PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES OF ENHANCING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN GAMBELLA REGIONAL STATE

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Abstract

This study aimed at examining the extent to which Gambella Region made efforts to professionalize school leaders as stipulated in the education and training policy document. The specific objectives were exploring the attempts made to professionalize principals; assessing the existing practices to enhance school principals, and the identifying challenges faced so far. 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. Woreda 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 school principals.

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 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 'Blue Print' 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 blue print 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 emerging 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 Blue print by MoE (1999 E.C) also suggests that principals should be visionary and play major 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 major 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 woreda or sub-city levels. However, the majority of school principals do not meet the standard set in the blue print by Ministry of Education which suggests graduates of the first degree for primary schools and master's degree holders for secondary school (MoE, 1999 E.C).

Rationale of the Study
Gambella Regional State is one of the emerging regions in the country. The regional government has committed itself to the provision of quality, relevant, accessible and equitable education for citizens of the region (Regional Education Bureau Report, 2009). However, there are a lot of challenges such as low participation of local people, shortage of skilled educational leaders and teachers that hinder achievement of the regional goals. On top of these, the document suggests that the nationally set education sector development programs are not adequately responding to the local needs particularly in the areas of school leadership. The report of the Regional Education Bureau (Ibid) has also shown that there are: a) knowledge gap among school principals which may result into low level of executing the jurisdiction and devolution of power, b) shortage of resources to achieve the intended educational objectives, c) challenges from the living situation due to sparse population and backward economy; poor means of communication network such as transportation, telecommunication, and d) low capacity to plan, manage and monitor the performance of the education system.

Besides this, little has been done to consider the experiences and qualification of school principals in the region. The information released from schools, woreda education offices and regional education bureaus reveals inexperienced and unqualified teachers are assigned as school principals. Because of the knowledge gap, most of those principals face challenges in exercising their power to foster education sector development in the region. Therefore, this study was aimed to answer the following basic research questions.

1. What are the factors that hinder to school principals from acquiring the necessary qualification in the area of principalship to carry-out their tasks of managing school activities?

2. What are the practices used so far to enhance school principals to be effective in decision- making pertaining issues related to school leadership?

3. What are the most challenging factors that hinder school principals from leading schools in an effective ways in the region under study?

Objectives of the Study
The main objective of the study was to examine the efforts made to professionalize school principals as stipulated in the Education and Training Policy and there by identify the practices and challenges of principalship in Gambella Regional State.
The specific objectives of the study were:

a) To examine the extent to which school principals obtained the necessary professional training before and after they become incumbent;
b) To assess the practices used so far to enhance school principals to be effective in decision- making pertaining issues related to school leadership; and
c) To identify the most challenging factors that school principals face while leading schools.

Significance of the Study
The results of the study are assumed to be significant in the following ways:
  a) It may help the Regional Education Bureau to identify the existing gaps between the practice and the demands for qualified school principals in the region;
  b) It may increase awareness and attention of stakeholders towards the important roles of qualified school principals to achieve education sector development programs; and
  c) The reactions to identify the gaps may press Regional Education Bureau in general and the Woreda Education Offices in particular to pay due attention to design capacity building training programs that are relevant to transform the necessary knowledge and skills of school principals.

Delimitation of the Study
The study was delimited to Gambella Regional State. All the 13 woredas as well as the 320 school principals from all primary and secondary schools and Alternative Basic Education (ABE) centres were duly emphasized. Conceptually, the study was delimited to the practices of school principals' assignment and the techniques of enhancement as well as the challenges faced to select competent would be incumbents from among school teachers. The duration of the study was integrated with the project agreement made between Jimma University and Gambella Regional State to undertake Universal Primary Education (UPE) development plan in 2003 E.C.

Research Design and Methodology
Gambella is one of the emerging 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 320 school principals including Alternative Basic Education (ABE) centres 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 woreda 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

In this part of the research, investigation was made pertaining to school principals' level of qualification and areas in which they were qualified. Besides, the orientations and trainings given so far, the efforts made to enable principals to become effective were considered. The duration used for training and upgrading the competence of principals was dully emphasized. Furthermore, the workload of the principals, the extent to which they were involved in teaching and their experience in the area of leadership as well as the extent to which they engaged in professional development (CPD) were also examine thoroughly.

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 Table1 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 Gambella Regional State

Level of qualification	Principals Placement by Level of School							
	ABE centers		Primary School (1-8)		Secondary (9-12)		Total	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Certificate (TTI)	36	56.25	28	11.92	-	-	64	20
Diploma(10+3)	1	0.54	183	77.87	1	5	185	57.81
Bachelor Degree	-	-	24	10.21	18	90	42	13.13
Masters Degree	-	-	-	-	1	5	1	0.31
Others	28	43.0	-	-	-	-	28	8.75
Total	**65**	**100**	**235**	**100**	**20**	**100**	**320**	**100**

One can also see from Table1 above that 77.87% of primary schools were run by diploma graduates, 11.92% by certificate (TTI) graduates, while only 10.21% were led by first degree holders. Regarding secondary school (Grades 9-12) principals, 90% were first degree holders and only 5% were second degree graduates whereas the rest 5% were diploma graduates. Beside this, 56.25% of ABE centers were run by TTI graduates, 43% by non-certified (certified in other fields) personnel and only 0.54% of them were headed by diploma holders.

The qualification of principals also varied from woreda to woreda. Accordingly, the majority of the principals in woredas like Jikawo (50%) and Gog (55%) were TTI graduates whereas in woredas such Etang (53%), Abobo (64%), Dima (77%), Akobo (73%), Mengish (57%), Wantwar (100%) and Lare (75%) school principals were diploma holders (JU-Gambella UPE Project Document, 2003 E.C).

Table-2: Qualification and Training Level of School Principals by Woreda

Woreda/ Town	Area of qualification				Short term Training in School Leadership			
	Educational Leadership		Non-Educational Leadership		No		Yes	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Gambella Town	1	6.2	15	93.8	11	73.3	4	26.7
Etang	5	14.7	29	85.3	7	24.1	22	75.9
Jikawo	16	42.1	22	57.9	8	36.4	14	63.6
Abobo	3	12.0	22	88.0	9	42.9	12	57.1
Gog	3	15.0	17	85.0	3	17.6	14	82.4
Godare	4	16.7	20	83.3	9	47.4	10	52.6
Jor	0	.0	20	100.0	16	80.0	4	20.0
Dima	5	38.5	8	61.5	4	50.0	4	50.0
Akobo	0	.0	11	100.0	3	27.3	8	72.7
Mengish	7	31.8	15	68.2	7	50.0	7	50.0
Gambella Zuria	1	4.8	20	95.2	7	35.0	13	65.0
Wantwar	1	7.1	13	92.9	4	30.8	9	69.2
Lare	3	10.7	25	89.3	9	36.0	16	64.0
Total	**49**	**17.1**	**237**	**82.9**	**97**	**41.5**	**137**	**58.5**

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 Table2 above, the results revealed that the majority of school principals (82.9%) were not qualified in educational leadership but in other fields. Only few (17.1%) 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 (58.5%) had got exposure to short term training assumed relevant to carry-out their leadership tasks**.**

As can be seen from Table 2, woreda wide, only school principals in Jikawo (42%), Dima (38.5%) and Mengish (31.8%) had got exposure to short term training in educational leadership whereas school principals in the rest of the woredas qualified were in different fields of study but not in educational leadership. Moreover, in woredas like Gambella Zuria (95%), Wantwar (93%) and Jor (100%) of school principals did not have any 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, 53.7% of them (on average) had got short term training for almost less than a week; 23.18% had got orientation for almost two weeks; and only 23.12 % have got short term training for three 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 woredas like Abobo and Mengish (55.6%, 53.3%) respectively. School principals in woredas like Gambella Town (73.3%), Etang (48%), Godare (47.1%) and Gog (41.2%) responded that they had got short term orientation in school leadership for almost two weeks. In woredas like Dimma (100%), Akobo (88.9%), Jor (87.5%), Gambella Zuria(85.7%) and Jikawo (65.6%) principals had responded that they had got short term training or orientation in educational leadership only for less than a week (Table3).

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

Name of the Woreda	For how long did you take training in capacity building as school principal?					
	< A week		Almost two weeks		Three weeks and above	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Gambella Town	1	6.7	11	73.3	3	20.0
Etang	10	40.0	12	48.0	3	12.0
Jikawo	21	65.6	6	18.8	5	15.6
Abobo	8	44.4	0	.0	10	55.6
Gog	7	41.2	7	41.2	3	17.6
Godare	5	29.4	8	47.1	4	23.5
Jor	7	87.5	1	12.5	0	.0
Dima	11	100.0	0	.0	0	.0
Akobo	8	88.9	0	.0	1	11.1
Mengish	4	26.7	3	20.0	8	53.3
Gambella Zuria	12	85.7	0	.0	2	14.3
Wantwar	5	38.5	3	23.1	5	38.5
Lare	10	43.5	4	17.4	9	39.1
Average	**-**	**53.7**	**-**	**23.18**	**-**	**23.12**

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 Gambella Town (35.3%), almost all school principals (above 50%) engaged in classroom teaching. As far as the practice in school leadership is

concerned, the majority (65.3%) of school principals lacked the necessary work experience as educational leaders except that few of them in woredas like Lare (64.3%), Etang (54.5%), and Jikawo (50%) 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 90%) who were working in various woredas involve in classroom teaching. Only respondents in Gambella Town (65%) and Godare woreda (50%) had replied that they did not involve in class teaching after becoming school leaders.

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 Jor (53%), in almost all the rest of the woerdas, school principals (on average 75%) responded that they participated in continuous professional development. This shows that school principals in Gambella Regional State had multiple responsibilities that made them overloaded and affect their leadership roles in schools.

Table 4: Workload, Management Experience and CPD Participation by Woreda

Name of the Woreda	Do you involve in teaching?				Do you have leadership experience?				Do you participate in continuous professional development?			
	NO		YES		NO		YES		NO		YES	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Gam. Town	11	64.7	6	35.3	12	70.6	5	29.4	1	6.2	15	93.8
Etang	2	5.9	32	94.1	15	45.5	18	54.5	9	26.5	25	73.5
Jikawo	2	5.0	38	95.0	20	50.0	20	50.0	8	20.0	32	80.0
Abobo	4	16.7	20	83.3	20	80.0	5	20.0	6	24.0	19	76.0
Gog	2	10.0	18	90.0	15	78.9	4	21.1	3	15.0	17	85.0
Godare	14	50.0	14	50.0	22	78.6	6	21.4	11	39.3	17	60.7
Jor	2	10.0	18	90.0	12	60.0	8	40.0	10	52.6	9	47.4
Dima	1	7.7	12	92.3	13	100.0	0	.0	2	15.4	11	84.6
Akobo	1	9.1	10	90.9	8	72.7	3	27.3	2	18.2	9	81.8
Mengish	5	21.7	18	78.3	21	91.3	2	8.7	7	31.8	15	68.2
Gam. Zuria	6	27.3	16	72.7	15	65.2	8	34.8	8	34.8	15	65.2
Wantwar	-	-	14	100.0	9	64.3	5	35.7	1	7.1	13	92.9
Lare	-	-	28	100.0	10	35.7	18	64.3	5	17.9	23	82.1
Total	**50**	**17.0**	**244**	**83.0**	**192**	**65.3**	**102**	**34.7**	**73**	**24.9**	**220**	**75.1**

The average years of service as a teacher (Table 5) was 4 years whereas the smallest service years were reported as zero in most of the woredas. The longest service years as a teacher were reported in Gambella Town (27 years). The majority of school principals in almost all the woredas were found to have two years service on average as teachers.

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

Woreda/ Town	Years of service as teacher				Years of service as principal			
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mini mum	Maxi mum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mini mum	Maxi mum
Gam. Town	9	8	1	27	4	5	1	16
Etang	6	3	1	14	2	1	0	6
Jikawo	2	2	0	7	2	2	0	7
Abobo	6	4	0	15	2	2	0	5
Gog	5	3	1	9	3	2	0	7
Godare	5	4	0	14	2	2	0	6
Jor	3	2	0	6	2	1	1	4
Dima	4	3	0	8	1	1	0	2
Akobo	2	2	0	6	1	2	0	7
Mengish	2	3	0	11	2	2	0	6
Gam. Zuria	5	3	0	16	2	2	0	8
Wantwar	4	2	0	8	2	1	1	5
Lare	3	2	0	8	3	2	0	8
Average	**4**	**3**	**0**	**27**	**2**	**2**	**0**	**16**

One can see from Table5 above that the school principals in the region served as teachers with the maximum and minimum mean values (9, 2), and served as principals with maximum and minimum mean values (4,1). The highest and the lowest standard deviations were (8, 2) as teachers and (5, 1) as principals. This implies that the composition of experienced and young fresh teachers and principals in Gambella Town was relatively better than other woredas. In other words except Gambella Town, teaching-learning

process and principalship responsibilities in the rest of the woredas 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 major influence, moderate influence, minor influence and no influence were used to rate the degree of influence. The purpose was to identify major areas of influence on decision-making power from different stakeholders. As can be seen from Table 6 below, the principal had the power to make decision pertaining to issues of the school like teachers' performance evaluation which rated as major influence (62.7%), moderate influence (17.16%), and minor influence and no influence (20.16% in aggregate). The degree of influence from parent teacher association (PTA) was rated as major influence (44.36%), moderate influence (24.73%), and minor influence and no influence (30.93% in aggregate).

The degree of influence that emanated from unit leaders was rated as major influence (35.93%), moderate influence (30%), and minor influence and no influence (34.07% in aggregate). Furthermore, respondents were also asked to rate the degree of influence on decision-making power of school principal from Kebele Education and Training Board (KETB) which is the nearest higher body for decision-making. Accordingly, respondents were rated KETB influence as major influence (32.84%), moderate influence (29.85%), and minor influence and no influence (37.32% in aggregate). The influence that comes from teachers was rated as major influence (30.15%), moderate influence (31.62%), and minor influence and no influence (38.26% in aggregate). On the other hand, the degree of influence that emanates from students was rated as major influence (17.84%), moderate influence (24.54%), and minor and no influence (57.63% in aggregate).

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

Sources of influence	Degree of Influence									
	No Influence		Minor Influence		Moderate Influence		Major Influence		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Principals	34	12.7	20	7.46	46	17.16	168	62.7	268	100
Unit leaders	50	18.51	42	15.56	81	30	97	35.93	270	100
teachers	53	19.48	51	18.75	86	31.62	82	30.15	272	100
Students	83	30.86	72	26.77	66	24.54	48	17.84	269	100
PTA	42	15.27	43	15.64	68	24.73	122	44.36	275	100
KETB	55	20.52	45	16.80	80	29.85	88	32.84	268	100

The data in Table 6 above also reveals that the school principals played major influential roles (62.5%) in making-decisions pertaining to school issues like teachers' performance evaluation.   PTA and unit leaders (44.36% and 35.93% 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-KETB had weak influential role in decision-making process regardless of their power when compared with school principals and PTA. The highest degree of influence on the part of teachers was rated as moderate (31.62%), and that of students was rated with no influence (30.86%). This may imply 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 five selected school activities using the parameters of *'yes'* and *'no'* (Table-7). Accordingly, they replied (on average) that *school strategic plan* (78.6%), *setting school vision* (72.9%), *developing school code of conducts* (69%), *communicating the vision and code of conducts* (77.9% and 71.5% respectively) rated positively with 'yes'.

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

Do you practice the following activities in your school?	Response			
	Yes		No	
	No	%	No	%
School strategic plan preparation	213	78.6	58	21.4
School vision preparation	212	72.9	79	27.1
School code of conduct development	200	69.0	90	31.0
Communicating the vision to school community	226	77.9	64	22.1
Communicating the code to school community	193	71.5	77	28.5

From individual woreda's points of view, the data reveals that the awareness on the consideration of school strategic plan is high. It was reported as high rate with 'yes' (92.9%) in Wantwar but school strategic plan preparation was reported with weak consideration which was rated 'no' (40%) in Jor.

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 (Table 8). As can also be seen from the Table, 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. 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.

Table 8: Teachers Distribution by Sex and Level of Qualification in Each Woreda

Woreda/ Town	Teachers Distribution by Sex				Teachers Distribution by level of Qualification							
	Sex		Total		TTI (Certificate)		Diploma (10+3)		BA/BSc		MA/MSc	
	Male	Female	Sum	(%)	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Gambella.T	245	172	417	14.1	52			70	96	15	0	0
Etang	291	59	350	11.8	149	43		14		2		0
Jikawo	179	9	188	6.3	98	6	75	3	6	0	0	0
Abobo	222	80	302	10.2	106	40	95	37	21	3	0	0
Gog	252	29	281	9.5	119	21	94	7	39	1	0	0
Godare	264	137	401	13.5	56	62	120	57	77	12	11	6
Jor	115	3	118	4.0	58	2	46	1	11	0	0	0
Dima	73	6	79	2.7	36	4	29	2	8	0	0	0
Akobo	58	8	66	2.2	41	5	17	3	0	0	0	0
Mengish	163	49	212	7.1	74	28	78	19	11	2	0	0
Gam. Zuria	156	59	215	7.2	69	45	73	12	14	2	0	0
Wantwar	60	10	70	2.4	28	7	32	3	0	0	0	0
Lare	233	35	268	9.0	130	18	91	15	12	2	0	0
Total	2311	656	2967	100	1016	368	958	243	326	39	11	6
%	77.89	21.11	100	100	73.41	26.59	79.77	20.23	89.32	10.68	64.71	35.29
Percentages of each level					46.65		40.48		12.3		0.57	

In line with gender balance in each level of qualification (Table 8), females with certificate/TTI graduate accounted for 26.59%, diploma graduate for 20.23% and first degree holders 10.68%. In most of the woredas, the number of male teachers is almost three-folds of female teachers particularly in woredas like Jikawo, Jor, Dima Akobo and Wanwar consisting of nearly less than 10 female teachers in each case. The minimum

number of female teachers was reported in Jor (3 out of 118 teachers) at woreda level. This was also true in line with their educational status in that female teachers were very minimal in all woredas except Gambella Town in which females at TTI level accounted for 87 (62.60%).

From among TTI graduates, 33.74% were teaching in Grades 1-4; 5.56% teaching in Grades 5-8; 55.61% in Grades 1-8; 4.26% in Grades 9-10; and the rest 0.66% in Grades 9-12 (Table 9).

Table-9: Qualification of Teachers and Its Association with Their Placement

Qualification	G1-4	G5-8	G1-8	G9-10	G11-12	G9-12	
TTI female	90	19	216	13	-	1	
TTI male	322	50	463	39	1	7	
TTI -Total (n=1221)	412 (33.74%)	69 (5.56%)	679 (55.61%)	52 (4.26)	1	8	(0.66)
Diploma or 10+3 male	124	122	630	85	4	19	
Diploma or 10+3 female	36	17	171	14	-	2	
Diploma Total (n=1224)	160 (13.1)	139 (11.36)	801 (65.44)	99 (8.09)	4 (0.33)	21	(1.72)
BA/BSc male	10	20	50	180	56	86	
BA/BSc female	1	3	7	22	4	8	
BA/BSc Total (n=447)	11 (2.46)	23 (5.15)	57 (12.75)	202 (45.2)	60 (13.42)	94	(21.03)
MA/MSc female	-	-	-	-	-	6	
MSc/MA male	-	-	-	-	-	11	
MSc/ MA Tota	-	-	-	-	-	**17**	**(100)**

As far as diploma holders are concerned, 13.1% of the teachers were teaching in Grades 1-4; 11.36% in Grades 5-8; 65.44% in Grades 1-8; 8.09% in Grades 9-10; and 2% in Grades

9-12. Similarly, 79.65% BA/BSc holders (in aggregate) were teaching in Grades 9-12 (Table 9).

An inquiry was also made to identify intensive areas of additional responsibilities of teachers in schools (Table10). 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.

Table10: Teachers' Additional Responsibilities in Schools

Do you have any additional responsibility?	Parameters			
	Yes		No	
	No	%	No	%
vice principal	115	41.1	165	58.9
internal supervisor	152	53.7	131	46.3
school guidance counselor	113	41.1	162	58.9
school clinic nurse	17	6.2	259	93.8
Minute taker and support staff	42	15.0	238	85.0
unit leader	231	81.1	54	18.9
co-curricular activity	201	71.5	80	28.5
stream or department head	237	83.5	47	16.5

One can also see from Table10 above that respondents responded that teachers had multiple additional responsibilities in the form of vice principals (41.1%),   internal supervisors (53.7%), school guidance and counselors (41.1%), minute taker and support staff (15%), unit leaders (81%), co-curricular activity coordinators (71.5%) and stream or department heads (83.5%).

DISCUSSIONS

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 Gambella 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 woredas like Jikawo, Abobo, Godare, Jor, Dimma, Akobo, Mengish, Gambella Zuria, Wantwar and Lare had zero years of experience even in teaching. In the rest of the woredas unqualified school principals had got short term training in educational leadership for the duration of less than three weeks. Only school principals in Abobo and Mengish 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 emerging 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 E.C). 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 Gambella Regional State.
The study shows that the degree of influence from each stakeholder varies from woreda to woreda and from school to school. In most of the woredas, high degree of influence comes from 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 KETB 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 principals, PTA, etc.

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 woredas (more than 60%) except Gambella Town in which communicating school code of ethics was rated with 'no' (64.7%) 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 Gambella 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 Gambella 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

Leadership is among the key elements in managing education sector development. It is complex in nature and needs training and rich experience on the part of the principals to be successful. Therefore, based on the results of the finding of the study, the following conclusions have been drawn.

The majority of the school principals in Gambella 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 Gambella Regional State. In some woredas, 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 woreda to woreda 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 TTI graduates or certificate holders. There is scarcity of both diploma and first degree holders in teaching as well as school leadership.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 'Blue Print' prepared by the Ministry of Education (1999 E.C Amharic version) advocates for visionary, transparent, innovative and communicative school leadership. Regional Education Bureaus are also responsible to enhance and assign school principals who meet the policy requirements stated in the Blue Print. Therefore, based on the findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations have been forwarded:

- Whether it is for primary or secondary schools, the 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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