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## SCHOOL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES: FOCUS ON SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN EAST SHOWA, ETHIOPIA

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### ABSTRACT

*In the 21<sup>st</sup> century there is a growing realization that principalship is a specialist occupation. The study examines the present practices of leadership development in secondary schools with particular reference to some selected public schools in East Showa, Ethiopia. Questionnaire and interview were used to solicit information from secondary school principals and educational experts. Questionnaire was employed to collect data from school principals and vice principals. Interview was used for gathering pertinent information from experts working at different levels of the education system. Accordingly, 19(nineteen) secondary school principals and vice principals and 6(six) supervisors from Woreda Education offices and Zone Education Department were included in the study. Availability and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the required numbers of principals and educational experts respectively. Percentage, weighted mean, and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. The study revealed that short term trainings and experience sharing appear the major practices that are being used frequently to promote the knowledge, skills and attitude of secondary school Principals. The researcher concludes that short term trainings and experience sharing should not be the only ways to be practiced for professional development of Principals. The paper therefore, suggests that potential principals would attend leadership courses at Colleges/Universities before they are assumed for school managerial positions. Despite the necessity of initial formal training, continuous on-job training, leadership consultancy, coaching and mentoring, experiential learning, role playing and simulations are so vital to promote the leadership skills of secondary school principals.*

### KEYWORDS

Leadership, principals, professional development, school leadership.

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to examine the existing school leadership development practices in public secondary schools of East Showa. More specifically, the study was aimed to investigate the extent to which the present secondary school principals have the necessary preparation in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude to effectively perform school tasks and to investigate the different modalities that have been in place to promote the competence and capabilities of school leaders. Furthermore, the study was targeted to identify the types of leadership development programs that school principals need to effectively discharge their roles and responsibilities. To do so, basic research questions were formulated to guide the whole activities of the study. It is hoped that the study will help policy makers to revisit the existing realities of the competence of school principals and the need to provide professional development to promote their leadership skills.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

*"Quality schools require quality leadership. Quality leadership cannot be assumed or acquired without a systematic approach to leadership recruitment, retention, and professional development" (UNESCO, 2005:4).*

Literature gives ample evidence that leadership plays an indispensable role in the effectiveness of educational institution, right from the setting of goals to accomplishment of goals. For instance, emphasizing the importance of school leaders in school effectiveness, the Wallance Foundation (2005) indicates that with many imperative issues and challenges facing schools today, effective leadership is essential to meet educational goals and ensure that students achieve academic success. In the same way, Cheng and Townsend (2000) discusses that under the same set of rules and regulations, with same set of teaching staff and students from similar background, an educational institution maintains status quo, or rises to prominence with a change of school leadership. Thus, as countries struggle to transform their educational systems to prepare young people with the knowledge and skills needed to function in a rapidly changing world, the roles and expectations of school leaders have been crucial. So, school leadership has become a priority in education policy agendas internationally. It plays a key role in improving school outcomes by influencing the motivations and capacity of teachers as well as the school climate and environment (OCED, 2008).

As described by the Wallance Foundation (2005), the current status of educational administration both as an academic field and as a profession in practice differs from one country to another. The reasons for the differences according to the writers can be attributed to cultural, political, and socio-economic differences. Apparently, selection criteria, appointment, employment procedures, and the responsibilities of principals are considerably different in different countries. Although these differences are inevitable, the quality of training principals receive before they assume their positions, and the continuing professional development they get once they are hired and throughout their careers, has a lot to do with whether school leaders can meet the increasingly tough expectations and responsibilities.

Thus, leadership is not the result of simply obtaining a position, but rather possessing the knowledge and understanding of successful leadership skills along with the personal ability to effectively implement those skills. Consequently, School leaders need impressive skills to provide effective leadership in the diverse school environments. But, are the present school principals getting the necessary professional preparation and readiness that they need to meet the responsibilities given to them in Ethiopian context? What are the current practices in place to promote the knowledge and skills of secondary school principals which enable them to discharge their responsibilities? These questions were used as a roadmap in this study to investigate the present status of school leadership development practices at the secondary schools of East Showa.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present education system of Ethiopia is based on the 1994 Education and Training Policy. The policy introduced major changes in the structure of the education system, curriculum and medium of instruction and decentralization. For implementing the education policy, a series of Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) was launched to be effected in phases of five year cycles over 20 years. Accordingly, ESDP I, II, and III have already been completed and it was reported by the Ministry of Education that many achievements have been gained (MOE, 2010).

Currently, the implementation of the fourth Education Sector Development Program (ESDP IV) is underway. As per ESDP IV, the core priorities in the education system in the coming years will concentrate on improving the quality of education. One of the key activities to be done to enhance the quality of education is improving school leadership as school leadership plays a key role in improving school outcomes by influencing the motivations and capacities of teachers, as well as the school climate and environment.

In this regard, secondary education occupies an important place in the Ethiopian education system. It serves as the link between the primary and tertiary levels. The Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia (ETPE, 1994) labels secondary education as the education that the child receives after primary education and it has four years duration, consisting of two years of general secondary education (grade 9 & 10) and two years of preparation for higher education (grade 11 &12). In the last two decades secondary education has made a remarkable progress in terms access to the people. As a result of dramatic increase of secondary schools,

there has been significant increase of students' enrollment. Parallel to these expansions, there has been also momentous increasing number of teachers and administrative staff year after year. Furthermore, there has been a huge mobilization of resources to secondary schools. These all human and material resources indispensably require competent and professionally trained school leaders to effectively utilize the resources and attain the intended objectives of education system at this particular level. However, there is no clear evidence whether the present school principals have adequate preparation in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude during their pre-service training and how far there is also continuous on-job training program to enhance their leadership competences.

Therefore, the purpose of the study was to investigate the extent to which secondary school principals' have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their present leadership roles and to identify the existing leadership development modalities/strategies in place to promote the leadership skills of secondary school principals. In doing so, the study attempts to answer the following basic research questions

1. What are the current models/forms of professional development practices in place for secondary school principals to promote their competence?
2. How do secondary school principals perceive their preparation and readiness in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude to carry out their roles?
3. What do secondary school principals really need on the job training to effectively discharge their roles?

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of the study is to investigate the existing leadership development practices in secondary schools of East Showa. More specifically, the study has the following specific objectives:

- To explore the extent to which school principals have adequately prepared before they possess the leadership position;
- To assess the present modalities/forms of professional development practices set for secondary school principals to promote their competence;
- To identify school principals needs in relation to the current practices and future demands;
- To provide practical and possible suggestions to improve the existing problems related to school leadership development programs

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### RESEARCH METHOD

The research is descriptive survey in nature. It was aimed to investigate the existing leadership development practices in public secondary schools of East Showa and to identify the different strategies carried out for school leadership development practices.

### SAMPLES AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

There are 17 public secondary schools in East Showa. These secondary schools are geographically dispersed and it was difficult to incorporate all schools in the study. So, availability sampling technique 9 (53%) of the schools were chosen to be included in the study. All together a total of 19 (9 principals and 10 vice principals) were included in the study. The researcher used availability sampling technique so as to include those school principals and vice principals available during data collection. In addition, a total of six experts (school supervisors) both at cluster level, woreda, and zone were included to solicit information pertaining to the current practices of school leadership development. These target respondents (experts) were selected purposively as the result of their position in the office and the researcher assumed that they have the necessary information about the prevailing situations of secondary school principals leadership development practices in their respective Woredas and zone.

### DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Basically questionnaire and interview were used to gather information from the target respondents. Questionnaire was used for collecting data from principals and vice principals and structured interview was developed and administered to supervisors at the cluster level, woreda education office, and zone education department.

### DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Based on the literature reviewed and the basic research questions raised, data collection instruments were developed and get checked by other potential colleagues for the face validity and clarity of the items. Then, the instruments were revised by taking into account the constructive comments given. Finally, the required information was gathered from the target population by the researcher himself.

### METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

Both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis were used. In this regard, descriptive statistical method such as percentage, aggregate mean and standard deviation were employed to analyze the quantitative data. Qualitative analysis was also used for a critical investigation of views, opinions and suggestions and for responses of principals, and vice principals to open ended questions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS

TABLE 1: PRINCIPALS AND VICE PRINCIPALS' TEACHING EXPERIENCES AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS (N=19)

Service years	Frequency	%
1-5 years	11	60
6-10 years	4	20
11-15	0	-
Above 15 years	4	20
Total	19	100

It can be portrayed in Table 1, 11 (60 %) of the principals and vice principals had 1-5 years of teaching experiences, followed by 4 (20%) having 6-10 years of teaching experience. The figure in the table shows that only 4(20%) of principals and vice principals have a relatively good number of service years. The remaining majority (60%) of them have less than five years of teaching experiences in secondary schools. Literature evidences that experience in teaching is one of the most important ingredient to make school principal and vice principal effective in their performance. However, there is no clear evidence for the researcher why the WEO or ZED gives due attention to less experienced individuals while recruiting and selecting school principals and vice principals. Anyways, it can be inferred from the data that the leadership of secondary schools in East Showa were relatively staffed with less experienced and young principals and vice principals. For such group of school leaders, it seems vital to provide relevant and continuous on-job training to build their leadership capacity so as to fill the gap in the lack of adequate experience and attain the overall objectives of the secondary schools.

TABLE 2: RESPONDENTS' LEVEL OF EDUCATION/ QUALIFICATION (N=19)

Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Diploma	-	-
Bachelors degree	19	100.0
Masters degree	-	-
Total	19	100.0

In Table 2, it was intended to examine the qualification status of secondary school principals' and vice principals. The figure in the table shows that all the respondents 19 (100%) had bachelor degree. This reveals that in terms of qualification, the respondents have the required degree which is inline with the directives and legislation of the government that allows a minimum of bachelor degree to be a principal of secondary school. Nevertheless, it was reported that the majority of school principals and vice principals 15 (77.8%) were graduated in subject areas such as Geography 5 (26.6%), Mathematics 4 (21.2%), Biology 2



(10%), Afan Oromo 2 (10%), Chemistry 1 (5%), and Amharic 1 (5%). Only 4 (21.2%) of them had graduated from the relevant field Educational Planning and Management. Thus, it is certainly obvious that leadership skills are vital for those who lack the know-how of leadership. In this regard, the data above revealed that the overwhelming number of secondary school principals were from different discipline which imply that they have to participate in leadership development practice to improve their leadership capacity and consequently improve the quality of their performances.

TABLE 3: SCHOOL PRINCIPALS SELECTION AND PRIOR TRAINING (N=19)

	Methods employed	Principals		V/Principals		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
How school principals selected	Competition	5	55.5	7	70	12	63
	Political appointment	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Staff selection	-	-	3	30	3	16
	Relevance of field of study	4	44.5	-	-	4	21
	Total	9	100	10	100	19	100
Prior training of school principals	Induction	-	-	3	30	3	30
	Short term training	-	-	2	20	2	20
	Pre-service training	4	44.5	-	-	4	-
	No training at all	5	55.5	5	50	10	50
Total	9	100	10	100	19	100	

Table 3 depicts that almost all principals and vice principals 12 (63%) indicated that they take school leadership position through competition. The remaining 4 (26%) of them have indicated that they were directly nominated by WEO and/or ZED due to the relevance of area of studies in their pre-service training. The rest 3 (11%) have replied that they take the position through staff selection. In this regard, the attempt made to recruit and select school principals and vice principals' based on competition and staff selection appears a good job. Above all, the selection and assignment of school principals by considering relevance of areas of studies is appreciated. But, the information obtained from principals and educational experts regarding this issue was inconsistent. During the interview with the supervisors at WEO and ZED it was understood that most of the principals and vice principals are assigned to the leadership position by being membership and loyalty to the political system of the ruling party. They have confirmed that although there is nominal competition among applicants for school principalship, practically the one who has political affiliation is directly or indirectly nominated for the position. This situation is more serious in the case of school principal selection than the vice principals. Sometimes the staff is given an opportunity to select their vice principals. As shown in the table above, out of the ten vice principals in the study group 3 (three) of them were selected directly by the staff. An extensive review of relevant literature have showed that the recruitment and selection of school principals are matters of great importance for all school systems because effective selection of educational leadership is absolutely vital to bringing about improvements and advances in all processes that foster the provision of education and student learning.

Regarding principals and vice principals prior training, the figure in Table 3 shows that the majority of principals 5 (55.5%) and vice principals 5 (50%) have no any prior leadership training. As depicted in this table, only 4 (45%) of principals have got formal training in Educational Planning and Management. The remaining 5 (50%) of vice principals have reported that they attended induction and short term training programs on school leadership. However, they claim that it was inadequate to perform the diverse nature of school tasks. In this regard, the literature stresses that school systems require a cadre of highly qualified and experienced educators to apply for and assume positions of leadership in schools.

TABLE 4: PRINCIPALS SELF PERCEPTION IN THEIR LEADERSHIP COMPETENCE (N=19)

No	Items	No of Respondents										M	SD
		1		2		3		4		5			
		f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1	I have a high level of up-to-date pedagogical knowledge and skills	2	11	4	21	4	21	3	16	6	32	3.4	1.4
2	I have a clear and justified vision for school development	-	-	1	5	5	26	5	26	8	42	4.0	.94
3	I have sound financial and resource management skills	-	-	2	11	6	32	7	37	4	21	3.6	.92
4	I have the ability to lead and participate in group discussions	-	-	-	-	4	21	7	37	8	42	4.2	.76
5	I have a high level of interest to the profession of leadership	-	-	-	-	2	11	11	58	6	32	4.2	.61
6	I have good skills of conflict management in my present leadership work	-	-	-	-	5	26	5	26	9	47	4.2	.83
7	I know how to manage programs/projects into successful implementation	-	-	-	-	5	26	7	37	7	37	4.1	.78
8	I have the ability to help others learn in the workplace through best practice	-	-	-	-	4	21	7	37	8	42	4.2	.76
9	I know how organizational tasks planned, organized and operated	-	-	-	-	7	37	3	16	9	47	4.1	.91
10	I am familiar to manage time effectively	-	-	-	-	5	26	5	26	9	47	4.2	.83
11	I can use IT effectively to communicate and perform management functions	-	-	8	42	4	21	5	26	2	11	3.2	
12	I know how to effectively identify and disseminate good practice across the departments, units and sections in the school	-	-	1	5	4	21	5	26	9	47	4.1	.93
13	Being able to work collaboratively with colleagues	-	-	1	5	-	-	8	42	10	53	4.3	.76
Weighted mean=3.9 SD = .80													

Table 4 above is planned to get a good insight on the extent to which secondary school principals and vice principals have adequate preparation and readiness in terms of leadership knowledge and skills. Especially, the items in the table above were designed to understand the self-perception of school principals and vice principals towards themselves and the extent to which they feel that they are mentally and psychologically ready to handle school tasks and discharge their responsibilities. As shown in the table, the average mean of all items was 3.9. This indicates that the mean value of all respondents is falling between 'moderate' and 'high'. The aggregate mean value (M=3.9, SD=0.80) generally shows that most of school principals and vice principals are moderately prepared for leadership position of secondary schools. A significant number of principals and vice principals rated high mean score to items such as: working collaboratively with colleagues (M=4.3), helping others to learn in the workplace through best practices (.M=4.2), participating staff in discussions and decision making processes (M=4.2), managing time effectively (M=4.2) and having good skills of conflict management (M=4.2). On the other hand, a considerable number of principals and vice principals rated relatively low to items such as: using IT effectively to communicate and perform management functions (M=3.2), having a high level of up-to-date pedagogical knowledge and skills (M=3.4) and having sound financial and resource management skills (M=3.6). Thus, from both aspects of the responses it is possible to conclude that the preparation and readiness of school principals and vice principals is moderate. On top of this, it was discussed earlier that most principals and vice principals are graduated in subject areas and most of them have no adequate experiences in teaching. All these together affect the quality of their performances. Therefore, they need more leadership development practices so as to feel confident to accomplish the wide variety of school tasks effectively.

TABLE 5: VARIOUS FORMS OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES (N=19)

No	Forms of LDP	No of respondents							
		1		2		3		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	M	SD
1	Formal leadership training	12	63	7	37	-	-	1.3	0.70
2	Workshops and seminars	8	42	10	53	1	5	1.5	0.59
3	Reflective writing	11	58	8	42	-	-	1.4	0.60
4	Peer observation	4	21	12	63	3	16	1.6	0.99
5	Action learning	8	42	10	53	1	5	1.5	0.59
6	Role play and simulations	9	47	9	47	1	6	1.4	0.69
7	Leadership consultancy	7	37	10	53	2	10	1.5	0.68
8	Experience sharing activities	3	16	14	74	2	10	1.7	0.50
9	E-learning and video conference	18	95	1	5	-	-	1.0	0.51
10	Coaching and mentoring	10	53	8	42	1	5	1.4	0.68
								Weighted Mean = 1.4, SD= 0.65	

Table 5 was projected to examine the extent to which secondary school principals and vice principals participate in various forms of leadership development practices organized by their respective schools, WEO, ZED and any other concerned body. As indicated in the table above (Table 5), the average mean of all items was 1.4 i.e. the mean value of all respondents is falling in between 'not at all' and 'sometimes'. This value (M=1.4, SD=0.65) generally shows that school leadership development practices were very rare. The participation of principals and vice principals in all forms of leadership development activities is much less than the average point 2. Although all the study group were agreed that their participation in leadership development practices is very low, a significant number of principals and vice principals rated relatively high mean score (M=1.7, M=1.6 and M=1.5) to items like participating in experience sharing activities, peer observation, and workshops and seminars respectively. On the other hand, a significant number of respondents rated low mean score to specific items such as e-learning and video conferences (M=1.0), formal leadership training (M=1.3), reflective writing (M=1.4), simulation and role playing (M=1.4) respectively. In general, it was confirmed by the respondents that the existing situation of school leadership development practices are not promising and attractive. The practices are not on a regular basis rather it has been given occasionally and in a sporadic manner. Such unsystematic and discontinuous approach may not help school principals and vice principals to improve their leadership skills. At this juncture the researcher would like to remind Fullan's (2007) argument related this point. The writer recommended that leadership development practices for school leaders should take place over the long-term rather than being episodic, be job-embedded rather than outside the realm of the school and be carefully planned with intention and purpose.

TABLE 6: THE TYPES OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES THAT PRINCIPALS NEED (N=19)

No	Items	No of respondents											
		1		2		3		4		5		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	M	SD
1	Using real-life workplace problems as a key resource for learning	-	-	-	-	3	16	10	53	6	32	4.5	.75
2	Coaching and mentoring on identified skills and best practices	-	-	1	5	-	-	11	58	7	37	4.3	.71
3	Attending masters degree and other postgraduate courses	-	-	1	5	1	5	2	11	15	79	4.6	.81
4	Creating relationship with inspiring international experts	-	-	-	-	3	16	9	47	7	37	4.2	.69
5	Sharing learning experiences to develop the interpersonal and personal skills needed by a principal	-	-	1	5	1	5	5	26	12	63	4.5	.82
6	Using IT to make learning as convenient and interactive as possible	-	-	1	5	3	16	5	26	10	53	4.3	.90
7	Practical problem-based workshops and action learning groups of principals	-	-	-	-	1	5	7	37	11	58	4.5	.59
8	Induction Programs	-	-	1	5	4	21	9	47	5	26	3.9	.82
9	Visits to other similar schools or systems	-	-	-	-	2	11	10	53	7	37	4.3	.51
10	Short-term training	1	5	1	5	5	26	6	32	6	32	3.8	1.1
11	Informal interactions with peers and collegial support	-	-	-	-	1	5	10	53	8	42	4.4	.58
												Average Mean = 4.4, SD = .75	

In Table 6, it was intended to examine the needs and interests of school principals and vice principals with regard to school leadership development practices. As indicated in the table above, the average mean score of the whole items is M=4.4. This value is falling between 'agree' and 'strongly agree'. This shows that the respondents have positive outlook to most of the items described in the table. More specifically, 79% and 63% of the respondents strongly prefer to attend masters degree in leadership and to share experiences from similar institutions to develop personal and interpersonal skills respectively. As can be seen in this table, the overwhelming of respondents reveal that they prefer to follow need based leadership development programs which are related to the practical situations of school tasks instead of taking predetermined programs which is mostly designed by people remotest from the actual practice. In the regard, the majority of respondents prefer leadership development practices that are related to real life work related problem (M=4.5), experience sharing among similar institutions (M=4.5), attending masters program and other related courses (M=4.6), practical and problem based workshops and action learning. On the other hand, items such as short term training (M=3.8), induction programs (M=3.9), and creating relationship with inspiring international experts (M=4.2) were among the list which are relatively rated low. However, the overall demand and interest of school principals to all items were very much positive.

Likewise, the experts (supervisors) were interviewed to describe the leadership development practices most likely preferred by school principals and vice principals. Almost all 5(five) of them have indicated that principals and vice principals prefer any leadership development program which promote their status and increase their salary. According to the experts, principals and vice principals mostly do not like short term trainings, workshops, meetings because participation to these programs does not incur any benefit for them. Principals are very much bored with workshops and seminars rather they prefer to attend post graduate programs, sharing of experiences from similar institutions.

In general, it was realized from the responses that school principals and vice principals at present are trying to attend various leadership development practices. Yet, there are more to do on the part of Woreda, and Zone Education Department, school principals themselves to effectively plan, organize and monitor the leadership development practices so as to enable school principals to acquire the contemporary knowledge and skills and apply the skills to improve school effectiveness.

**FINDINGS**

This part provides a brief summary of the major findings to the research questions raised i.e. school principals' preparation and readiness for educational leadership position, the present modalities of school leadership development practices, and the needs of school principals in the leadership development practices of secondary schools.

Concerning principals and vice principals preparation and readiness for school leadership, the findings revealed that the majority of them lack adequate preparation either during their pre-service training or in-service training. Out of 19 school principals and vice principals only 4 (21%) have relevant training in

Educational Planning and Management. The remaining 15(79%) do not have adequate leadership training and initially they were trained for teaching their area of studies.

With regard to various forms of school leadership development practices, the data mainly showed the existence of short term training, induction, workshops and experience sharing practices. It was ensured that these activities have been occasionally conducted to improve the leadership skills of secondary school principals. However, it was found that these practices are not well organized and systematically delivered for all principals and vice principals across all school continuously. Respondents specified that the irrelevance of the training contents and imposed type of training programs that do not address the needs and interests of the school principals and vice principals in improving their leadership practices and solving complex problems of their schools.

Concerning the type of training required by school principals and vice principals, it was found that the majority of them prefer leadership development programs which focus on real life and problem based action learning. Respondents stressed the importance of work place trainings and formal leadership courses which practically enable them to solve school problems and at the same time acquire leadership knowledge and skills.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to improve the existing school leadership development practices in secondary schools, the following recommendations are made by considering the information taken from the available literature and from the practical experiences of the present situations in secondary schools in East Showa.

- School leaders are expected to commit themselves and take the initiatives to participate in different leadership development practices. Every principal has to do his or her own effort to strengthen his/her leadership competence and skills. Leadership development is not fruitful without the internal motives and responsibilities of the principals themselves.
- Developing the best educational leaders possible is critical to create the quality of learning environments in schools that we seek. However, school leadership development is not an easy task rather the most demanding practices at all levels of the education system. So, the concerned governments officials at various levels are responsible to take the frontline initiatives to plan, organize and implement school leadership development activities.
- Potential principals have to attend leadership courses at different Universities before they assume managerial positions in secondary schools. In this regard, departments of Educational Planning and Management found in different universities in the country have to avail opportunities for such people who demand the training.
- Despite the necessity of initial formal training, continuous on-job training, leadership consultancy, coaching and mentoring, experiential learning, role playing, action learning and simulations are so vital to promote the leadership skills of secondary school principals.
- There has to be continuous follow-up system by the immediate Woreda Education Office and Zone Education Department on the practical implementations of the professional development of school principals. Regular meetings and discussion forums are vital to examine the successes and failures of the practices so as to make timely measures on the drawbacks observed. Furthermore, they have to create motivating work environment for conducting LDP by allocating the necessary resources (budget, time) and fulfilling the required facilities.
- The Ministry of Education in collaboration with all other concerned bodies including regional education Beauró's has to set transmissible incentive and promotion systems for trained school principals to minimize the turnover and sustain them doing their work.
- Further investigation on a wider scale is essential to examine the impact of school principals leadership development practices and understand its contribution in terms of developing leaders' competence and commitment and improving the quality of students learning.

## CONCLUSIONS

The importance of school leadership development practice in the entire educational system cannot be ignored. However, it has been observed that the government has been giving less attention to the leadership development of secondary school principals. The assumption is that any teacher, who has been teaching in secondary school, is competent to administer the school. This argument is no longer plausible. Many evidences in the literature show that not all teachers can be school administrators. Anyone who wants to be involved in the art of secondary school Principalship needs to be equipped with the necessary leadership skills. So, recognizing leadership knowledge and skills as a prerequisite for healthy school operations and substantive student achievement is essential.

The literature also noted that it is helpful to be in another position of responsibility, such as head of department and vice principals, before applying to the principalship position. The principals themselves also agreed that they need to pursue further studies to be qualified and need to have good experiences at the lower echelons to manage secondary schools. These data suggest that the process by which principals are selected is not based on qualification and experiences of a person at leadership positions, but rather they are simply selected based mainly on political affiliation. Thus, these situations need to be completely reversed in order to use competent and trained educators for school leadership. Generally, it is possible to conclude that the existing leadership development practices are not encouraging. The challenges have to be addressed so as to improve and maximize school effectiveness.

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