment helps parents positively influence school curriculum implementation through close interactions with both teachers and SMBs. SMBs should give strong attention to engaging parents for issues related to the implementation of the curriculum, beyond participating in issues of school facilities.

Furthermore, parents should strictly follow up on their children's day-to-day activities by contacting their teachers and SMBs to ask about their children's engagement in the curriculum. There had better be parental engagement and communication between teachers and parents through greater transparency for monitoring teachers' performance and holding them to account for parents' demands in the implementation of the curriculum. Primary school curriculum implementers must use the knowledge, skills, and experience of parents to improve the implementation of the curriculum by giving recognition to parental power. Parents should get school choices, elsewhere internationally (nationally), to transfer their children from field school to private or competent government primary schools with a government budget through a market accountability model. This would help them personalize the school inspection system, making it

more enjoyable and efficient to exercise in holding school curriculum implementers accountable for what they demanded in the implementation of the curriculum.

The study recommends that REB should display legal accountability as an important aspect of educational accountability, so that schools must be legally accountable to parents for the failed implementation of the curriculum. This is because effective legal accountability requires proper execution of laws and regulations and providing citizens (parents and students in the context of this study) with required information about laws and regulations at the expected time (Fard and Rostamy, 2007). There should be legal accountability in the primary education system for curriculum implementation that is significantly useful for educational structural organizations adhering to legislation and laws. Since it provides for processes such as audits, school visits, and other monitoring tasks (Heinrich, 2002). The REB should continuously launch primary school education policies that provide clear and accessible information by considering the needs of curriculum users, that enforce the laws for accountability, to provide better chances to exercise their rights in holding SMBs and teachers accountable for better implementation of the school curriculum.

5.2.4 Management Accountability Relationships

The findings of this study expose that the relationship between SMBs and teachers regarding the implementation of the curriculum can often be fraught with challenges, leading to failures in accountability. This is due to the failure of a compact accountability relationship affects the management accountability relationship that leads to more effective schooling (general education services, whether textbooks, teachers, policy advocates, construction...) and schooling /subordinate roles given through compact accountability relationship (e.g., students' test scores, enrollment, dropout...) that drive teachers and SMBs from technical issues to professional roles than for what is going in the classroom. Management accountability relationships in schools maintain positive relationships and valuable alignment between SMBs and teachers, so that teachers should be innovative in the classroom through an enabling environment. This is because teachers must be held accountable for what they do (in translating written curriculum into classroom practices) as frontline curriculum implementers based on the school management guideline (MoE, 2002), but not for subordinates reporting to the implementation of the curriculum. Teachers should not be held accountable for what they are not responsible for.

Teacher motivation and incentives make a difference in the implementation of curriculum, even with few inputs (WDR, 2018), so that the management accountability relationship will be successful in bringing expected change. Today, in an era of accountability, it is recommended that the schools' environment should be conducive to providing support and invention to staff members, and provide material and financial resources, autonomous in their internal management...for effective implementation of curriculum, but should not be the place of political and technical garbage for burdening teachers and SMBs.

It was observed that the management accountability relationship was extremely embedded due to the lack of professional autonomy of both teachers and SMBs. Therefore, a combination of increased levels of school autonomy and accountability should be profoundly addressed with new policies/guidelines to positively enhance the implementation of the primary school curriculum. There should be an improved accountability movement as a golden call that will help educators focus on curriculum implementation. This is due to shifting from a loosely coupled nation to a management accountability relationship, to a coherent accountability system may encourage teachers to attend more to students' engagement in the curriculum. Therefore, curriculum implementation must be accompanied by a strong, coherent, and cohesive system of accountability, one that should mainly aim to improve the system to help primary schools address the needs of the curriculum users.

To strengthen the management accountability relationship, new independent oversight institutions and regulatory agencies between the REB and primary schools with rigorous standards should be established to evaluate and inspect schools for the continuous improved implementation of the curriculum. This is because experience elsewhere shows that raising school accountability requires strengthening the quality-assurance mechanisms that are in place between the government and school implementers (Baum et al., 2014). Any education system in many countries implements educational accountability that neither rewards educators for performing well nor penalizes them for performing poorly (WDR, 2018).

To make the primary school system workable for effective accountability relationships, SMBs should get newly developed accountability policy guidelines and procedures that give the right to exercise rewards and sanctions for teachers' roles in the classroom. As Bryant et al. (2018) emphasized, when principals or SMBs are empowered, they implement policy mandates 'with

confidence’ and ‘with little worry about fidelity to’ external mandates (356) that enforce them to do so. Therefore, I strongly recommend that SMBs have a high-performing accountability system that opens the floor for school curriculum implementers’ empowerment. Indeed, a high-performing accountability system is crucial for shaping the quality of curriculum implementation in primary education. Such systems ensure that teachers, school principals, supervisors, and stakeholders are held responsible for the effective implementation of the curriculum.

5.2.5. The Contributions of this Research Findings

The study of accountability for curriculum implementation contributes to educational research and practice in several significant ways:

For one, the findings of the study provide valuable contributions to enhance the understanding of accountability relationships, mechanisms, and feedback loops. This can clarify how different accountability mechanisms influence curriculum implementation. This understanding helps educators and policymakers design more effective accountability policies, frameworks, and clear expectations for education stakeholders for better implementation of the primary school curricula. The findings of the study can emphasize the importance of involving various stakeholders in the primary education system in the accountability process, fostering a collaborative approach to curriculum implementation.

Secondly, the findings contribute to informing new policy and practice by examining the accountability relationship among education stakeholders. This study can provide insights into how effective curriculum implementation contributes that can lead to the development of frameworks or models that schools, WEOs, and REB can use to evaluate their accountability practices regarding curriculum implementation. More importantly, this study explores how cultural contexts affect accountability relationships in education, leading to curriculum users facing challenges in practicing their voice and power due to local and cultural norms. Therefore, in the future, it will strengthen the existing literature so that culture and social traditions can be aligned with the practice of accountability relationships. The findings contribute to the literature by emphasizing that the implementation of the education system is not outside the path of accountability because of mutual respect. Cultures that value open communication may foster

environments where curriculum users feel comfortable voicing concerns or suggestions regarding the implementation of the curriculum.

Thirdly, these research findings suggest that when education stakeholders are held accountable for curriculum implementation, they tend to be more focused, motivated, and consistent in delivering content. In particular, to teachers, accountability systems encourage teachers to align their instruction with curriculum goals and standards. Finally, these findings were original and filled several gaps in the practices of accountability for curriculum implementation. Hence, these provide practical insights that are crucial for improving the arrangement and structures of primary education to make the system coherent, which can inform the innovation towards accountabilities that fit the present century for the betterment of curriculum implementation.

5.2.6 Recommendations for Further Research

Accountability-based curriculum implementation is a critical aspect of educational reform, particularly in developing countries like Ethiopia. It is of paramount importance to put in further communication. The success of any curriculum not only depends on a well-designed curriculum but also largely depends on the accountability relationships of those involved in its implementation. The following recommendations help with a deeper exploration of the accountability system for the implementation of the curriculum.

1. More sophisticated information through case studies is needed about why accountability pressure is operational on gathering countable reports than for translating curriculum into classroom practices in the decentralized primary education system in the study area. Also, the question of why political parties would exert pressure on schools to violate schools should get a reasonable answer to escape from the education system's incoherence in curriculum implementation.
2. Large-scale research will be needed to rethink and conceptualize the practice of accountability relationships for the implementation of curriculum in the primary school education system.
3. Further exploration of case studies with reliable reasoning is advised to determine why school guideline is challenged or less operational to use accountability consequences

(reward for good practices or sanction for bad practices) to implement the curriculum as intended.

5.2.7 A School-based Accountability Model as a Recommendation

The 2004 World Development Report's triangular accountability systems framework is a tool for describing the complex dynamics of a system, relationships of accountability, and feedback loops that drive the system for meaningful implementation of the curriculum. It explains the relationships between primary education stakeholders to work in a closed loop and is a little bit complicated, and it does not bring all concerned stakeholders into to single table or a face-to-face approach for better interaction. The study reveals that education systems that struggled with long-route accountability relationships were more vacant than the short-route ones, which leads to system incoherency for implementing the curriculum. I observed many gaps: lack of clear expectations, resource constraints, limited stakeholder engagement, ineffective communication, cultural factors, overemphasis of accountability relationship on schooling/embedded roles, system failures to work in a transparent way, inadequate assessment mechanisms, weak feedback mechanisms, absence of accountability policies and frameworks.... for curriculum implementation.

It was observed that the existing accountability systems move power and decision-making away from the primary curriculum users of the education system and more toward REB agencies. The current educational structure is fragmented (geographically and structurally) for exercising accountability relationships in primary schools for the implementation of the curriculum. To speak the truth, East Wollega Zone is on average more than 300 KM away from Finfinnee, students and parents cannot go in person to make their voices heard. REB's curriculum developers do not go to primary school and discuss the details of their status of the implementation of the curriculum with the school community. The structure that may be useful for making curriculum users' voices heard through political representatives is weak, and a systems thinking approach in primary schools is becoming overwhelmed by complexity. Hence, I believe that the existing accountability relationship is necessary but not a sufficient condition that uphold expected improvement in the implementation of the curriculum to satisfy the needs of the curriculum users.

The implementation of the curriculum in educational settings is a complex process that involves various stakeholders, including curriculum users, schools, district education offices, and the REB. The relationships among these entities can be understood through the lens of structured democratic voice, power dynamics (traditional hierarchies within schools may limit students' ability to voice concerns), compact agreements, and management accountability. Based on the observed gap in this dissertation, I proposed a school-based accountability model as a working accountability relationship among the primary school education stakeholders by making a common intersection among them in a decentralized and democratic approach. I believe that the model aims to improve school performance and governance through continuous improvement in the implementation of the curriculum.

School-based accountability model is designed to enhance the implementation of the curriculum by promoting responsibility, transparency, and continuous improvement within educational institutions. This model empowers schools to take ownership of their performance and outcomes, fostering an environment where educators can effectively implement the curriculum while being held accountable for student learning. This model ensures that all parties are held responsible for their roles in implementing the curriculum. By promoting systems thinking and a shared accountability approach, I believe that this model benefits equity within all internal and external stakeholders to have a "*seat at the table*" to improve the implementation of the primary school curriculum. This means bringing the disconnected vertical and horizontal accountability approaches into one round table to minimize bureaucracy.

Implementing a school-based accountability model can significantly enhance the effectiveness of curriculum implementation by fostering a culture of responsibility among educators while ensuring that all stakeholders are engaged in the process of continuous improvement. By focusing on data-driven decision-making within a collaborative framework, schools can better meet their educational objectives and improve students' engagement in the curriculum. This approach helps education stakeholders to analyze student performance data to identify areas for improvement and implement targeted interventions.

This collaborative approach fosters a sense of shared responsibility. In this case, schools may be given more autonomy in decision-making processes related to curriculum implementation, resource allocation, and instructional strategies to meet the specific needs of curriculum users. This

model may help to make accountability relationship more coherent by pulling down the REB or WEOs to the school environment so that teachers, curriculum users, SMBs, and experts from WEOs or curriculum developers from the REB play an active role in the decision-making and holding one another accountable processes for curriculum implementation proactively and reactively. *The arrows show that there should be a two-way communication between the principal and the agent in vertical and horizontal accountability relationships.* This model can serve as a timely call for the primary school education system of the State primary education to make a coherent system and shared decision-making practices to escape from blaming one another for the implementation of the curriculum. Finally, I believe that the proposed model can play a great role in restructuring primary education stakeholders to exercise their shared decision-making authority, fostering a democratic voice and power accountability relationship, , reducing fragmentation... and nurturing trust in each other to take responsibility and consequences for what they decide together for better implantation of the curriculum.

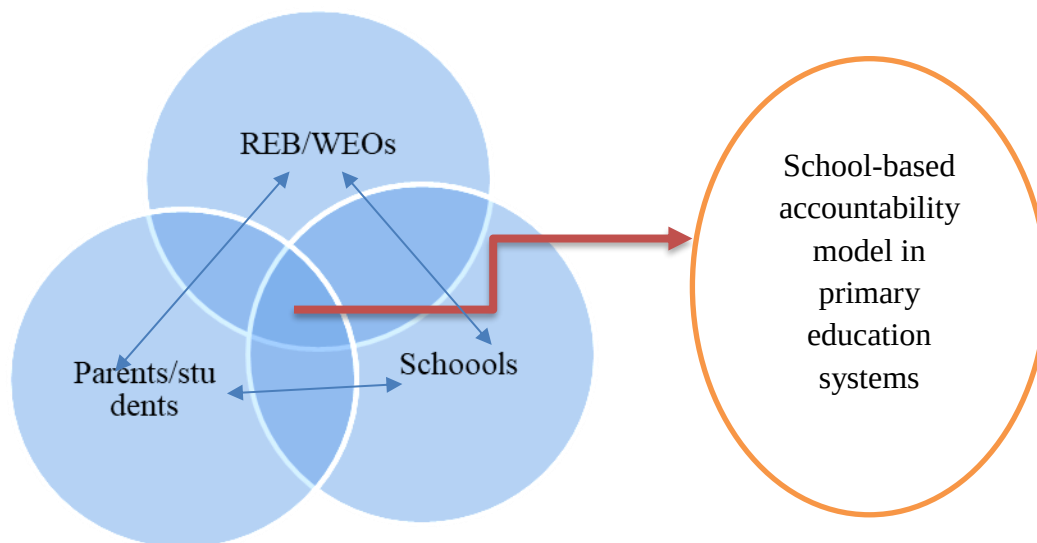


Figure 4: A School-based Accountability Model for Curriculum Implementation

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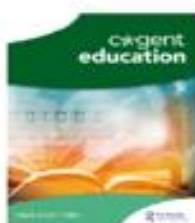
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Feyera Beyessa

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*Corresponding author: Feyera Beyessa, Department of Curriculum & Instruction, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
E-mail: feyerafey@yahoo.com

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Additional information is available at the end of the article

CURRICULUM & TEACHING STUDIES | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Students' voice and power accountability relationship for curriculum implementation in Ethiopian primary schools: A qualitative study

Feyera Beyessa*

Abstract: This study was aimed at exploring the students' voice and power accountability relationships for curriculum implementation in rural public primary schools in the east Wollega zone, Oromia region, Ethiopia. An exploratory case study type and a multiple case study research design with a qualitative approach were employed to achieve the study's objectives. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the schools and the respondents. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and documents. The study reveals that the students' voice accountability relationships were insufficient to hold the Woreda (district) Education Offices' curriculum and instruction experts accountable. This is due to the loosely coupled triangular accountability system and experts' sense of superiority and carelessness to focus on political matters rather than taking disciplinary measures against curriculum implementers for poorly implemented curricula. The results of this study also affirm that students' power

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Feyera Beyessa (lecturer and researcher) held his first degree in mathematics education and his second degree in curriculum studies and instructional skills. He has been working as a teacher educator in secondary schools, the College of teacher education, and Wollega University in the Department of teacher education. He has 20 years of experience and participated in various national and international research conferences. The Author published more than 20 articles on teachers' professional development, science education, cooperative learning, the quality of teacher education, and distance education. His research areas are teacher education, curriculum development, instructional technology, and educational accountability at all levels of the education system. He wrote different teaching modules for a regional college of teacher education. Currently, the author is a Ph.D. candidate at Addis Ababa University in curriculum studies.



Feyera Beyessa

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENTS

Since 1991, the emergence of education and training policy, decentralization, and educational accountability have been introduced in Ethiopia's primary schools to give opportunities for stakeholder participation in general and student participation, in particular, to exercise their voice and power in accountability relationships or curriculum implementation. Despite those efforts, national studies and regional government reports reveal the meager participation of students in exercising their voice and power to hold districts' curriculum and instruction experts, and curriculum implementers accountable. Using the WDA (2006) or Frizchett (2015) as a conceptual framework, this study, therefore, explores the existing accountability relationships for curriculum implementation in primary schools. The findings of the study prompt policymakers to design new educational accountability policies for the implementation of the curriculum. The study's findings also encourage various curriculum experts and researchers to conduct country-wide research to save students' engagement in the curriculum from education system failure.



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Publication two



Publication three: Report-driven management accountability in primary school curriculum implementation in Ethiopia: Is it driving or diverting teachers' focus?

Publication Four: A Study of School Principals' Practices to Ensure Teacher Accountability for Curriculum Implementation in Ethiopian Primary Schools

Publication Five: Accountability for Curriculum Implementation in Ethiopian Primary Schools: Compact Relationship in Focus

Ethical Approval

This study is my brand-new dissertation, and it was conducted with the permission of the Institutional Review Board of the College of Education and Behavioral Studies (CEBS), Addis Ababa University, with protocol number: CEBS_C & I_006/2024 dated May 20, 2024.

Appendices

Appendix- A

Face-to-face Interview Guide for REB curriculum developers

a) Background

1. Can you give me a brief bio in terms of your name, your current role, and a very brief overview of previous roles you have worked in?

B) Issues related to accountability in primary school curriculum implementation

1. As curriculum developers, what are your main roles?
2. What are your sources for developing the curriculum?
3. What is the curriculum & its implementation for you?
4. What makes classroom curriculum implementation effective or not?
5. How do you evaluate the implementation of the curriculum at primary schools?
6. What kinds of reports do you expect from schools through WEOs and ZEOs?
7. What kind of report do you or your office officially report to MoE?
8. What are the opinions of students and parents, and the community at large of REB/or curriculum developers?
9. Do you have the practice to incorporate those (No. 6) opinions in curriculum making? If yes, what are they, for example?
10. Do you have any communication channels about the status of Curriculum Implementation (CI) at the school or classroom level? How?
11. Do you give professional development training, sustained motivation, and resources?
12. How do you monitor and judge school performance in the implementation of the curriculum?
13. Do you know students' and parents' concerns about school instructional materials (books, laboratory, technology...)
14. Do you use school-based accountability for examination (National, international/ Standardized PISA) results?
15. Do you have inspection practices for how well teachers and schools are serving the educational needs of our students during the implementation of the curriculum?
16. Do you provide induction training on newly developed textbooks?
17. Do schools/ teachers have the autonomy to implement the curriculum effectively?

18. What kinds of accountability have been exercised in the school system? Based on what?
19. How do you acknowledge the teachers and schools, or curriculum experts in terms of the practice for school curriculum implementation?
20. How do you force SMBs and teachers to ensure the implementation of the curriculum to satisfy the needs of parents and students? (reward for good and punishment for bad performances)
21. Who is going to use the power (if any) of hiring and firing teachers for effectiveness or deficiency in the implementation of the curriculum, respectively?
22. Add additional comments.

Appendix- B

Interview Guide for WEOs' C and I experts

a) Background

1. Can you give me a brief bio in terms of your name, service years, your current role, and a very brief overview of previous roles you have worked in?

B) Issues related to accountability for curriculum implementation

1. Do you have regular meetings with teachers, students, parents (community), and SMBs? On what issues?
2. How do the students, parents, and communities reflect their views about the status of the implementation of the school curriculum at school meetings or by visiting your office?
3. Have you heard any information from students and parents (community) about the deficiency of the school CI through Media, face-to-face, or other channels? If so? How do you put pressure on effective implementation?
4. Can it be possible to increase the accountability of teachers and schools for effective CI through parents' and students' voices?
5. What is your main role for CI?
6. How do you have strategies to set goals, monitor and manage progress, and provide support and resources relevant to the context?
7. How do we acknowledge the administrative roles of school supervisors, directors, and PTAs expressed in terms of planning, organization, control, leadership, and discipline to implement curriculum?
8. How do you force SMBs and teachers to implement curriculum to the needs of parents and students according to their responsibilities?
9. Do you give professional development training, sustained motivation, and resources?
10. Do you have annual teachers' absenteeism reports either in % or number? If not, what is the evidence for effective curriculum implementation or not?
11. What kinds of report activities are usually done at schools and woreda levels? Does the report include teachers' and schools' roles for CL (eg, merging curriculum, pedagogical practices, and assessment practices)?
12. Have you seen or taken any educational accountability measures at schools? For what cases, if any? Or to punish or reward based on performance evaluations
13. What are the government policy or guideline directions on accountability for educators or teachers' professional practices?
14. Do you have additional comments?

Appendix- C

Face-to-face Interview Guide SMBs (Supervisors, Directors, and PTAs)

a) Background

1. Ask the respondent to introduce themselves and ask whether he /she joined/their job. Why/ why not?

B) Issues related to accountability for curriculum implementation

1. Are there regular meetings with students and parents (community), WEOs' C and I experts ...? If yes, on what issues
2. What are the views of students and parents (community) about teachers and their performance in implementing the school curriculum?
3. How do you respect the rights of the students and parents when they complain about teachers' content, pedagogical knowledge, and assessment practice during CI?
4. How do you assess the status of CI (merging curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment in the classroom) in the school based on monitoring and evaluation practices? Have you seen the gap in this case?
5. Do you cover all the textbooks within the given time? If not, what measures have been taken?
6. How do you provide information on the teachers' performance concerning the merging of curriculum, pedagogical practices, and assessment?
7. If there are some gaps, what is your remedial action?
8. For what purpose/activities are you accountable? What kinds of information do you have to report and to whom?
9. How does knowing the commitment of teachers to curriculum implementation meet the needs of the students?
10. How do you take necessary measures against teachers who failed to discharge their duties and responsibilities properly (if any) to implement the curriculum? Or to punish or reward based on performance evaluation for CI.
11. Have you seen any teachers' absenteeism from their regular work?
12. Do you have evidence (report) either in % or number from? What is your controlling mechanism?
13. What kind of accountability actions (rewards and sanctions have been taken in your school in case of failure of CL is observed? If not, what are the difficulties in doing so? (Policy, political, or... Hide them to take action. Explore more?
14. What are the government policy or guideline directions on accountability for educators or teachers' professional practices?

Appendix- D

Face-to-face Interview Guide for Teachers

1. What are your main roles in the schools, particularly in implementing the curriculum?
Please list them.
2. How do we implement essential components of the curriculum to achieve the objectives of the subject matter of the study?
3. Have you directly heard any comments (either positive or negative) about your instructional practices from students and parents?
4. How do you satisfy the needs of parents/students in your subject area through merging curriculum, pedagogy, and assessments in the classroom?
5. Have you completed the yearly activities on time according to the prepared plan?
6. How are you autonomous in creating a good atmosphere for teaching and learning?
7. For what are you evaluated and accountable?
8. Are there regular meetings with WEOs and REB? If yes, on what issues?
9. Have you come across monitoring practices by SMBs or WEOs' C and I experts or REB curriculum developers when you implement the curriculum at the school level?
10. How do SMBs, WEOs' C and I experts, and REB curriculum developers monitor schools and teachers for CI practices?
11. How do SMBs, WEOs' C and I experts, and REB curriculum developers hold schools and teachers accountable for CI practices?
12. What kind of accountability system do you have in your school? For what are you accountable and controlled?
13. Have you ever seen any disciplinary penalties for teachers and school staff members? If yes, for what case?
14. What are the government policy or guideline directions on accountability for educators or teachers' professional practices?

Appendix- E

Face-to-face Interview Guide for Parents

1. How do you see the importance of curriculum for your students' lives?
2. Are you interested in schools' and teachers' practices to implement the curriculum?
3. Do you observe some gaps in the implementation of the curriculum?
4. Do you have joint meetings either with teachers, SMBs, WEOs' C and I experts, or REB?
If yes, on what issues??
5. How do you see the relationship/meetings with REB and WEOs' C and I experts? If so, would you explain the issues?
6. Have you exercised your voice (opinions or concerns) to the nearest WEO and REB for effective teaching and learning in the school? Do you exercise our vices or our rights to voice our opinions or to claim what you and your students deserve in courses of study?
7. Do you have any activities closely with teachers and SMBs? If yes, on what issues?
8. Do you visit the school to observe the school for your students' engagement in the essential components of the curriculum?
9. Do you have face-to-face meetings/contacts with SMBs and teachers for CI? If so, how do you see your influence and right to give an opinion on your students' learning?
10. Do you have any communication (your views) with teachers and schools/SMBs for effective CI? If not, what are your measures like withdrawing your student or searching for another school?
11. Have you exercised control over teachers?
12. Did you exercise to recommend the disciplinary problems (absenteeism and weakness in instructional practices) to PTAs of SMBs? If so, what penalties do you observe?
13. Do you have the power to increase the accountability of teachers and SMBs for effective teaching-learning?
14. Have you exercised to give rewards and punishments to address issues of teaching and learning? If so, what aspects or measures do you practice?
15. Have you seen remedial measures based on your request regarding the status of CI? Explain.
16. Do you know about government policy or guideline directions on accountability for educators or teachers' professional practices?

Appendix- F

Face-to-face Interview Guide for Students

1. How do you see the importance of the curriculum for your future career/ life?
2. How do you get appropriate support from teachers concerning participatory teaching, assessment, and academic guidance in and outside the classroom?
3. Have you seen any gaps in schools and teachers' instructional practices?
4. Do you have joint meetings with teachers, SMBs, WEOs' C and I experts, and REB? If yes, on what issues?
5. Have you exercised your voice (opinion) to the WEOs' C and I experts and REB for more CI through meeting any method of communication about gaps you observed? If not, why? (fear access, political issue, or)
6. How do you evaluate your teachers' teaching-learning/ instructional practices?
7. Do you exercise your right to issue proper directives to teachers and schools/SMBs to be provided meaningful CI (planned learning opportunities, appropriate pedagogy, and support services throughout the study)? How? Explain the right to give an opinion and the kinds of questions you raised to them.
8. How do schools/SMBs respect your communication for the intervention of CL? If not, what kinds of measures (transfer to other schools...) do you use?
9. Do you cover all the courses within the given time? If not, what measures have been taken?
10. Have you seen teachers' absenteeism from their school and regular classrooms?
11. Did you recommend the disciplinary problems (absenteeism, weakness of instructional practices) of teachers to PTAs of SMBs? If so, what penalties do you observe?
12. Can you increase the accountability of teachers through communication with SMBs? If yes, how? If not, why?
13. Do you know about government policy or guideline directions on accountability for educators or teachers' professional practices?

Appendix-G

Non- participant observation (related to themes)

- Teachers' absenteeism;
- Respondents' emotions, feelings, and tone of voice;
- Major visible activities are done by SPs, CRC supervisors, PTAs, and WEOs' C and I experts.
- Wastage of the classroom;
- School facilities and instructional materials; and
- Interaction of parents/ students with SPs and teachers (if any)

Appendix- H

Major components of the teachers' evaluation format for primary schools

No.	Planned activities	Level of performance				Total	
		1	2	3	4		
1	Prepare annual and weekly plans and conduct teaching and learning.						
2	Responsible for respecting working hours and attending flag ceremonies						
3	Respect and uphold school ethics						
4	Participate in increasing students' enrollment (bringing students) and providing on-time reports.						
5	Activities done to reduce students' dropout and absenteeism						
6	The role played in the assembly, committee, and department.						
7	Book distributed and collected.						
8	Giving tutorials for female students and slow learners						
9	Activities were carried out to keep the school atmosphere, restrooms, and classrooms clean.						
10	Using different teaching methods						

11	Completing the textbook contents on time						
12	Replace wasted instructional time and report on time						
13	Evaluation of Students' Textbooks						
14	conducting action research						
15	Work hard on school discipline and safety.						
16	On-time report on increasing students' results by 5 to 10 %						
17	Provide quality and timely reporting of education activities.						
18	Good exemplary work on planting and maintaining trees						
19	Work hard on increasing the students' promotion.						
20	CPD plan, practice, and on-time report						
21	Attempts were made to increase school revenue.						
22	Perform or implement various management duties assigned to the teacher.						
Overall result							

Teacher's name_____

Approval of School principal

Sing_____Date_____

Name _____ Sign. ____Date_____

Supervisors' approval

Name_____Sign____Date_____