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Practices and Challenges of School Leadership Training in Some Selected Primary Schools of Oromiya Regional State, Ethiopia

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Abstract

School leadership in Oromiya region is making is abysmal though the education sector development program (ESDP V) urges for its enhancement. Thus this study focused on assessing the existing practices to enhance school principals, and identifying the challenges of the leadership. Survey method was employed and included all school principals of both primary and secondary schools as participants of the study. Census technique was used and data were collected from almost all school principals using questionnaire. Data were analysed and interpreted using percentage, mean and standard deviation. The findings have shown that majority of school principals become school leaders without the necessary training in school leadership. The majority of the principals lacked experience both in teaching and school leadership. However, they engaged both in leading schools and classroom teaching. They lacked confidence and consistency in decision-making pertaining to school issues. In order to alleviate or minimize the problems; the following recommendations have been forwarded. Zone education offices should select and assign competent individuals from among teachers on the basis of merits and competitions. The regional education bureau should also intensively work on building the capacity of school principals in collaboration with universities and regional training college. The Ministry of Education should also capitalize on the provision of technical supports to enhance the capacity of school leadership.

Key words: Enhancement, School Leadership, Oromiya

Introduction

School principals are key actors in education playing crucial roles to implement educational sector development. Therefore, the way principals respond to education reforms becomes a basic concern in policy formulation, public debate and research in both local and global communities (Cheng, 2003). The author father elaborates that the practices of principals need changes in order to meet the challenges of globalization, localization and individualization. This may help to analyze the paradigm shift in principalship and draw implications for educational leadership development. Cheng (Ibid) also identifies that three waves of principal leadership roles in managing changes in education as internal leadership, interface leadership and future leadership.

The internal leadership wave is deeply rooted in the assumption that policy-makers should have clear education aims that could enable to find the best practices to enhance effectiveness for all schools at the grassroots level. The improvement of teacher and student performance is an important target for the educational reform. The way principals attempt to ensure the performance of teachers and students is a key concern in their roles (Brundrett, Burton, and Smith, 2003). The school principals put their major effort for improving the internal environment and processes to achieve the planned objectives. Internal leadership has been considered as a basis for community of practice because it enables leaders to pay attention to help the community develop (Gronn, 2003). Similarly, the ESDP V for School Improvement Program (MoE, 1999 E.C: 25-26) and the directive for School Management, Community Participation and Finance-Amharic version (MoE, 1994 E.C:30-34) suggest that educational managers should play the significant leadership and supervisory roles in order to ensure schools have the necessary input and are engaged in goal oriented and processes focused on positive outcomes.

The second wave of principalship-the 'interface principalship' is completely different from the traditional internal leadership in such way that it focuses on taking the initiatives to meet the diverse needs and expectations of parents, students, employers, policy-makers, and those concerned in the community (Cheng, 2002a). The author also believes that the interface between schools and the community helps to meet the stakeholders' satisfaction and implement education reforms. In this way, the role of the school principal needs adaptation to the new conception of school effectiveness. As stated by Jackson and Lund (2000); Smith, Armstrong and Brown (1999); Glickman (2001); and Cheng (1997b), the practice of interface leadership for education effectiveness should involve institutional monitoring, institutional self-evaluation, quality supervision, quality data for educational indicators and benchmarks, survey of key stakeholders' needs and satisfaction, accountability of reporting to the local community, etc. This implies that the interface principalship approach focuses on participatory management system. The practice of this approach seems to have been introduced to the Ethiopian education system since the inception of the current education and

training policy which says “*due attention will be given to popular participation in the production, distribution, utilization, upkeep, care and safety of educational materials, educational technology and facilities*” (TGE, 1994:28) which in turn requires for qualified school principals. The ESDP V organized by the Ministry of Education has also underlined that the school leadership should create safe and healthy environment for students learning and coordinate the work of teachers, insist that students solve their own problems and fulfill the necessary facilities (MoE, 1999 E.C: 11-12).

The third wave of principalship as suggested by Cheng (2002a) is the future leadership which aspires for issues of leadership in the 21st century. It is associated with the new era of globalization, information technology and new economic system. The future leadership also assumes that educational outcomes in the 21st century should fit to rapidly changing environment. Accordingly, the development of knowledge-driven economy and information technology strongly emphasize the paradigm shift in learning and teaching from mere transformation of past experience and culture to demand-driven reforming management of education at different levels in order to ensure their relevance to the future (Cheng, 2000a; Daun, 2001; Burbules & Torres, 2000;). Therefore, the future-oriented populous education reforms need visionary school principals who emphasize strongly future effectiveness in terms of relevance to the new education functions. It is also concerned with contextualized multiple intelligences, globalization, localization and individualization of education (Cheng, 2002a). The focus on future leadership has implication for principalship in that leading and directing school should aim at ensuring school effectiveness and relevance to an era of globalization. The ESDP V by MoE (2017) also suggests that principals should be visionary and play key roles in ensuring sustainable education sector development. The current education and training policy (ETP) has adopted different implementation strategies. The policy document greatly stresses the integration of education and development to ensure problem solving capacity of the society in general and that of the individual in particular (TGE, 1994). It emphasizes the identification of the accessibility, relevance, quality, and equity of education provision as the key issue of the country’s education system. In order to achieve the strategic goals set in the policy document, the country has adapted the concept of five-year Education Sector Development Program (ESDP). The main purpose of the ESDP is to improve education quality, relevance, efficiency and equity with special emphasis on primary education in rural and underserved areas, as well as the promotion of education of girls as a first step to achieve universal primary education by 2015 (MoE, 2002). The implementation of ESDP requires designing different strategies such as working with stakeholders and the community at large. For instance the ESDP IV (MoE, 2010) suggests that a special leadership and management program has been initiated to build the capacity of school principals and supervisors towards planning and managing school activities. With the introduction of ESDPs, programs like leadership and administration (LAM) has been introduced with due attention to general education quality improvement programs (GEQIP) (MoE, 2009). However, the practice of school principal assignment to be incumbent is still more confined to nomination from among teachers. The nomination of school principals usually takes place at zone or woreda levels. However, the majority of school principals do not meet the standard set in the ESDP V (MoE, 2017). by Ministry of Education which suggests graduates of the first degree for primary schools and master’s degree holders for secondary school . However, there is only limited information on the capacity building activities being carried out for the school principals in oromiya region. Therefore, this study is aimed to assess the status of leadership enhancement programs in some selected schools of oromiya region in Ethiopia.

Materials and methods

Study Area

Oromiya is one of the populous regions in the country located far from the center (the capital city of the country-Addis Ababa) in the South Western corner bordering the Republic of South Sudan. The region is large but sparsely populated and subjected to communication problems such as transportation, telephone, and internet services. The study was conducted in such a challenging environment. Therefore, survey research design was employed to cover such a vast area. The design was preferred because it is appropriate to simplify the process of data collection from such a large population dispersed over a wide area.

Population of the Study

A population of 70 respondents including school principals, teachers, WEO and parents were the main sources of data. The principals were focused on because they were assumed to be good informants in providing pertinent information regarding the practices of principals’ assignment and the challenges faced to enhance them to realize the effectiveness of the schools. As to the sampling technique, census was employed. The technique was preferred to other techniques because the study included all the principals responsible for running educational activities at school level.

Instruments of Data Collection

A questionnaire was mainly used as instrument of data collection. The instrument was preferred because it was deemed useful to obtain pertinent information from large population dispersed over vast area that makes it difficult to deploy other instruments of data collection. The validity of the instrument was checked through pilot testing. Before it was used for data collection, the instrument was distributed to cluster school supervisors and x-principals (who had responsibility during the study time) but currently working as education experts in different zone education offices in the region as well as teaching in different schools. After the test, the instrument was edited and refined and made ready for the final data collection.

Methods of Data Analysis

The data were entered into a computer software program known as ‘*epi Info*’, and translated into SPSS program for analysis. To this effect, the following essential activities were undertaken. The data entry template was designed in line with the variables in the questionnaire in order to make the data encoding process simple. For the actual work of data processing, data encoders were

recruited and trained before resuming the actual data encoding process and frequent observation and follow-up supervision implemented. Finally, the data were mainly analyzed and interpreted using percentage, mean and standard deviation.

Results

Work Experience and Qualification of School Principals

The level of qualification of school principals in the region varies following the levels of schools from Alternative Basic Education (ABE) to preparatory schools. It is possible to see from Table 1 below that, 20% of the school principals in the region were qualified at certificate (TTI), 57.81% at diploma (10+3), 13.13 % at bachelor (first degree) and only 0.31% at master's degree levels.

Table 1: School Principals' Level Qualification and Placement in Oromiya Regional State

No.	Qualification	ABE		Primary		Secondary		Overall	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	< = Diploma	0	0	9	22.5	0	0	9	100
2	Diploma Level	6	92	19	47.5	7	23.34	22	100
3	Degree	1	3.34	18	47.7	14	46.67	33	100
4	Second degree	0	0	0	0	3	10	3	100
5	Others	2	6.33	0	0	2	13.33	4	100
	Total	9	42.56	46	57.14	26	42.56	81	100

Source: - Survey (2017)

One can also see from Table 1 above that 47.5 % of primary schools were run by diploma graduates, 22.5 % by certificate (TTI) graduates, while only 47.7 % were led by first degree holders. Regarding secondary school (Grades 9-12) principals, 46.67 % were first degree holders and only 10 % were second degree graduates whereas the rest 23.34 % were diploma graduates. Beside this, 92 % of ABE centers were run by diploma graduates, 6.33 % by non-certified (certified in other fields) personnel and none of them were headed by masters holders. The qualification of principals also varied from zone to zone. Accordingly, the majority of the principals in zones like East Shoa (55%) were degree graduates whereas in zones such West Hararghe (73%), West Wollega (100%) and West Arsi (75%) school principals were diploma holders (OEB, 2013).

Table 2: Respondents' or School Principals' Training Level by Zone

No.	Qualification	Trained in School leadership		Never-trained in school leadership		Overall	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	West Arsi	3	10	12	30	15	100
2	East Arsi	6	20	9	22.5	10	100
3	East Shoa	7	23.34	8	20	15	100
4	West Hararghe	8	26.67	7	17.5	15	100
5	West Wollaga	4	13.33	11	27.5	15	100
	Total	30	42.56	40	57.14	70	100

Source: - Survey (2017)

The school principals were asked to express on whether they were qualified in educational leadership or not. The question was extended to specify the extent to which they were engaged in short and long term trainings in order to fill the gap of qualification they had in the area of school leadership. As shown in Table 2 above, the results revealed that the majority of school principals (57.14 %) were not qualified in educational leadership but in other fields. Only few (42.56 %) of the principals in the region were qualified in educational leadership during the study period. Out of those who did not engage in training in the area of educational planning and management, (42.56 %) had got exposure to short term training assumed relevant to carry-out their leadership tasks.

As can be seen from Table 2, zone wide, only school principals in East Shoa (3.34 %) had got exposure to short term training in educational leadership whereas school principals in the rest of the zones qualified were in different fields of study but not in educational leadership. Moreover, in zones like West Arsi (22.5 %) and East shoa (47.7 %) of school principals had medium exposure to training in educational leadership. Regarding the gap between the existing reality and the demand for trained educational leaders, respondents were asked to explain for how long they had got short term training. Accordingly, 42.7% of them (on average) had got short term training for almost less than a week; 57.14 % had got orientation for almost two weeks; and only 42.56 % have got short term training for 4 weeks and above. Seen from each criterion point of view, those school principals who had got short term training for three weeks and above had reported in zones like West Hararghe and West Wollega (13.33 %, 10 %) respectively. School principals in zones like West Arsi (22.5 %), and East Shoa (47.5 %) responded that they had got short term orientation in school leadership for a week up to for 4 weeks.

Besides the deficiency of qualification in educational leadership, the majority of school principals had work overload. In addition to school principalship responsibilities, many of the school principals were expected to involve in classroom teaching. As can be seen from Table 4, except East Shoa Zone (46.67 %), almost all school principals (above 40%) engaged in classroom teaching. As

far as the practice in school leadership is concerned, the majority (57.14 %) of school principals lacked the necessary work experience as educational leaders. However, few of them in zones like West Arsi (22.5 %) reported that they did have the necessary work experience in school leadership. However, besides their leadership responsibilities (Table 4), the majority of school principals (nearly 12.67 %) who were working in various zones involve in classroom teaching.

Table-3: Duration of Training and Capacity Building for School Principals at Zone

No.	Zone	< a 1 week		1week–1month		Above a month		Overall	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	West Arsi	0	0	9	22.5	0	0	9	100
2	East Arsi	6	92	19	47.5	7	23.34	22	100
3	East Shoa	1	3.34	18	47.7	14	46.67	33	100
4	West Hararghe	0	0	0	0	3	10	3	100
5	West Wollaga	2	6.33	0	0	2	13.33	4	100
	Total	9	42.56	46	57.14	26	42.56	81	100

Source: - Survey (2017)

The school principals who were responsible to run schools activities had a maximum of 27 and minimum of zero years of experience in teaching (Table 4). With regard to issues of participation in continuous professional development (CPD), except West Arsi (0.0 %), in almost all the rest of the Zones, school principals (on average 36.61 %) responded that they participated in continuous professional development. This shows that school principals in Oromiya Regional State had multiple responsibilities that made them overloaded and affect their leadership roles in schools.

Table 4: Workload, Management Experience and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Participation by Zone

No.	Zone	High Wok Load		Management Experience		CPD		Overall	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	West Arsi	0	0	9	22.5	0	0	9	100
2	East Arsi	6	92	19	47.5	7	23.34	22	100
3	East Shoa	1	3.34	18	47.7	14	46.67	33	100
4	West Hararghe	0	0	0	0	3	10	3	100
5	West Wollaga	2	6.33	0	0	2	13.33	4	100
	Total	9	12.67	46	64.78	26	36.61	71	100

Source: - Survey (2017)

Most of the leadership (64.79 %) in the zones had 3-7 years of work experiences. The proportion of leaders with lower years of service as a teacher (Table 5) was observed in West Hararghe whereas the smallest service years were prevalent west arsi zones (92 %). The proportion of leaders with long years of services as a teacher was reported in Eat shoa (above 8 years) were 36.62 %. The majority of school principals in almost all the zones which were found to have less or equal to two years service on average as teachers, were 8.4 %.

Table-5: Service Year of Teachers and School Principals by Zone

No.	Zone	< = 2 years		3-7 years		8 years &Above		Overall	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	West Arsi	6	92	28	70	7	23.34	31	100
2	East Shoa	1	3.34	18	47.7	14	46.67	33	100
3	West Hararghe	0	0	0	0	3	10	3	100
4	West Wollaga	2	6.33	0	0	2	13.33	4	100
	Total	6	8.4%	46	64.79	26	36.62	71	100

Source: - Survey (2017)

This implies that the composition of experienced and young fresh teachers and principals in East Shoa zone was relatively better than other zones. In other words except East shoa zone, teaching-learning process and principalship responsibilities in the rest of the zones were left to new graduates who had little or no experience in the area of principalship.

The Level of Influences from Stakeholders on Decision-Making Power of School Principals

The school principals were asked to rate the degree of influence from different stakeholders such as Kebele Education and Training Board (KETB), Parent Teacher Association (PTA), unit leaders, teachers and students in the process of decision-making. Different parameters such as majority influence, moderate influence, minor influence and no influence were used to rate the degree of influence. The purpose was to identify majority areas of influence on decision-making power from different stakeholders. As can be seen from Table 6 below, the Kebele Education and Training Board (KETB) had the power to make decision pertaining to issues of the school like teachers' performance evaluation which rated as majority influence (35.04 %),

moderate influence (9.8 %), and minor influence (16.16 %). The degree of influence from parent teacher association (PTA) was rated as majority influence (30.77 %), moderate influence (15.38 %), and minor influence (15.66%). The degree of influence that emanated from principals and unit leaders was rated as majority influence (15.38 %), moderate influence (19.78 %), and minor influence (22.72 %). The influence that comes from teachers was rated as majority influence (8.5 %), moderate influence (32.97 %), and minor influence (20.7 %). On the other hand, the degree of influence that emanates from students was rated as majority influence (10.25 %), moderate influence (21.98 %), and minor influence (24.74 %).

Table-6: Degree of Influences from Different Stakeholders on Decision-Making Power of Principals

No.	Influencing Bodies	High		Moderate		Minor		Overall	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	Kebele Education and Training Board (KETB)	41	50.62	9	11.11	32	39.51	81	100
2	Parent-Teacher Association (PTA),	36	44.44	14	17.28	31	38.27	81	100
3	Principals & Unit leaders	18	22.22	18	22.22	45	55.56	81	100
4	Teachers	10	12.35	30	37.04	41	50.62	81	100
5	Students' Union	12	14.81	20	24.69	49	60.49	81	100

Source: - Survey (2017)

The data in Table 6 above also reveals that the school principals played majority influential roles (22.22 %) in making-decisions pertaining to school issues like teachers' performance evaluation. PTA and principals/unit leaders (44.44 % and 22.22 % respectively) were considered as influential organs out of the personality of the school principals on issues of decision-making at school level. Although they were not qualified in educational leadership, the principals had the lion share in influencing the decision-making processes at schools. On the other hand, the nearest higher decision-making body- teachers had weak influential role in decision-making process regardless of their power when compared with school principals and PTA. The highest degree of influence (12.35 %) on the part of teachers was rated as moderate (37.05 %), and that of students was rated with minor influence (60.49 %). This implies that participatory approach in decision-making had less consideration. In order to judge on the provision of quality education, the school principals were asked to reflect on 4 selected school activities using the parameters of 'yes' and 'no' (Table-7). Accordingly, they replied (on average) that school strategic plan (66.05 %), setting school vision (55.56 %), developing school code of conducts (58.64 %), communicating the vision and code of conducts (61.42 %) rated positively with 'yes'.

Table-7: Selected School Activities for Quality Effectiveness in each Zone

No.	Activities	Resp- onse	West Arsi		East Shoa		West Haraghe		West Wollega		Overall	
			Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%
1	School Strategic Plan	Yes	53	65.43	57	70.37	63	77.78	41	50.62	54	66.05
		No	28	34.57	24	29.63	18	22.22	40	49.38	27	33.95
		Total	81	100.0	81	100.00	81	100.0	81	100.00	81	100.0
2	Setting School Vision	Yes	50	61.73	50	61.73	50	61.73	30	37.04	45	55.56
		No	31	38.27	31	38.27	31	38.27	51	62.96	36	44.44
		Total	81	100.0	81	100.00	81	100.0	81	100.00	81	100.0
3	Developing school code of conducts	Yes	55	67.90	45	55.56	55	67.90	35	43.21	47	58.64
		No	26	32.10	36	44.44	26	32.10	46	56.79	34	41.36
		Total	81	100.0	81	100.00	81	100.0	81	100.00	81	100.0
4	Communicating the vision and code of conducts	Yes	51	62.96	48	59.26	51	62.96	49	60.49	49	61.42
		No	30	37.04	33	40.74	30	37.04	32	39.51	32	38.58
		Total	81	100.0	81	100.00	81	100.0	81	100.00	81	100.0

Source :- Own Survey, 2017

From individual zone's points of view, the data reveals that the awareness on the consideration of school strategic plan is high in west Haraghe (77.78%). It was reported as low rate with 'yes' (50.62 %) in west Wollega but setting school vision preparation was reported with weak consideration which was rated 'no' (62.91 %) in West Wollega.

Profile of Teachers to be Prospective Principals: The issue of teachers profile was considered to see the potential level of teachers in the region who can soon be incumbent to lead schools in accordance with the policy requirement. Accordingly, the issue of

teachers profile is presented through Tables 8-10 below. Therefore, during the survey period, 2967 teachers were reported teaching in the region of which 656 (21.11%) were females and the rest 2311 (77.89%) males (OEB, 2014). As can also be seen from the ESAA (2014), teachers working in the region were qualified with certificate, 1384(46.65%), diploma, 1201(40.48%), first degree holders, 365(12.3%) and MA/MSc or second degree 17(0.57%). The data shows that the teaching-learning process in the region was highly dominated by the male gender and teachers' qualification with certificate level. This may also mean that even female principals are under male dominance in decision-making. The problem is clearly reflected in the respective zones and samples taken (Table 8).

Table 8: Qualification of Teachers and its Association with their Placement

No.	Zone	2 nd Degree		1 st Degree		Diploma		Overall	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	West Arsi	0	0	9	22.5	0	0	9	100
2	East Arsi	6	92	19	47.5	7	23.34	22	100
3	East Shoa	1	3.34	18	47.7	14	46.67	33	100
4	West Hararghe	0	0	0	0	3	10	3	100
5	West Wollega	2	6.33	0	0	2	13.33	4	100
Total		9	12.67	46	64.79	26	36.62	71	100

Source :- Survey, 2017

Besides this, the profile of the majority of teachers to be prospective school principals does not meet the policy standard which requires first degree holders for primary schools and second degree holders for secondary schools. In most of the zones, the number of First-Degree holding teachers is almost three-folds of Masters-holding teachers particularly in zones like West Shoa, East shoa, West Hararghe and West Wollega that collectively consisting of nearly 9 masters teachers in aggregate. The minimum number of teachers with masters degree was reported in East shoa (0 out of 10 teachers) at zone level (Table 8).

An inquiry was also made to identify intensive areas of additional responsibilities of teachers in schools (Table 9). This was dully emphasized to see the extent to which teachers were exercising areas of leadership and engaged in participatory decision-making. Accordingly, respondents were intentionally asked to express their opinion on the extent to which teachers were engaged in responsibilities other than teaching. In this regard, items like vice director, unit leader, internal supervisor, guidance and counselor, school clinical nurse, minute-taker and supportive staff, coordinator of co-curricular activities, and department head were used as parameters to assess teachers' additional responsibilities. It was also intentionally emphasized to see the situations in which teachers were contributing to the school and how it varies from school to school.

Table 9: Teachers' Additional Responsibilities in Schools

No.	Activities	Resp- onse	West Arsi		East Shoa		West Haraghe		West Wollega		Overall	
			Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%
1	Vice Director	Yes	33	40.74	17	20.99	43	53.09	56	69.14	37	45.99
		No	48	59.26	64	79.01	48	59.26	25	30.86	34	57.10
		Total	81	100.00	81	100.00	81	100.00	81	100.00	81	100.00
2	Unit Leader	Yes	40	49.38	10	12.35	50	61.73	30	37.04	33	40.12
		No	41	50.62	71	87.65	31	38.27	51	62.96	48	59.88
		Total	81	100.00	81	100.00	81	100.00	81	100.00	81	100.00
3	Internal Supervisor	Yes	65	80.25	15	18.52	55	67.90	35	43.21	42	52.47
		No	16	19.75	66	81.48	26	32.10	46	56.79	39	47.53
		Total	81	100.00	81	100.00	81	100.00	81	100.00	81	100.00
4	Guidance & Counselor	Yes	31	38.27	28	34.57	51	62.96	49	60.49	39	49.07
		No	50	61.73	53	65.43	30	37.04	32	39.51	42	50.93
		Total	81	100.00	81	100.00	81	100.00	81	100.00	81	100.00
5	Department Head	Yes	63	77.78	47	58.02	63	77.78	45	55.56	55	67.28
		No	18	22.22	34	41.98	18	22.22	36	44.44	26	32.72
		Total	81	100.00	81	100.00	81	100.00	81	100.00	81	100.00
6	Minute-Taker & Supportive Staff,	Yes	70	86.42	56	69.14	50	61.73	30	37.04	50	63.58
		No	11	13.58	35	43.21	31	38.27	51	62.96	31	39.51
		Total	81	100.00	81	100.00	81	100.00	81	100.00	81	100.00
7	Coordinator of co-curricular activities	Yes	15	18.52	44	54.32	55	67.90	35	43.21	37	45.99
		No	66	81.48	37	45.68	26	32.10	46	56.79	44	54.01
		Total	81	100.00	81	100.00	81	100.00	81	100.00	81	100.00

Source :- Survey, 2017

It can also be seen from Table 10 that respondents replied that teachers had multiple additional responsibilities in the form of vice principals (46 %), internal supervisors (52.47%), school guidance and counselors (49.07%), minute taker and support staff (63.58 %), unit leaders (40.12 %), co-curricular activity coordinators (46 %) and stream or department heads (67.28 %). The respondents said that the teachers from West Arsi zone are burdened with additional responsibilities than the rest of the zones under consideration while teachers from East shoa are the least burdened than the rest of the zones in the sample.

Discussion

Experience and Qualification of Schools Principals

Experience and qualification are required to increase roles of school principals to achieve goals of education and keep the pace of educational reform in the 21st century. As stated by Cheng (2003), school principals are expected to play the roles as 'goal achievement leader' which is aimed at ensuring achievement of stated education goals and confirmation of students' academic achievements and ensure personal developments. As a goal achievement leader, a principal is expected to energize the school community to develop appropriate strategies to achieve the expected educational goals. The principals are responsible to manage schools for better educational outcomes and should focus on monitoring school activities; identifying weaknesses, managing conflicts, overcoming difficulties and correcting defects in the teaching-learning process. In this case, the issue of school principals' training in Oromiya Regional State needs due attention through long and short term training programs. Therefore, the provision of training is essential since the majority of the principals (more than 83% and even in some cases 100%) both at primary and secondary schools lack training in educational leadership.

In addition to the gaps in training in educational leadership many of the school principals had few years of experience in teaching. Accordingly, the majority of school principals in zones like West Shoa, West Hararghe, East shoa, West Hararghe, and West Arsi, had minimum years of experience even in teaching. In the rest of the zones unqualified school principals had got short term training in educational leadership for the duration of less than three weeks. Only school principals in West Hararghe and West Arsi had got relatively better orientation through short term training than others. However, the overall situation seems that principals' qualification level is far from the need for development of future leadership which aims at searching for new vision and goals of education as well as the consideration of life-long learning, global networking and the use of information and technology as populous evidences of the future leadership of school (Cheng, 2001c). This implies that a lot of work is expected to be done to enhance school principals and ensure human power development in the education sector. Short and long term strategies need to be designed in order to build the capacity of school principals. One should also understand that such a problem is a real challenge in meeting the education policy requirements. The need for principalship qualification also has both global and local implications. Globally, it has profound implication on school leadership because it is viewed as a critical need to maximize the global relevance of educational leaders. Therefore, principals need to have a global outlook or international communication skills to expand the scope of their leadership influence to a wide variety of stakeholders (Caldwell & Spinks, 1998; Daun, 1997).

Locally, principalship qualification is needed to achieve environmental changes by maximizing community support, and partnership with local agencies. Particularly, the principals need to expand their dimensions of leadership from the structural and social leadership to the political and cultural leadership in order to deal with the complexity and uncertainties during the process of localization of education (Cheng, 2000c). Besides global and local implications, principalship training is imperative for individual principals to enhance their human initiative in education. Individualization of leadership in education is assumed to promote students and teachers self-learning and self-initiating. Whether it is global or local, today's leadership in education needs to focus on school improvement program by ensuring transparency, democracy, effectiveness and efficiency (MoE, 1999). This implies that leadership in education is a permeable process that should widely range from individual to global perspectives because it has an influence that goes across different levels of the organization (Demmock, 2003).

Influences of Stakeholders on School Level Decision-Making Process

Decision-making is among issues to be addressed when dealing with school leadership. In this study, Kebele Education and Training Board (KETB), Parent Teacher Association (PTA), school principals, teachers, unit leaders and the students were taken as responsible organs in decision-making power of school principals. As a rule, KETB, PTA members and the school principals have a major influence on decisions pertaining to issues of school management. Board of education (Freeman, 2002) has the responsibility to establish procedures and policies for education service, implement stated education law, monitor the operation of schools; and oversee the annual budget and resources deployment. Similarly, the directive set by the Ministry of Education (Amharic version 1994 E.C) also reveals that KETB has the responsibility of directing and controlling issues pertaining to the teaching-learning process. The board has the right to direct and control the work of principals, teachers and other supportive staff which is more or less weaker than others stakeholders' influence in Oromiya Regional State. The study shows that the degree of influence from each stakeholder varies from zone to zone and from school to school. In most of the zones, high degree of influence comes from KETB and principals, whereas in others, the dominant influence comes from PTA members. This variation reveals the problem of consistency in implementing school management directives that advocates for more roles from and PTA as higher organ to make decisions pertaining to issues of school management. It also implies the need to revise the working system in schools by sharing responsibilities among different parties such as students and teachers.

The majority of the respondents had awareness and concern on issues of planning and its implementation. They pointed out that the majority of schools had strategic plan, set school vision and develop code of conduct that was communicated to the concerned

bodies for implementation. Such positive reflection was observed in almost all the zones in which communicating school code of ethics was rated with 'yes' response. However, in aggregate, the preparation of school strategic plan, setting school vision, formulating school disciplinary policy and establishing school code of ethics, and communicating them to key stakeholders were rated positively (more than 70%). This may correlate with research result that verifies the importance of planning to serve the needs of school age children and to ensure access to quality of education (UNESCO, 2001). Similarly, a research conducted by Vaughn (2005) verifies that the strategic planning helps the school leaders to make informed decisions that can be used as guidance for the school organization. The concern for the preparation and implementation of school strategic plan in Oromiya Region seems positive because the level of awareness on the part of the principals to address the future to meet the objectives was positively addressed. However, the level of communicating the school vision and code of ethics to the key stakeholders in Oromiya Town may imply denial of the fact or less consideration in developing and communicating the school vision and code of ethics to the others. Or, it may imply inconsistency in planning and implementation processes. In such an environment, school principals cannot play their significant role of interface leadership (Cheng, 2003). This writer considers interface leadership as resource manager, social leader and satisfier, environmental leader as well as organizational developer. The way principals set strategic plans to maximize the use of resources for education quality and school effectiveness determines the role of principals in resource management because schools usually view as organizational learning model that focuses on improvement and adaptation to a changing circumstance. In this regard, the principals should play roles of environmental analyzer, learning promoter, and organizational developer (Yuen & Cheng, 2000).

Conclusions

The majority of the school principals in Oromiya Region are nominated from among school teachers before taking any training or orientation in the area of school leadership. Moreover, scarcity of experienced teachers to be nominated and assigned as school principals is one of the major challenges in the region. This may result in the absence of consistency in leading the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, the practice in the region also shows that school principals are over burdened by different tasks including classroom teaching which makes the leadership of schools more difficult in the absences of experience, and qualification in the area of school leadership. This is really a challenging task and needs more effort to enhance school principals in Oromiya Regional State. In some zones, the principals dominate the decision-making processes, whereas in others, KETB or PTA members are dominant decision makers. Because of the complexity of the nature of the work, the decision-making power of principals pertaining issues related to teachers' performance evaluation, resources allocation lacks consistence and varies from zone to zone and can be viewed as a hindering factor for school effectiveness. The issue of gender balance in leadership position and even in the teaching profession needs due consideration. There are problems of nomination or assignment of new school principals because leave alone in secondary schools, leadership in primary schools was dominated by male principals. Besides this, the qualification of the majority of teachers who would be school principals are far from the standards set by the Ministry of Education. The majority of the principals and primary school teachers are diploma graduates or certificate holders. There is scarcity of both diploma and first degree holders in teaching as well as school leadership.

Recommendations

The ESDP V prepared by the Ministry of Education advocates for visionary, transparent, innovative and communicative school leadership. Regional Education Bureaus are not yet geared up to enhance and assign school principals who meet the policy requirements stated in the ESDP V. Therefore, based on the findings and conclusions drawn, it's recommended that for primary or secondary schools, the regional, zonal and woreda education bureaus should select and assign school principals from among teachers on the basis of their experience, academic merits and effectiveness in teaching and other co-curricular activities. The regional education bureau should design long, intermediate and short term training programs in order to meet the policy demands and enhance non-qualified and non-experienced school principals. The regional education bureau should establish strong relationship with nearby universities offering principalship training in order to build the capacity of school principals so that school effectiveness can be realized in accordance with the education and training policy demands. In order to build the capacity of the region, the Ministry of Education should increase the provision of technical and material supports to the region. Different training modalities such as regular, summer and refreshing programs should be facilitated by the ministry to increase the interests and commitments of the region to enhance the capacity of schools.

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