

**FULL-LENGTH ARTICLE****An Investigation into Major Features of Exemplary School Leadership Development Programs and their Implications to School Leadership Development in Ethiopia: A Systematic Review**

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\*Corresponding author: [des\\_bey@yahoo.com](mailto:des_bey@yahoo.com)**ABSTRACT**

Schools, nowadays, function in a complex, dynamic and throat-cutting competitive world which needs creativity, innovation and high performance which, in turn, makes new leadership skills and behaviours indispensable. School leadership, thus, has received significant attention among educational scientists and systems worldwide for its cruciality in determining school effectiveness and improvement in students' achievement. The objective of this review, therefore, was to identify common characteristics of exemplary school leadership development programs in different contexts and, eventually, draw lessons for Ethiopia. Scoping approach was employed for the review. Relevant sources were searched from ERIC, SAGE and Google scholar. Consequently eight articles representing diversified contexts were systematically reviewed. Time of publication and relevance of the articles were major inclusion and exclusion criteria. The articles were selected through reading and rereading of the titles and abstracts. Rubric was used to extract the data. The review revealed that exemplary school leadership development programs are characterized by having program contents with instructional leadership focus, distinct criteria for candidates' selection, student centered learning strategies, strong partnership among stakeholders, involvement of committed and competent personnel and cohort-based program structure with significant implications to school leadership development programs in Ethiopia in terms of program content, program modality and the selection of candidates. Concerning content, for instance, programs should go beyond traditional administrative roles of school leaders and include both curricular and instructional issues. The selection of candidates should consider adequate leadership experiences and prior academic preparations. Regarding modality, adequate internship and field work opportunities need due attention.

**Key Words:** Educational Leadership, School Leadership, Leadership development, Ethiopia, Exemplary leadership

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**INTRODUCTION**

Leadership is a mysterious concept (Armstrong, 2009). Although most of us indiscriminately agree about its importance particularly in this dynamic era, we could hardly find commonalities and similarities in defining it. Despite the broad-spectrum research endeavours to understand the concept, the depth of understanding over the concept among scholars is so little (Matthew & Gilbert, 2009). Various conceptions of leadership that range from the early Trait theories that suggest leaders must possess certain personal qualities through a behavioural and contingency approaches to the new

notions of leadership as a relational and collective process by which people work collectively upon a shared vision have been evolving over time (Komives et al., 2007; Kondalkar, 2007; Martineau et al., 2007).

As the external environment of organizations is prone to the growing change and intense complexities yielding in many challenges upon organizations, the life of organizations is becoming more and more complicated (Morgeson et al., 2010; Murphy & Riggio, 2003; Yukl, 2010). So does the essence of leadership in today's organizations including schools. In this regard, Vicere states:

Globalization has brought us flatter, faster-paced organizations with global reach. Information technology has enabled us to work in partnerships linked by powerful information networks. Together, these forces are triggering the reconfiguration and restructuring of virtually every major industry worldwide and they are redefining the essence of leadership (2003, p. 71).

This, as Murphy & Riggio (2003) and Vicere (2003) indicated, implies that the essence of leadership has become so tough in today's organizations to which schools are not exceptions and, consequently, needs to be redefined.

In this era of complexity and challenge, given the need for innovation, creativity, performance, new markets and throat cutting competitions, the need for new and innovative leadership skills is indispensable more than ever before (Noel & Dotlic, 2008). This is because success as a leader is very demanding and requires the possession of innovative and advanced leadership skills and competencies (Yukl, 2010, p. 381).

## **BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW**

Recognizing the inevitable need for effective leaders, most organizations invest a huge amount of money for leadership development programs (Day & O'Connor, 2003; Yukl, 2010) to support researchers and experts in the field of leadership so as to come up with effective methods of developing effective leaders (Murphy & Riggio, 2003) and, consequently, new techniques have been developed and old techniques are refined (Yukl, 2010).

Bass (2000, p. 34), in his article entitled, "The Future of Leadership in Learning Organizations", argued that "The leadership of the school principal is strongly linked to the success of the school". In line with this long rooted scientific conviction, leadership in the educational setting has received a significant attention among policy makers, researchers and practitioners for its cruciality in determining the school effectiveness and improvement of student achievement (Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Leithwood & Massey, 2010). Besides, the intensified public demand for better schools has also created an increased demand for the quality of school leadership (Orr & Orphanos, 2011) across the world education systems (Dyer & Renn, 2010; Noel & Dotlic, 2008; Yemini & Giladi, 2015).

Several research attempts

in the area of school leadership have generated strong evidences that school leadership has a tremendous influence over students' academic achievement and student discipline both directly and through promoting the school culture and other related factors (Dyer & Renn, 2010; Orr, 2011; Orr & Orphanos, 2011). Such strong conviction about the pre-eminence of effective leadership makes leadership development to be the chief strategy of educational reform initiatives in many countries across the globe (Hamilton et al., 2018; Leithwood & Massey, 2010; Orr, 2011). While discussing the emphasis placed on school leadership development, Orr (2011, p. 115) asserted that "Leadership preparation has become one of this decade's primary approaches to educational reform and improvement of student achievement". Consequently, in the last two decades, there has been a growing interest among scholars and researchers to study exemplary features of school leadership development programs with the intention to inform and improve the future courses of school leadership development. The fact that several special issues on school leadership development have continuously been published in the well-known books and/or journals indicate the growing interest among researchers and scholars in area of school leadership development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Jacobson et al., 2015; Leithwood & Massey, 2010; Orr, 2011; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Perez et al., 2011; Pounder, 2011; Walker et al., 2013).

#### **PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW**

In this paper, an effort has been made to review previous research findings so as to identify peculiar features of exemplary school leadership development programs. To this end, two sets of articles were reviewed. The first category of the articles were reviews of previous researches on exemplary school leadership development programs as, in the last decade, several systematic reviews were conducted to identify the major features of exemplary school leadership development programs and, as to this paper, consequently, three systematic reviews were analyzed. The other category consists of articles involving first hand evaluations of exemplary leadership development programs. In this regard, several scholars have been engaged in identifying chief and common characteristics of effective school leadership development programs. We, then, reviewed four such articles in this paper.

The following question was raised to guide the review process: What common features have been reported of exemplary school leadership development programs and what lesson could be drawn for Ethiopia? This is because identifying common characteristics of school leadership development programs has a multitude of advantages. For instance, it helps highlight what could be learned from the past efforts. It could also help point out inconsistencies of past practices as well as methodological strengths and weaknesses.

#### **METHODOLOGY OF THE REVIEW**

This is a scoping review by its nature as it seeks to map the key features underpinning school leadership development programs and identify the conceptual boundaries of leadership development in educational setting. Accordingly, studies pertaining to the school leadership development programs were reviewed. Such data bases as Sage, ERIC and Google scholar were searched for articles relevant to the focus of this paper. The decision as to the use of these databases was made based on the fact that most academic resources pertaining education in general and educational leadership are found in these databases.

Studies were located by conducting computer searches with keywords: Achievement, academic performance, results and scores, outcomes that intersected with the key subject areas of school leadership development, principal preparation, exemplary programs, school principals, principalship, effectiveness, supervisory training and supervisory development. Regarding the inclusion and exclusion of articles, time of publication and relevance of the article were used as chief criteria. Only articles published since 2000 were considered for the review with the intention to focus on relatively recent scholarly works. Even though the review focuses on leadership development practices, it only took the school leadership development aspects into account. In this regard, school leadership development endeavours in other contexts were excluded. The relevance of titles was consulted initially to obtain appropriate pool of articles for the final selection. The abstracts of the articles whose title were congruent to the themes were read to identify the most relevant articles for the review and the final documents to be reviewed were selected.

Initially, each of the articles and the book were read and reread thoroughly. Then, data from the article were extracted through the help of data mining rubrics. The rubrics contained the major search terms identified and data were extracted from each of the selected articles. The extracted data were, then, categorized under similar themes and discussed accordingly. The purposes, objectives and brief reviews were used to write up overviews of each of the articles while the major findings and implications were used for the discussion part of the review.

## OVERVIEW OF THE ARTICLES REVIEWED

In this paper, 8 documents constituting seven articles and a book were reviewed. The documents were selected due to their focus on the identification of school leadership development features.

Orr's (2011) article presents major findings on the nature of 17 leadership preparation programs in 13 institutions. It is a cross-sectional study that involved a "post-only follow-up survey" of voluntary graduates of 17 programs. Both programs and individual graduates of these programs were used as a unit of analysis. At the program level, aggregate mean ratings of graduates on selected measures were used to test the assumption that programs are distinguishable on their core features whereas at the individual level, graduate outcomes were used to correlate program features and graduate outcomes.

The study by Perez, et al. (2011) entitled, "Foregrounding Fieldwork in Leadership Preparation: The Transformative Capacity of Authentic Inquiry" in the *EAQ Journal*, 47(1) indicates that school leadership candidates are followed through the first phase of a comprehensive effort to reform master's level principal preparation at *urban* California university. The reforms placed an 18-month field experience at the center of candidates' preparation. Researchers sought to capture the changes over time in candidates' beliefs about school leadership, commitment to the work of school leadership, knowledge of leadership practices that support improved teaching and learning and capacity to apply those practices. The results revealed marked changes in the majority of candidates' understandings of school leadership. They came to see the work as complex, with all aspects interrelated. They developed deeper recognition of the leader's role in fostering trust and relationships, encouraging collaboration and building leadership capacity within schools.

In the book entitled, "Preparing principals for a changing world: lessons from effective school leadership programs", Darling-Hammond, et al. (2010) examined eight nationwide exemplary pre- and in-service principal development programs in the US. These writers looked into the peculiar qualities of the programs, their outcomes and the context within which these programs were implemented. The programs were chosen on the basis of their excellence and representation of diversified program approaches. In affirming this notion, the authors proclaimed that the eight programs "provided evidence of strong outcomes in preparing school leaders because, in combination, they represent a variety of approaches with respect to their designs, policy contexts and the nature of partnerships between universities and school districts" (Darling-Hammond, et al.(2010, pp 6-7).

Walker, Bryant and Lee (2013) identified five leadership programmes from five different societies for analysis based on their excellences and diversity of the context in which the programs function and found that the overall trajectories of leadership preparation programmes have converged across the five high-performing education systems in terms of three interdependent programme components, i.e., framework, content and operation. Jackson and Kelley (2002) studied six programs the development of three of which was supported by the Dan forth Foundation Program for the Preparation of School Principals. These programs were selected for their cohort-based modality as well as other excellence criteria.

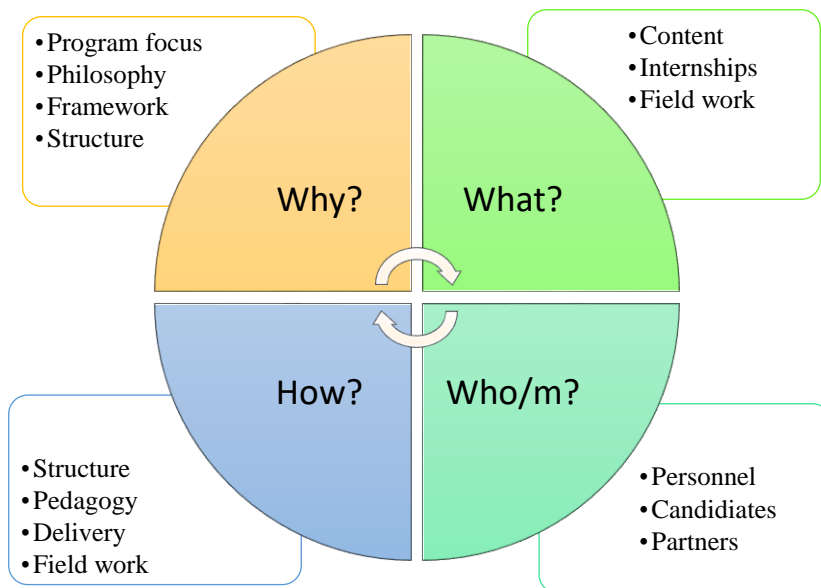
Jacobson, et al. (2015) have published an article entitled, “What Makes a Leadership Preparation Program Exemplary?” with the aim to identify various features of two exemplary leadership preparation programs. The idea of program evaluation was born with the authors attempt to rank the 10 exemplary programs nominated for the award. The authors opted to avoid the ranking cognizant of the fact that “some programs were stronger in certain areas than others and that no one program was the best in everything” (Jacobson et al., 2015, p. 63) and tried to unfasten the process from the predominant and long rooted “one best model” orthodoxy from which the profession has long been suffering. Accordingly, the committee members selected two exemplary programs without ranking the rest of the programs. The two programs had some similarities while they have their own unique characteristics that make them different from one another. Consequently, the authors argued that the selection of the two programs helped them identify program features which are unique and contextualized. Okoko’s (2018) article entitled, “Framing school leadership preparation and development for Kenya: Context matters”, highlights aspects that practicing school leaders consider to be meaningful for their preparation and development and provides recommendations as a contribution to the agenda of leadership development about framing context-specific school leadership preparation and development for Kenya and, to this end, collected data from 137 schools’ leaders so as to elicit their recommendations about the improvement of the school leadership development program.

**Table 1.** Summary of the articles

Authors and year	Title of the article	Research Design	Purpose
Orr, (2011)	Pipeline to Preparation to Advancement: Graduates' Experiences In, Through, and Beyond Leadership Preparation.	Comparative Programs analysis	To present findings on the nature of leadership preparation among 17 programs in 13 institutions
Pounder, (2011)	Leader Preparation Special Issue: Implications for Policy, Practice and Research	Review of studies	Briefly summarizes the nature and findings of the studies presented in EAQ special issue on leadership preparation
Perez, et al. (2011)	Foregrounding Fieldwork in Leadership Preparation: The Transformative Capacity of Authentic Inquiry	Fieldwork inquiry (Cohort analysis)	An assessment of the master's-level principal preparation program at urban California University.
Darling-Hammond, et al. (2010)	Preparing principals for a changing world: Lessons from Effective School Leadership Programs	In depth case analysis	To point out effective ways of developing strong school leaders for America's diverse student populations.
Walker et al. (2013)	International Patterns in Principal Preparation: Commonalities and Variations in Pre-service Programmes	Comparative Analysis	To draw international comparisons in leadership preparation (Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore & the USA)
Jackson & Kelley, (2002)	Exceptional and Innovative Programs in Educational Leadership	Program Review and Analysis	Analysis of the characteristics of these innovative preparation program
Jacobson et al. (2015)	What Makes a Leadership Preparation Program Exemplary?	Programs Evaluation	To identify various features of the UTSA and UIC leadership preparation programs that make them exemplary
Okoko (2018)	Framing school leadership preparation and development for Kenya: Context matters	Exploratory qualitative study	To find out the meaningful aspects school leadership development program as perceived by the principals in Kenya.

## FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

In this section, the major findings, i.e., major components of effective school leadership development programs identified by review are presented in such a way that common features of the programs are presented first and followed by discussions which, in turn, is followed by our reflections.



**Fig. 1.** Major features of the exemplary programs

## SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT PROGRAM CANDIDATES

A key feature of school leadership development programs is the degree to which applicants are screened and selected for the programs (Jackson & Kelley, 2002). According to Orr (2011), a variety of professional and work experiences related criteria have been developed by most of the exemplary school leadership development programs to accept aspiring and potential principals to their programs. Orr (2011) further stated that, on average, school leadership development programs select experienced teachers with some prior leadership experience which experts suggest is a critical foundation for developing school leaders.

Most of the programs, as discussed by Jackson and Kelley (2002) and Darling-Hammond, et al. (2010), have adopted some generic criteria such as work experiences as teachers, leaders and experts and a commitment to instructional improvement and professional experiences whereas some of the programs adopted a program specific criterion such as working in a diverse and particular setting. In most of the programs, candidates to school leadership development programs are supposed to have work experiences as teachers and experts. Leadership potentials also are used as a selection criterion for admissions into some programs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010). Universities offering the leadership development program may select the candidates



through their faculty or in collaboration with district officials (Jacobson et al., 2015). In Kenya, due to lack of teachers with BA degrees, most school principals did not favour the use of academic requirements as a criterion for the selection of candidates for school leadership development programs (Okoko, 2018). In general, for school leadership development programs to succeed, the selection of program candidates must be guided by clear and relevant criteria which should be adhered to. Among these, prior experiences in leadership, academic background and leadership potentials of the candidates must be taken into account.

### **PROGRAM CONTENTS AND CURRICULUM**

The second major feature attributed to exemplary school leadership development programs relates to curriculum and contents of the program. In supporting this idea, Orr (2011) stated that, the contents of exemplary leadership development programs focus on instructional leadership and content of school leadership development programs being challenging and reflection rich. Pounder (2011) also revealed that exemplary school leadership development programs are characterized as challenging in nature and with a strong instructional leadership focus. As Perez et al. (2011) indicated, contents of the school leadership development programs should be rigorous, relevant and inform as well as support fieldwork tasks. To ensure these, as Perez et al. (2011) explained, program faculty must continuously reassess course contents. Darling-Hammond et al. (2010), after having assessed eight school leadership development programs, pointed out that the contents of the programs are research-based, aligned with professional standards and focused on instruction, organizational development and change management. School leadership development programs across different countries have shown some common patterns with respect to content. Major contents of these programs that are determined by the established frameworks of the programs and specific issues (foci) are taken care of in the contextualization of the contents into particular situations (Walker et al., 2013).

According to Walker et al. (2013), the contents of exemplary school leadership development programs in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore and the USA tend to emphasize change orientation and stresses instructional and transformational leadership. The authors further explained that school leadership development programs differ in terms of their contents and, accordingly, identified that specific program foci are dictated by local concerns as mediated by the particular expertise of academic and/or practitioners the content of which ranges from addressing 'national' priorities such as globalization and the knowledge society to more pragmatic concerns of the 'local' context (Walker et al., 2013).

As Pounder (2011) asserted, the candidate's learning outcomes most commonly reported by graduates of high-quality preparation experiences include greater understanding of the complexity of educational leadership and the interrelatedness of educational issues, strategies and outcomes. Moreover, Jackson and Kelley (2002) indicated that the core or critical knowledge that drove the design of school leadership development programs' curriculum are moral leadership and organizational change, research-based practice, ethics and communication, instructional and transformational leadership and standards-based reform. Furthermore, the knowledge base in many of the school leadership development programs was linked to the states' standards suggesting that state licensure policy and the standards help in shaping and defining the

knowledge base of administrator preparation programs. In Kenya, as stated by Okoko (2018), school leaders suggested such context specific content areas as instructional leadership, managing contextual needs associated with socio-economic diversity, politics, discipline and drug abuse to be included in school leadership development programs. As well, Okoko (2018) underscored the need to include such generic areas as finance and human resources management, law, public relations, project management and policies related to community engagement and partnerships into school leadership development programs.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING (INSTRUCTIONAL) STRATEGIES**

As Orr (2011) explained, exemplary school leadership development programs adopted active, experiential, and reflective strategies by which students are placed at the center. The author further indicated that these learning strategies provide competent faculty and positive student relationships. Perez et al (2011) also discussed that inquiry-based approach to learning is as strategy by which students are expected to involve in a real situation of uncertainty. This approach, as Perez et al. (2011) stated, provides the candidates with the necessary leadership and management tools and, under the guidance of site and university supervisors, require them to identify and resolve a learning problem at their schools. Darling-Hammond et al (2010) also expressed that the archetypal school leadership development programs are characterized by having such problem-based learning strategies as case methods, action research, and projects that link theory and practice and support reflection. According to Jackson and Kelly (2002), the exemplary school leadership development programs they have evaluated had adopted learning strategies that are selected with student characteristics and the knowledge base firmly in mind and, moreover, team teaching has been implemented as a strategy.

### **INTERNSHIPS AND FILED WORKS**

According to the review, internships are among the essential elements of exemplary school leadership development programs in all cases. The review also revealed that most school leadership development programs view the field experience as the primary vehicle for teaching (Jackson & Kelley, 2002) and that classroom works are designed to support field learning. Similarly, Orr (2011, p.117) stated that field experience has a paramount impact on the candidates' further aspirations as a school principal. In this regard, the author added that, "the quality of graduates' internship experiences was singularly positively related to the strength of graduates' intentions to become a principal soon" (Orr, 2011, p.117). Likewise, Pounder (2011) explained that most of the school leadership development programs have adopted internship programs that can provide challenging and rich experience. Pounder (2011) further indicated that internship schemes are authentic and designed to enhance experiential learning and skill development and are guided by faculty supervisors as well as expert practitioners from districts (Perez, et al., 2011; Orr, 2011, p.117).

### **PARTNERSHIPS AMONG STAKEHOLDERS**

As the review showed, partnering with relevant stakeholders in the implementation of internship programs is of high importance for the programs' quality and effectiveness. That is, partnership among different stakeholders is one of the key features of the significant majority of exemplary school leadership development programs. These partnerships are evident in many aspects of the programs ranging from candidates'

selection and recruitment to course provision and internship supervision. In supporting this idea, Darling-Hammond et al. (2010), while explaining the major features of exemplary school leadership development programs, pointed out that the programs are characterized by having strong collaborations between universities and school districts which are materialized through the creations of coherence between training and practice and financial support for pre-service candidates to enable them to undertake an intensive program with a full-time internship and recruitment, preparation, hiring, and induction of program candidates. As well, Jackson & Kelley (2002) stated that recruitment and selection of students for those exemplary programs is a collaborative effort between the school district and the universities. Districts can collaborate with a program offering universities in such areas as program development, provision of considerable support both materially and financially to ensure that their candidates' field and internships are intensive and authentic (Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Jacobson, 2015). Such partnerships, as Jacobson et al (2015) added, help the universities to ensure that their most talented students become positioned to fast-track into school leadership opportunities. The authors stated that university and district partnerships should be made on the basis of institutional commitment to a shared goal.

### **PROGRAM PERSONNEL**

Most of the exemplary school leadership development programs underline the importance of staffing for the achievement of goals. Commitment and competences were used in the assignment of faculty, site supervisors and mentors in most of the exemplary school leadership development programs with careful analysis and as per the demand of the subject taught (Jackson & Kelley, 2002). Retired principals and alumni of the programs, as Jacobson et al (2015) discussed, were assigned as a mentors and coaches to the candidates in the the University of Texas/San Antonio (UTSA) and University of Illinois/Chicago (UIC) leadership preparation programs.

According to Walker et al. (2013) who analyzed major features of school leadership development programs across 7 countries, except in Singapore, the assignment of program providers have been made or regulated at the national level implying the attention given to the assignment of the personnel. As Perez, et al (2011) indicated, one of the features of exemplary school leadership development programs relate to competent and committed site supervisors who understand the purpose of the field experience and their role in supporting it. Besides, program faculty must continuously reassess course content, check for rigor, relevance and alignment and, hence, need to be competent in this aspect.

### **PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

As to the structure of exemplary school leadership development programs, the review revealed that cohort based program structures dominate. The cohort program is a growing trend among institutions of higher education. In line with this, Orr (2011) indicated that the more the programs are coherently organized around instructional leadership and provide challenging, field-work-rich experience, the more positively their graduates highly rate their learning across the five leadership domains and are positive about the principalship as a career. Similarly, Pounder (2011) discussed that exemplary school leadership development programs are characterized by having supportive program structures such as cohort models that encourage positive student relationships and enhance professional socialization and induction.

Darling-Hammond et al (2010) stated that exemplary school leadership development programs are having cohort structures that enable collaboration, teamwork and mutual support. According to Jackson and Kelly (2002), exemplary school leadership development programs they studied are virtually all cohort-based with 20 to 25 students and that, in all cases, faculty members worked together whereas, in many cases, they work with area administrators to develop a coherent program focus and integrate the program to enable students to master critical competencies identified.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE REVIEW FOR ETHIOPIA**

School Leadership Development did not exist in Ethiopia until the 1960's. Formal school principals' training begun in the early 1960's at the Haile Silliasie I University (HSIU), College of Education. Since then, the program had passed through several challenges like closure and retrenchments at various periods in the course of its development. These formal leadership training program which begun in HSIU has nowadays expanded into several universities with the aim of preparing secondary school principals.

As to the experiences of these authors as educators and program participants even as students, the program has significant limitations that need substantial revision. The program, in almost all universities, follows similar modes of delivery and is heavily theory based and only few practical courses and attachments are provided. The fact that participants of the program mostly are from education offices, schools and related sectors with certain work and leadership experiences is a better input for the program. Nevertheless, adequate attachments and experiential learning experiences were not provided to students. It would have been better if the programs provide ample opportunities for students to practice leadership both individually and collectively through various in-class as well as out-of-class projects on campus and in the community. It is also advisable to design programs in such a way that students are encouraged to engage in both written and oral reflective activities.

Based on the reviews made thus far, certain conclusions could be drawn with clear implication for school leadership development programs in Ethiopia. Accordingly, among other things, the "*Who*" involves in the program determines the effectiveness of formal school leadership training which implies to the personality and competence of trainees. In supporting this, Yukl (2010) stated that the extent to which formal leadership trainings can affect skill learning, behaviour change and performance improvement depends on the personality and ability of trainees. Orr and Orphanos (2011) reported two certain critics of the leadership preparation field pertaining to the differences in the leadership potential and prior skills of students admitted to the programs. Accordingly, such selection criteria as prior academic performance, leadership experiences and candidates' leadership aspirations prior to enrolling to the program have strong positive association with program effectiveness. In line with this, it was understood from the reviews that attributes of the candidates entering into the programs are one of the major features of exemplary school leadership development programs. It was also understood that particular criteria to be used must be determined in relation to the nature of the program and the particular socio-cultural context in which the program exists. Though leadership experiences and prior academic performances are important in selecting program candidates, the availability of potential candidates with

the required academic qualifications in the pool should be taken into account prior to setting the criteria for selection.

It was also learned from the reviews that most exemplary school leadership development programs are characterized by having distinct program content which, as Yukl (2010) indicated, among other things, affects the effectiveness of school leadership training. As Yukl (2010) further asserted, the contents of the programs should not only be clear and meaningful but also focus attention on important things. In this regard, it was identified that the contents of most of the school leadership development programs focus on instructional leadership. Nowadays, the major responsibilities of school principals extend beyond the traditional administrative roles and include curricular and instructional issues. School principals, as instructional leaders, are intensely involved in curricular and instructional issues that directly affect student achievement (Cotton, 2003). Consequently, it is very meaningful that the contents of most exemplary school leadership development programs emphasize issues related to instructional leadership and school improvement. Besides, as indicated in most of the programs reviewed, the contents of school leadership development programs should be designed in such a way that they guide as well as support the internship and field works of the candidates. Since the candidates, eventually, are supposed to work in schools after their training, it is essential to ensure that the contents of the program are in line with the professional standards set by the government. It is also important to capture generic areas of content, contextualize the contents of the program into the particular context and continuously revise based on both research and practical feedbacks.

The review further revealed that exemplary school leadership development programs are characterized by having practical and student centered learning strategies. Most of the learning strategies, as Orr (2011) explained, were experiential and inquiry based in nature. That is, as Perez et al. (2011) stated, school leadership development programs are designed in such a way that students are provided with real life situations by which they engage in solving real life problems. Darling-Hammond et al. (2010), while discussing the design of strategy, underlined the importance of having students' characteristics and their knowledge base firmly in mind which, as Yukl (2010) stated, is essential for the effectiveness of the programs.

According to the review, internships were found to be the chief element of exemplary school leadership development programs. In line with this, Yukl (2010, p.383) argued that "trainees should have ample opportunity to practice the skills they learn during the training and afterward". Internships and field works in most of these programs were designed to provide rich and practical learning experiences to the candidates so that the candidates get opportunities to practice skills learned during the classroom sessions. Partnership between program providing universities and the concerned stakeholders was also found to be among the major components of the exemplary school leadership development programs. District and university relations, in particular, are found to be crucial for the effective implementations school leadership development. These partnerships are comprehensive in nature and mainly include such areas as candidate selection and recruitment, program design and provision, course offering, supervision of internship programs, content determination and revision, provision of required resources and many more.

In general, the findings of this review have several theoretical and practical implications for school leadership development efforts. Though the majority of the programs reviewed and perhaps existing school leadership development programs are from the Western nations, they have unavoidable implications for developing countries including Ethiopia. This is due to the fact that school leadership, as a field of study, has certain universal features that may work across education systems worldwide. Theoretically, researchers could carry out further studies to explore exemplary school leadership development programs in different contexts and compare their results against the findings of this review. The findings of possible future researches would contribute to the more generic and relatively comprehensive school leadership development framework. Moreover, the findings of this review might provide a generic framework for program evaluation by which school leadership development programs could be reviewed in developing countries. However, such attempts should be made cautiously by taking the particular local contexts into account. Besides, the review's methodological framework could be adapted to other similar review efforts that aim at identifying the chief features of effective school leadership development programs in developing countries including Ethiopia.

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