




Practices and problems of school principals' recruitment and selection in Hawassa city administration, Sidama National Regional State, in Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate practices and problems of secondary school principals' recruitment and selection in Hawassa City Administration, Sidama National Regional State, Ethiopia. To this end, a convergent parallel design was employed. Teachers were selected by simple random sampling techniques, whereas school leaders and selection committee members were selected by using purposive sampling techniques. Questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis were used to collect data. Both descriptive statistical and non-parametric tests were used to analyze data. In addition to these, qualitative data were analyzed qualitatively and triangulated with quantitative results. The findings of the study revealed that selection criteria were not merit-based and competency-based, screening phase criteria were subjective, attitudinal, and more related to political aspects rather than academic requirements. Moreover, the study showed that incompetency and favoritism of selection panels, and subjectivity and inappropriate implementation of selection tools in the selection process. Besides, the findings of the study revealed that partisan affiliation and non-merit aspects were used as criteria to select principals rather than professional knowledge, skills, and values. Furthermore, the study showed that a lack of clearly defined selection criteria and methods, and transparency problems, implementers' related problems, and different malpractices affect school principals' selection. It was concluded that school principals' selection processes and practices were not implemented as designed, and school principals were assigned based on non-professional and non-merit-based criteria.

Keywords: school principals, secondary school principals, principals' recruitment, principals' selection, principals' recruitment and selection

INTRODUCTION

Internationally, school leadership has gained high importance in education policy. School leaders play central roles in improving students' achievement and school effectiveness through motivating and developing the capability of teachers and modeling school climate and environment (Pont et al., 2008). School principals are responsible for leading all aspects of school operations, and they have leadership as well as managerial functions. They influence the school teaching-learning process and learning outcomes (Lunenburg, 2010). Successful school leaders set the school vision, values, and strategies; improve the teaching-learning process and outcome, redesign and restructure the school or organization to align with roles and responsibilities, redesign and enrich the school curriculum, understand and develop teachers' professional quality, establish a positive and smooth relationship within the school community and external community, emphasis on common values and establish and develop school culture. So, they are crucial persons in the school setting (Day et al., 2009, 2020; Day & Sammons, 2013).

School leaders play vital roles in the instructional process and the overall effectiveness of schools. The qualified and effective school principals have a significant impact on the teachers' commitment, the learners' academic achievement of learners, and the school effectiveness (Lee & Mao, 2023; Romanowski et al., 2020). The lack of efficient and effective school leaders is one major factor in the poor performance of schools and low student achievement. To improve school, students' learning, and learning outcomes, researchers as well as policymakers have emphasized strategies that improve the quality of school leaders. One strategic approach that ensures the availability of competent school leaders in school leadership positions is the recruitment and selection process. Proper principal selection is essential to improve the quality of school principals and, in turn, changes overall school performance and students' learning outcomes (Gurmu, 2018, 2020; Mulkeen et al., 2004; Palmer & Mullooly, 2015; Quraishi & Aziz, 2016).

Studies have demonstrated that school principals' selection, development, and retention policies and strategies play a great role in ensuring effective school principals who are vital to improving all educational activities and systems in schools (Pont et al., 2008). Selecting qualified principals is essential to have quality school leadership and deliver quality education. Chapman (2005, p. 1) asserted that "quality schools require quality leadership. Quality leadership cannot be assumed or acquired without a coherent, integrated, consequential, and systematic approach to leadership recruitment, retention, and development". Thus, great emphasis has been given to the recruitment and selection policies and procedures (Huber & Hiltmann, 2009; Kirkpatrick, 2000; Leithwood et al., 2004, 2009).

Recruiting and selecting principals are the most important tasks to ensure the assignment of the best and most capable leaders in principalship positions. Conducting recruitment and selection in a structured and thoughtful approach enhances the probability of selecting competent and quality principals. Moreover, an effective recruitment and selection system uses effective, objective, transparent, and consistent procedures and criteria. School principals are not only well-qualified, but also their selection and appointment criteria and processes should be conducted based on professional knowledge and skills, and objectively and orderly (Akbaşı et al., 2017). Moreover, a well-designed recruitment and selection process attracts competent individuals to apply for the school leadership position and increases the likelihood that appropriate leaders are appointed. This also increases principals' professionalism. Moreover, the entry profile of school leaders affects school leadership positions and the preparation of leaders. So, the principals' selection must be conducted with highest care (Gurmu, 2020; Mulkeen et al., 2004; Palmer & Mullooly, 2015; Quraishi & Aziz, 2016).

Different researchers conducted investigations to assess school principals' recruitment and selection. Baltzell and Dentler (1983) revealed that not only selectors but also selection tools such as wrongly designed interview items and processes hinder merit principal selection. Schlueter and Walker (2008) exposed the incompatibility of selection criteria with principals' characteristics. Bush (2008) noted that school principals were assigned based on political attachment rather than professional competence. Palmer and Mullooly (2015) identified that

subjective selection procedures and incompetent panels lead to select less qualified school principals. Moreover, Palmer (2017) found that school principals were selected for school principal positions by the least reliable and least predictive selection methods. Ineffective and haphazard recruitment and selection processes not only deter the best potential candidates but also affect the effectiveness of school leaders and the professionalism of school leaders (Normore, 2006; Pont et al., 2008). Furthermore, Schlueter and Walker (2008) concluded that due to the haphazard manner of selection approach most of the time, incapable candidates hold principalship.

With the inauguration of the Education and Training Policy of 1994 in Ethiopia, more attention was given to educational leadership. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Education (MOE) launched the General Education Quality Improvement Package, and one of its programs was educational leadership and management. Moreover, the MOE has taken different initiatives to improve and professionalize school leadership. Some of them were the principals' pay structure, the national professional standards for school principals, licensing and relicensing of school leaders, school principals' recruitment and selection, and training guidelines (MOE, 2008, 2013, 2014, 2017).

Despite the government and different development partners' efforts, few studies indicated that school leadership recruitment and selection practices were not merit-based, and these affect school leaders' professionalism and their effectiveness (Gurmu, 2018; Mitchell, 2012; Tekleselassie, 2002). Moreover, due to assignment and competency-related problems, school effectiveness, students' academic achievement, and overall leadership effectiveness were not desired level (Edamo, 2018; Feye, 2019; Teferra et al., 2018). One problem might be related to school leaders' recruitment and selection system, and this was one reason to conduct this study.

Although school leaders' recruitment and selection aspects are very important in educational leadership and are a great concern of all stakeholders, there was little evidence on concerning issues. Who will be a school leader, on what criteria, and how they were assigned were not well researched, and there are a number of unknown aspects in school principals' selection. Moreover, school leaders' recruitment and selection aspect was not a widely researched topic in Ethiopia. In the Ethiopian context, as my knowledge, there were only a few studies that dealt with school leaders' selection and assignment. Tekleselassie (2002) revealed that political and other principals' assignment practices led to the deprofessionalization of school leadership. Gurmu (2020), through a qualitative investigation, exposed the gap in school principals' selection. Similarly, by employing a qualitative research method, Haile and Smit (2020) studied the influence of politics on public schools' leadership recruitment and selection process. School leadership, particularly school leaders' recruitment and selection policy and practices, was not thoroughly investigated. Many aspects of school leaders' selection and assignment policies, and related issues, were not studied, and this investigation intended to fill this gap. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine practices and problems of secondary school principals' recruitment and selection in the secondary school of Hawassa City Administration.

Objective of the Study

The current study aimed to investigate practices and problems of secondary school principals' recruitment and selection in Hawassa City Administration, Sidama National State, Ethiopia. The specific objectives were:

1. To examine the current selection criteria used in the recruitment and selection of secondary school principals.
2. To analyze the procedures and methods employed in the selection of secondary school principals.
3. To assess teachers' perceptions regarding the current recruitment and selection practices of school principals.
4. To identify the key influencing factors that impact the recruitment and selection processes of secondary school principals.

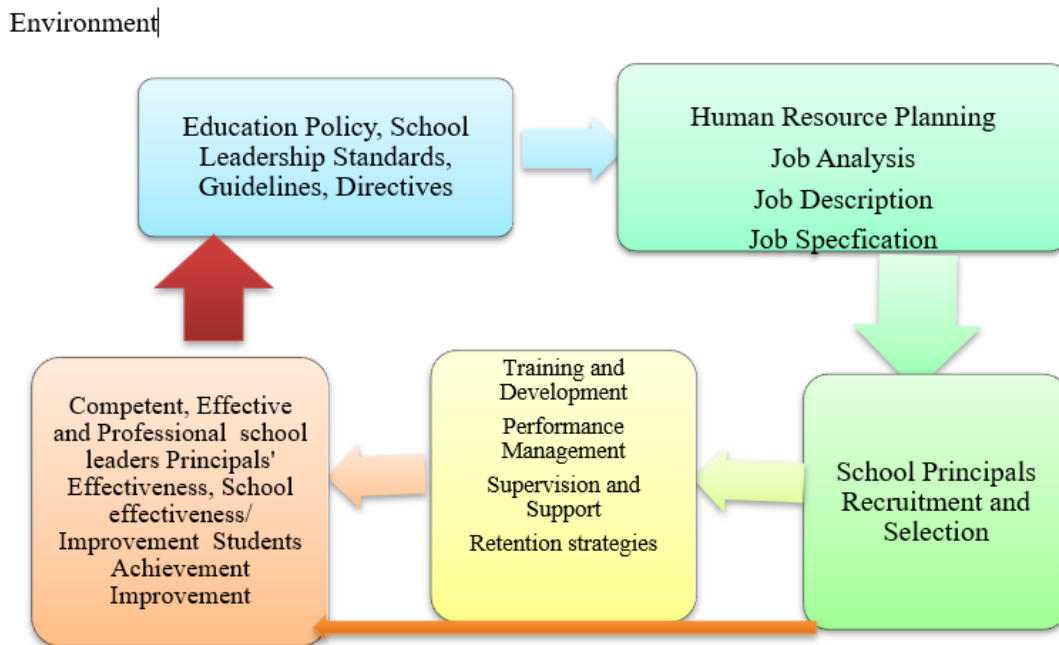


Figure 1. Conceptual model adapted from (Armstrong, 2006; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2021; Webb & Norton, 2013)

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

School principals play a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness of the school by fostering a positive school culture (Nasreen, 2019). They enhance student achievement by implementing instructional leadership and improving the learning environment. Additionally, principals drive educational reforms, acting as change agents who create conditions for student success (Macbeath, 2009; Schlueter & Walker, 2008). As a result, many countries prioritize hiring qualified principals to boost school performance (Busby, 2019; Lee & Mao, 2023).

School systems and current principals' roles require qualified, competent, and experienced principals to execute their roles effectively and change school conditions. Having qualified and competent school principals is the primary agenda of education leaders and policymakers around the world. To have qualified principals, recruiting, selecting, developing, and maintaining educational leaders' policy and strategies, as well as effective implementation of them, is needed (Busby, 2019; Chapman, 2005; Lee & Mao, 2023).

The theoretical framework directs and supports researchers in the selection of appropriate variables. Investigating practices and problems of secondary school principals' recruitment and selection can be explained by the Human Resource Management process model developed and employed in education by Webb and Norton (2013) and Lunenburg and Ornstein (2021). This model describes recruitment and selection that starts from policy, directives, and guidelines, human resource planning, and job analysis (job description and job specification). Recruitment and selection phases involve different stages. After recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, and maintaining are continuing in order to make an effective employee. These components are interconnected, have their dimensions, principles, and approaches, influenced by the environment and different stakeholders. The modified conceptual model was presented in **Figure 1**.

The target of this study was the investigating school principals' or leaders' recruitment and selection practices. So, other dimensions were not treated in this investigation. Recruitment and selection concepts and processes, selection criteria and methods, and empirical findings were presented in the following sections.

Principals' Recruitment and Selection

In the principals' selection processes, there are two important components: selection criteria and selection methods. Selection criteria are qualifications required for eligibility and are considered to be basis for assessing candidates, and should be clear, relevant, and assessable criteria to select the best principals (Palmer & Mullooly, 2015; Quraishi & Aziz, 2016; Romanowski et al., 2020).

Recruitment is the process of attracting potential applicants to apply for vacant positions in an organization (Nel et al., 2007). Similarly, Feichtinger and Hörold (2015) described recruitment as how an organization tries to attract candidates from different sources and to fill the position with the best applicant. It is a process of identifying qualified prospective applicants from inside and outside the organization and inspiring them to apply for vacancies.

The recruitment process enables individuals to become candidates for a job. The recruitment strategies also influence the selection process, potential candidates, and future organization leaders. Moreover, the recruitment process and strategies enable organizations to choose the best applicant, and applicants to choose the organization. Therefore, the recruitment process should be done with great care (Feichtinger & Hörold, 2015; Macbeath, 2009).

According to Feichtinger and Hörold (2015), Lunenburg and Ornstein (2021) and Webb and Norton (2013), there are four major steps in the recruitment process to attract the most talented school leaders. The first one is identifying the target groups where such individuals can be found. The second step is the job analysis and defining the requirements of the leadership position. This means first analyze the job, define the requirements to do the job, and identify relevant attributes to fill the leadership position. The next step is the job analysis of the leading position. This means the school has to define the requirements that are necessary in order to fill the leading position. The specifications can be background, experience, skills, knowledge, individual qualities and attributes, and working styles or behaviors. The third step is developing a job advertisement to attract candidates. A job advertisement affects attracting a competent and adequate number of applicants. The fourth step is the publish or post the leadership advertisement to attract applicants.

Selection is a process of choosing the most appropriate individual who possesses the necessary skills, abilities, and personality from the applicants to successfully fill specific jobs in an organization (Feichtinger & Hörold, 2015; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2021). Principal selection is about targeting to match the appropriate person to the specific requirements of a school. In other words, it is a process of assigning the right person to the right job through matching organizational requirements with the knowledge, skills, and qualifications of the person (Macbeath, 2009; Otoo et al., 2018).

The selection of the right principals is vital for developing effective schools, and a well-designed principal selection process can attract appropriate and competent candidates can apply for the principalship and increase the chance that qualified and competent candidates can be appointed principal position in schools. Appropriate selection processes enable to gain of able and competent school leaders (Kwan & Walker, 2009; Quraishi & Aziz, 2016).

Selection Criteria and Methods

The selection process or strategy is a series of processes or actions to select an appropriate candidate. This process comprises the screening of potential candidates for the actual selection decision to be made (Hay

Group, 2006; Macbeath, 2009). Armstrong (2006) and Otoo et al. (2018) identified selection procedures and methods such as interviews, assessment enters, qualifications, selection tests, and references.

Pont et al. (2008) and Taipale (2012) noted that in the school principals' selection process, some aspects should be given due consideration. They are eligibility criteria, selection criteria, decision-making process, school leadership training, and alternative career paths towards school leadership. Determining eligibility criteria that all applicants must meet, irrespective of the other candidates' characteristics, is the first step in designing recruitment and selection procedures. The second step is defining the selection criteria that enable to selection of the best-qualified person from eligible applicants. Selection criteria should demonstrate essential characteristics that are needed to perform well. There are no standardized selection criteria in many countries, but in most countries, the selection criteria include leadership experience, interpersonal skills, seniority, suggestions of stakeholders, excellence of work proposal for the school, academic qualifications, and school leadership values (Schleicher, 2012; Tulowitzki et al., 2019).

The third aspect is the decision-making process. In different countries, the selection process and decisions are made by different bodies. The school board, school committee, local authority, or other designated authority conducts principal selection (Taipale, 2012; Tulowitzki et al., 2019). Lunenburg (2010) and Sezer (2016) noted that in many countries, the school principal is an elected administrator. School principals are generally appointed by an official/(s), a multi-member committee, or a school board. Another aspect is the school leadership training. Countries require school leaders to be trained, and different training opportunities have been arranged. Training can be given through pre-service, during the induction, or in-service. Many countries made leadership training mandatory to get a position or to stay in a position (Schleicher, 2012; Tulowitzki et al., 2019).

Studies showed that selection procedures and methods should follow certain principles. Feichtinger and Hörold (2015) noted that to select a candidate, appropriate selection methods should be employed. The selection method should meet certain standards that are transparency, inclusiveness, reliability, validity, interpretability, and practicality. Macbeath (2009) remarked that school leaders' selection process should be inclusive and transparent to select appropriate school principals.

Concerning recruitment and selection criteria and qualification of school principals, there are no universal recruitment and selection criteria, and qualifications of school leaders. Selection criteria differ from country to country. But, in most countries, the selection criteria include leadership experience, interpersonal skills, seniority, suggestions of stakeholders, academic qualifications, excellence of work proposal for the school, and school leadership values (Pont et al., 2008; Schleicher, 2012; Taipale, 2012; Tulowitzki et al., 2019). Schlueter and Walker (2008) reviewed different studies on principal selection criteria and identified different selection criteria. Some comprises personal and professional qualities, instructional leadership, commitment to educational goals, and human relations skills with teachers, students, parents, and the community.

Muhlenbruck (2001) in his survey research came up with four selection criteria that are relationship builder, knowledge of how work, experience, and organizational fit. Moreover, Hooker (2000) recognized seven major themes and more comprehensive aspects in the selection criteria that used to select principals. These were previous administrative experience, personal characteristics (flexibility, intelligence, and perceptiveness, human relations skills, organizational skills; and the capability to form relationships with students and teachers, the ability to fit in and work with available managerial groups, and the ability to achieve backing from parents and community.

Rammer (2007) identified the five most important selection criteria: communication, culture, outreach, focus, and visibility. These selection criteria are important and enhance the effectiveness of school principals. According to Pont et al. (2008), the most frequently used selection criteria in different Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries are leadership experience, additional academic,

interpersonal and personal skills, vision/values for school leadership, and quality of work proposals for the school.

Sezer (2016) found that seventeen criteria were used to determine the school administrators' appointment and relocation. The main aspects for these criteria were leadership skills, educational qualification, experience, and scoring. On the other hand, Nasreen (2019) found that there are two major selection criteria in different countries. Principals are assigned or selected based on two ways that are merit merit-based selection and seniority-based promotion. Seniority-based promotion or assignment does not warrant that the principal selected is competent for the principalship.

Different studies found different and a variety of characteristics of principal candidates and criteria. Most findings indicated that human relation skills, demonstrated instructional leadership, ability to lead decision making, experience, academic qualification, and commitment to academic goals. Palmer (2017) and Waters et al. (2004) reviewed different studies and found that significant relationship between leadership responsibilities identified and students' achievement. So, school leaders' selection criteria should be based on leadership responsibilities that improve students' learning.

In different countries, there were different requirements for appointing school principals. Particularly in developed countries like the USA, UK, and Finland require some pre-service training programs and this is a prerequisite to be appointed. In France, two years of on-the-job training are needed. It is essential that the training and appointment process demands objective and standard measures in order to solve the problems of the education system (Pont et al., 2008; Sağlam et al., 2017; Sezer, 2016).

Akbaşı et al. (2017) reviewed selection criteria of four countries: Turkey, Germany, the USA, and Finland. They compared the selection criteria and procedures of school principals. According to them, there are selection criteria as well as appointment procedures in Turkey. Among the selection criteria are that candidates should have a bachelor's degree, a successful central written examination, a vice principal service, teaching experience, an Educational Administration Competency Certificate, and an oral interview. On the other hand, in Germany, a federal or decentralized approach has been used. The required criteria are to be qualified as a teacher, have at least a bachelor's degree, and have experience of 3-5 years and service as being vice-principal or team leader, and involvement in teacher training is an advantage. The principal position in Germany is a permanent job.

Although there are variations from state to state, the general selection criteria are having a Master's degree in educational administration, teaching experience, and a certificate in school administration. They are selected by using a questionnaire or test, a recommendation letter, the evaluation of the license document, and an interview (ibid). In the USA, several resources enable to identification of criteria to select principals. Some of them are Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards, McEwen's (2006) traits, Cotton (2003)'s leadership behaviors, and Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning and Balanced Leadership Framework (Schlueter & Walker, 2008). These centers set standards, effective school leaders' characteristics and behaviors.

The recruitment and selection are conducted at a lower level by the board of directors in charge of education. The selection criteria are that candidates must be qualified to teach that level, have a certificate in educational management, or have completed an educational leadership university program, have experience in administration in practice, and have experience in teaching. Moreover, interviews, psychological tests, and other aspects are used to select the best candidates (Akbaşı et al., 2017).

Factors Affecting School Principals' Selection

Recruiting and selecting capable school leaders is becoming a difficult task due to different reasons. One is the shortage of adequately qualified and capable school leaders. Moreover, increasingly changing and

complex school roles and responsibilities require highly capable and competent school leaders who are not easily available and prepared (Kwan & Walker, 2009). Quraishi and Aziz (2016) found out those internal and external different factors that affect the effective recruitment and selection process of principals. These comprise a lack of professional standards or qualification for the profession, closed merit selection criteria, lack of preparation training, lack of partnership with stakeholders, ineffective selection approaches, irrelevant professional courses for principals, and sporadic assessment and evaluation for principals. In addition to these, Schlueter and Walker (2008) and Macbeath (2009) found that the absence of clearly and well-defined criteria, and selection boards or agency or district mainly rely on “fit” to choose candidates for the principal position.

MacBeath et al. (2006) identified four interrelated aspects that can positively or negatively affect the process of school principal selection. The first is the efficacy and reliability of written applications, references, and other evidence provided by applicants. The second concern is developing and applying a standardized procedure and measures to review applications. A third issue deals with the time allocated to the selection process. The fourth aspect relates to the dominance of favoritism and/or selection panels being influenced by factors other than those related specifically to the job (Macbeath, 2009).

Studies identified different factors that affect school principals' selection. Miller (2014) found that the existence of a number of barriers affects principals' selection, and they are religious affiliation, political affiliation, interference, and social connections. Moreover, beyond formal criteria, the best candidates are not selected due to a set of invisible hands, the influence of informal networks, and societal structures and institutional practices. In the same way, Sezer (2016) found out factors that affect school principals' selection, and categorized in into favoritism and administrative problems.

RESEARCH METHOD AND MATERIALS

Research Methods

The main objective of the study was to investigate practices and problems of secondary school principals' recruitment and selection in Hawassa City administration. Moreover, it aimed to assess teachers' views on principals' recruitment and selection policies and practices. To achieve these objectives, the convergent parallel design was employed. The convergent parallel design enables to gathering of both quantitative and qualitative data, combining the data, and using the results to comprehend a research problem. Employing mixed-methods research enables to get relevant data pertinent to the basic questions and to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research questions (Creswell, 2015; Gay et al., 2012).

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The target population of this study was all the available public secondary schools in the Hawassa City Administration. There are fourteen public secondary schools in the Hawassa city Administration. Six schools were selected by using a simple random sampling technique. From selected schools, all principals, including vice principals, and three selection committee members of the City Education Department were selected purposively because they had relevant information about the school principals' recruitment and selection process. In the sample schools, there were 479 teachers. From these teachers, 218 (45.5%) teachers were selected using proportional simple random sampling to take from each school. The size of the teachers' sample was based on the (Cohen et al., 2017) appropriate sample size table.

Data Gathering Instruments and Collection

The types of data used for the study were both quantitative and qualitative. Accordingly, the instruments which were used for data gathering were a questionnaire, interviews, and document analysis. To gather data, a self-developed questionnaire and an interview were employed. The questionnaire was developed based on basic research questions and by reviewing different related literature (Chapman, 2005; MOE, 2014; Otoo et al., 2018; Quraishi & Aziz, 2016; Schleicher, 2012; Schlueter & Walker, 2008; Taipale, 2012; Tulowitzki et al., 2019). It was employed for teachers. The questionnaire consists of four parts: a demographic survey, selection criteria, selection methods, and challenges. The selection criteria and selection methods items are Likert-type scale questions. The number of items of the questionnaire for demographic survey, selection criteria, selection methods, and challenges was four, twelve, nine, and two, respectively. For the sake of easy understanding, the questionnaire was translated into the Amharic language. The objective, anonymity, confidentiality, and the use of data for only study purposes were discussed, and adequate clarification was given to the participants.

The semi-structured interview guide was prepared, and it was employed for principals and the selection committee/ to secure adequate, relevant, and in-depth information from them. The reliability of the qualitative data was ensured through preparing reliable interview guides, identifying dependable data sources or informants, member checking or sharing findings with other members, and triangulating with quantitative data. Both interview guides comprise two sections: personal information and selection criteria, procedures, and tools. The second section, the selection criteria, procedures, and tools, consists of the main eight items.

Questionnaire items were checked for their validity and reliability, and some items were modified, and some of them were eliminated. Moreover, internal consistency reliability was checked. The Cronbach's alpha values for the selection criteria scale and selection methods Scale were 0.762 and 0.729, respectively, indicating that both scales are reliable. Furthermore, policy documents, manuals, directives, and selection documents were used to assess the school principals' recruitment and selection practices.

Methods of Data Analysis

The collected data were checked to examine the defects in response. After checking, statistical outputs were computed and analyzed by using computer computer-assisted program, Statistics Package for Social Science version 20.0. Both descriptive statistical analyses, such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, and non-parametric tests, such as Chi Square and the Friedman test, were used to analyze data. To assess the practices of school principals' selection criteria, teachers' respondents were asked to reflect their views by using five-point rating scales: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), undecided (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). For the sake of easy analysis, the reflective mean scores were categorized as follows: Mean value 1.00–2.49 = strongly disagree, 2.50–2.99 = disagree, 3.00–3.49 = neutral/undecided, 3.50–3.99 = agree, ≥ 4.00 = strongly agree. The results were interpreted as strongly disagree and disagree as a low level of agreement or low-level practices, whereas agree and strongly agree were considered as high agreement on practices or high-level practices. The neutral or undecided category responses were considered as moderate level agreement or practices. In addition to these, qualitative data obtained through interviews and documents were organized into selected themes, then analyzed qualitatively, and triangulated with quantitative results.

FINDINGS

Data were collected by using the questionnaire, interview, and document analysis. Of 218 distributed questionnaires, 184 (84.4%) were filled in and returned. Regarding the interview, fourteen (14) school principals and vice principals and three selection committee members were interviewed. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality of data, pseudonyms were given for interview participants. The pseudo names were given as Principal/Vice Principal (P1), Principal /Vice Principal 2(P2), and up to Principal/Vice Principal 14 (T14). For

selection committee participants, S1 up to S3 were used. Besides, some relevant document analyses were made. Findings were discussed below.

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents

No.	Variable		Teachers		Principals & Vice Principals		Selection Committee Members	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Sex	Male	128	69.6	11	78.6	2	66.7
		Female	56	30.4	3	21.4	1	33.3
		Total	184	100	14	100	3	100
2.	Education level	Bachelor degree	97	52.7	5	35.7	3	100
		Master degree	87	47.3	9	64.3		
3.	Service years in teaching/total service for the selection committee	6–10	8	4.3	4	28.6		
		11–15	39	21.2	2	14.3		
		16–20	70	38.0	3	21.4	2	66.7
		> 20	67	36.4	5	35.7	1	33.3
4.	Service in principalship	6–10			8	57.1		
		11–15			6	42.9		
		16–20						
		> 20						

Background of Respondents

As illustrated in **Table 1**, 128 (69.6%), 11 (78.6%), and 2 (66.7%) of teachers, principals, vice principals, and selection committee members were male respondents, respectively. On the other hand, 56 (30.4%), 3 (21.4%), and 1 (33.3%) of teachers, principals, and vice principals, and selection committee members were female respondents, respectively. When we compare the ratio of female respondents with their counterparts is much lower than male respondents. This implies that females are still underrepresented in the education system positions.

Concerning academic qualification of respondents, 87 (47.3%) of teachers and 9 (35.7%) of principals and vice principals were second degree graduates while 97 (52.7%), 5 (35.7%) and 3 (100%) of teachers, principals, and vice principals, and selection committee members were first degree graduates respectively.

The teaching experience of respondents reported that the majority of teachers and principals, and vice principals had teaching service of ten years and above. The data also showed that principals and vice principals had principalship experience from 6-10 and 11 up to 15 years, which accounts for 8 (57.1%) and 6 (42.9%), respectively. This implies that they have better work experience in teaching and school leadership.

Principals' Selection Criteria

The MOE of Ethiopia has set selection criteria. MOE (2008) stated that school leadership is a profession that has its own training and values, and ethics, and the school leadership profession should first be acquainted with the teaching profession. According to MOE (2008), school principals should possess teachers' professional competence, educational leadership, and management knowledge, ability, and skills. Moreover, MOE (2013) defined the National Professional Standard for school principals. These are: "leading and facilitating vision of learning, developing and managing school community relations, leading and managing learning and teaching, leading and developing individuals and teams, and leading and managing school operations and resources" (p. 12). Besides, MOE (2014) set the secondary school leader's profile in knowledge, skills, and abilities.

The Ministry of Education of Ethiopia guidelines stated that school leadership needs high knowledge and skills. Therefore, the recruitment and assignment process of school principals should be a systematic and orderly approach. The selection process has two parts screening phase and the formal selection process (MOE, 2008, 2014, 2017).

According to MOE (2014, 2017), to ensure whether potential candidates satisfy set standards or not, the screening phase is mandatory. The concerned body should check whether candidates fulfill the required requirements or not. The screening phase of selection is the most determining one. All candidates must pass the screening phase. The screening phase selection criteria are candidate: knows, accepts and implements the country's constitution and laws, Ethiopian education and development policies; demonstrates readiness to accept change; is model in ethical behaviors for students, teachers, and community; and professional competent; demonstrates national patriotic feeling and responsibility; believes in national and nationalities, sex, and religion equality and demonstrate democratic sympathy; demonstrate ability to work in collaboration with teachers and other workers; and can solve differences in peaceful way and discussion way. Moreover, he or she has to bring evidence or a supportive letter from the principal, or supervisor, Woreda/district/ Education Office, and the parent students and teachers association. Before conducting the competition and selection, those who want to join the school leadership should pass the screening selection phase. Using selection criteria, the Education Office management screen, and filling in early screen results, and passing to the formal selection phase based on their performance.

Principals and vice principals (P1, P2, P4, P7, P8, P11) argued that screening phase selection criteria as well as processes are more subjective and politically based. These screening criteria are attitudinal, political, rather than academic, and open for manipulation. Moreover, the candidate is requested to bring a supportive letter from the concerned bodies to participate in the formal selection process of the selection. This exposes the selection process for external bodies such as political officials. Moreover, they expressed that these criteria are subjective, attitudinal, and difficult to measure. These lead the recruitment and selection process subjectively and haphazardly.

The second phase selection process is the formal selection process. Those who compete for a secondary school principal or vice principal position should graduate second degree in secondary school subjects or educational planning and management, have five years of teaching experience, have effective performance in his or her job, interest to be school leadership, and have completed a second degree in school leadership training. Moreover, guidelines stated that some affirmative action, such as a 30% quota, will be given for females to compete with each other, and other priorities will be given to increase female principals' participation (MOE, 2008, 2014, 2017). Practically, some criteria were not met by most principals. Guidelines stated that candidates should have accomplished school leadership training before holding a position, but in reality, school leadership training is given after holding the school principal position. **Table 1** indicates that a considerable number of principals and vice principals were below the standard level (second degree).

Selection committee members, and some principals and vice principals (P1, P6, P8, P9–14) mentioned that major selection criteria are secondary school any subjects or educational leadership qualification, service years in teaching, leadership experience (optional), and performance appraisal result. As comprehended from these, the selection criteria do not specify the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to be a school leader. Moreover, selection criteria were not aligned with school leaders' profiles and competency standards. Although guidelines stated that school leaders' selection is competency or criteria-based, in practice, it is norm-referenced, which focuses on comparing candidates and selecting a principal from applicants rather than evaluating candidates and matching with criteria. These imply that selection criteria are not competency-oriented.

Table 2. School principals' selection criteria

	School Principals and vice principals are selected based on	N	M	SD
1	Qualification in educational leadership or management	184	3.62	.897
2	Political affiliation	184	3.58	.949
3	Ethnic background	184	3.59	1.08
4	Previous experience as a school leader in different positions	184	3.69	.989
5	Experience in teaching (Seniority in teaching)	184	3.43	1.02
6	Performance in teaching	184	3.51	1.03
7	Gender	184	3.48	.917
8	Anticipating leadership roles in school	184	3.47	1.07
9	Professional knowledge	184	3.25	1.03
10	Professional skills	184	3.22	.978
11	Professional values	184	3.18	1.07
12	Personal qualities	184	3.16	.959

Note: N = Frequency, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation.

As stated in **Table 2**, on item 1, teachers responded that school leaders are selected based on educational leadership qualification, with the mean score ($M = 3.62$, $SD = .897$). Interviewees (P1, P4, P7, & P12) also indicated that educational leadership qualification is one selection criterion, like other subjects. Moreover, MOE guidelines state that an educational leadership qualification, like other subjects, is one criterion for selection.

As shown in **Table 2**, teachers replied that school principals were selected based on political affiliation and ethnic background, as agreed with mean score ($M = 3.58$, $SD = .949$) and ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 1.08$) respectively. Selection guidelines MOE (2014, 2017) set the early screening phase, and the criteria were more related to political aspects rather than academic requirements. Principals and vice principals (P2, P4, P5, P6, P9, P11, P14) in interviews and teacher respondents in open-ended items also responded that political affiliation or being a member of the ruling party was a major criterion to hold the principalship position. Teacher respondents remarked that ethnic background is an unofficial selection criterion. They reflected that requiring the ability of a local language can be considered as an ethnic-based criterion. Moreover, the majority of principals and vice principals, and the Selection committee members reported that ethnic background is not a selection criterion. They boldly confirmed that only the ability of the local language is considered, rather than the ethnic background.

As indicated in **Table 2**, the highest mean value for selection criteria was previous leadership experience as school leaders at different positions ($M = 3.69$, $SD = .989$). Teachers' response shows agreement as one criterion for school leaders' selection. Although to some extent less than leadership experience, performance in teaching was rated as agree, with a mean score ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.01$). Qualitative data from the Selection committee members (S1, S2 & S3) argued that, relatively, there were sufficient numbers of experienced candidates in the City; and some of them came via transfer from other areas.

As depicted in **Table 2**, experience in teaching or seniority in teaching, gender, and anticipating leadership roles were replied as moderately with mean values ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.02$; $M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.917$; and $M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.07$) respectively. Teachers rated these items as middle-level responses. Some principals and vice principals (P1, P5, P6, P8, P10) respondents argued that selection criteria do not attract senior teachers because the principal's position and their salary are equivalent or insignificant difference. Although some affirmative action was given for females, the number of female principals and vice principals was few. These indicated that these criteria, seniority in teaching, gender, and anticipating leadership roles, were not used widely.

Teacher respondents rated professional knowledge, professional skills, professional values, and personal qualities with mean score values ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.03$; $M = 3.22$, $SD = .978$; $M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.07$, and $M = 3.16$,

Table 3. Friedman test

	Ranks	Mean Rank
1.	Qualification in educational leadership or management	6.95
2.	Political affiliation	7.29
3.	Ethnic background	7.39
4.	Previous experience as a school leader in different positions	7.54
5.	Experience in teaching (Seniority in teaching)	6.68
6.	Performance in teaching	6.79
7.	Gender	6.71
8.	Anticipatory leadership roles in school	6.56
9.	Professional knowledge	5.72
10.	Professional skills	5.63
11.	Professional values	5.42
12.	Personal qualities	5.33
Test Statistics ^a		
	N	184
	Chi-Square	120.934
	df	11
	Asymp. Sig.	.000

^a Friedman Test

SD = .059) respectively as undecided or moderate level practices. This implies that professional knowledge, skills and values, and personal qualities were not used as major selection criteria for principals' selection.

To assess whether similarity or difference exists among selection criteria items, a statistical test was carried out. The proposed variables are ranked variables; the Friedman Test was computed. As shown in **Table 3**, the estimated Friedman Test ($\chi^2_{11} = 120.93$, $p < 0.00$) is significant at the 0.05 level. This means the Null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected at the 0.05 and even 0.01 level. Thus, it can be said that there is a statistically significant difference between different selection criteria.

To assess which criteria were important or rated the most highly for principal selection from the teachers' view. As indicated in **Table 3**, the highest score (7.54) belonged to the previous experience as school leaders at different positions, and the lowest score (5.33) was the personal qualities dimension. In other words, according to teacher respondents' view, the most used criterion for selecting school principals is principals' previous experience as school leaders at different positions, while personal qualities are the least important. Moreover, as presented in the above table, four highly ranked criteria were previous experience as school leaders at different positions, political affiliation, ethnic background, and qualification in educational leadership or management, whereas four least ranked criteria were professional knowledge, professional skills, professional values, and personal qualities. This implies that the selection criteria used in the city for selection of principals placed more emphasis on non-professional aspects.

Principals' Selection Methods and Tools

The MOE in Ethiopia (MOE, 2014, 2017) had specified selection criteria and selection tools. These are performance appraisal results, written examination, interview, experience, and personal record or file. The selection criteria weights vary from time to time. The MOE (2008) guidelines classified as performance appraisal result (50%), interview (10%), written exam (25%), work (leadership) experience (10%), and quality of personal file (5%). Then improved into service (10%); position experience /department, unit leader, or others/ (20%), two-round performance evaluation (40%), personal record quality (10%), and written examination (20%) (MOE, 2017). However, the recent criteria are service (20%), performance evaluation (45 %), personal record quality (5%), written examination (20%), and interview (10%) (MOE, 2021). These imply that there is no consistency in the school leaders' selection criteria system. Moreover, as can be seen from these selection tools, more emphasis was given to performance appraisal results that are most likely from teaching

Table 4. Principals' selection methods

	Selection methods	N	M	SD
1.	Interview	184	3.71	.802
2.	Written examination	184	3.73	.888
3.	Personal Record quality	184	3.63	.95
4.	Proposal presentation	184	2.43	1.181
5.	Performance appraisal result	184	3.64	.913
6.	City Education Department management decision	184	3.59	.857
7.	Ruling Political Party decision	184	3.58	.839
8.	Leadership experience	184	3.52	.975
9.	Teaching experience/seniority in teaching	184	3.45	.910

Note: N = Frequency, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation.

performance appraisal results. This does not guarantee school principals' position success because of good performance in certain situations.

In the third part of the questionnaire, respondents are asked about how and in what methods school principals were selected. The findings were presented in **Table 4**.

As presented in **Table 4**, selection methods, written examination with mean value $M = 3.72$ ($SD = .888$), interview with mean value $M = 3.71$ ($SD = .802$), performance appraisal results with mean value $M = 3.64$ ($SD = .913$), and personal record quality with mean value $M = 3.63$ ($SD = .95$), were responded as agree by teachers' respondents. As described above, MOE guidelines assigned significant points for these aspects. Moreover, the majority of principals and vice principals, and selection committee members' respondents confirmed that written examination, interview, performance appraisal results, and personal file were used to select principals from applicants. This shows that written examination, interview, performance appraisal results, and personal records were commonly used selection tools.

S1, S2, and S3 replied that the contents of the written examination focus on managerial functions, education information organization, analysis and utilization, educational plans preparation, monitoring and evaluation, finance management and utilization, teaching-learning principles, institutional strategies, school plans, and finance utilization. Principals and vice principals mentioned that the written examination is related to education administration issues, school improvement, teaching-learning process, and related tasks.

Concerning the interview, S1, S2, and S3 responded that oral examination focuses on four domains: school improvement program, school leadership tasks, school community and school stakeholders, rights and responsibilities, disciplinary cases, and school stakeholders' responsibilities. Principals and vice principals pointed out that the interview focuses on general management and leadership areas, school-related issues, teaching- learning process, general education quality improvement package, speaking ability, self-confidence, and readiness for work.

Teacher respondents in open-ended items, and principals and vice principals, remarked that these tools, written examination, interview, and performance appraisal results, were implemented subjectively and manipulated. They revealed that subjectivity, manipulation, and validity problems exist. Some teachers responded by administering these tools as a "nominal process", and appointment was conducted based on political recommendations or officials' decisions. Performance appraisal results evaluation system varies from school to school. Moreover, they raised the competency of selection committee members to prepare relevant, valid, and objective tests and administer them fairly.

As depicted in **Table 4**, teachers replied that City Education Department management decision and political party influence agree with mean values $M = 3.59$ ($SD = .857$) and $M = 3.58$ ($SD = .839$) respectively. This implies that teachers perceive that school principal selection was influenced and decided by management and political party rather than by other selection methods. This external influence on school principals' selection

Table 5. Friedman test

	Ranks	Mean Rank
1.	Interview	5.65
2.	Written examination	5.69
3.	Personal Record quality	5.46
4.	Proposal presentation	2.59
5.	Performance appraisal result	5.45
6.	City Education Department management decision	5.20
7.	Ruling Political Party decision	5.10
8.	Leadership experience	5.04
9.	Teaching experience/seniority in teaching	4.83
Test Statistics ^a		
	N	184
	Chi-Square	220.907
	df	8
	Asymp. Sig.	.000

^a Friedman Test

not only prevents qualified and competent candidates from school principal positions but also harms the selection process's truthfulness.

Concerning leadership experience as a tool for principals' selection, teachers rated as agreeing with a mean value ($M = 3.52$, $SD = .975$). On the other hand, as presented above in the table, teachers replied with moderate agreement on teaching experience or seniority in teaching with a mean score ($M = 3.45$, $SD = .910$). Moreover, teachers showed disagreement with the proposal or plan presentation with a mean value of 2.43 ($SD = 1.181$). This indicated that a low level or absence of proposal presentation for the principal's selection.

To assess whether differences exist among selection methods, a statistical test was carried out. The proposed variables are ranked variables; the Friedman Test was computed. As shown in **Table 5**, the estimated Friedman Test ($\chi^2_8 = 220.907$, $p < 0.00$) is significant at the 0.05 level. This means the Null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected at the 0.05 and even 0.01 level. Thus, it can be said that there is a statistically significant difference between different selection methods.

As indicated in **Table 5**, the highest score (5.69) belonged to the written examination, and the lowest score (2.59) was the plan or proposal presentation criteria. In other words, the most used tool for selecting school principals is the written examination, while presenting a proposal is the least important. Moreover, as presented in the above table, four highly ranked criteria were written examination, interview, personal record quality, and performance appraisal results, whereas four least or moderately ranked selection tools were proposal presentation, teaching experience or seniority in teaching, leadership experience, and political or ruling party influence.

Problems Affecting Principals' Recruitment and Selection

Qualitative data were obtained to analyze challenges related to school principals' recruitment and selection. Qualitative data were obtained from principals and vice principals, and selection committee members through interviews, and from teachers via open-ended questions in a questionnaire. Lists of problems are identified as possible challenges that affect school principals' recruitment and selection. These problems can be categorized into four broad areas: selection criteria and methods related problems, procedure and transparency related problems, implementers related problems, and different malpractices.

Respondents replied that selection guidelines, subsequent selection criteria, and methods have been changed frequently. Frequent changes in recruitment and selection guidelines create not only inconsistency but also confusion among implementers, candidates, and the school community. Some respondents noted

that selection criteria and methods do not ensure the competency of candidates. They are not emphasizing the merit of candidates rather comparing applicants. Moreover, some aspects of the selection guideline are exposed to malpractices.

Teachers and principals, and vice principals, research participants pointed out that selection criteria, methods, procedures, and results are not clear and transparent to all. Subjectivity in interviews, written examinations, and performance appraisal results is a problem that affects principal selection processes. Moreover, some argued that recruitment and selection vacancies were not accessible to all, because of this, many competent teachers did not apply for the position. Selection committee members mentioned that a lack of reliable and appropriate candidates' information and credential documents is the major problem. Applicants presented different qualifications, experience, performance, and other certificates and documents, but checking the authenticity of documents is challenging.

Teacher respondents and principals, and vice principals expressed that principals' selection demands knowledge and skills to select a competent person for the position. However, the selection committee lacked experience, knowledge, and skills to evaluate and select potential best candidate for principalship. Some respondents replied that intimacy and nepotism are major problems in the selection process. Moreover, some participants responded that management, politics, and officials influence school principals' selection. Teacher research participants perceived principals' selection as ethnic based, political affiliation, intimacy and nepotism, unfair and hidden, and not competency-based. In addition to these, they viewed selection competition, examination, interview, and other activities as nominal.

DISCUSSION

The study found that the screening phase and criteria are less concerned with academic qualifications and instead focus on other factors. Furthermore, early screening criteria are subjective, attitudinal, and unweighted. The study found that the early screening phase exposes the selection process to many external bodies, such as authorities, and causes the recruiting and selection process to become subjective and chaotic. This study complements the findings of Haile and Smit (2020), who highlighted the role of ruling party politics in the appointment process for public school principals. Similar to this study, Gurmu (2018) and Tadesse et al. (2019) discovered that political membership is an essential selection criterion.

The study found that selection criteria do not describe the required skills, knowledge, and competencies to be a school leader. Furthermore, selection criteria did not correspond to school leaders' profiles or qualification levels. The selection criteria and method prioritize comparing candidates and picking a principal from applicants over analyzing candidates and matching them to the criteria. The findings revealed a systemic failure in aligning selection criteria with the actual competencies required for effective school leadership.

The findings revealed that previous leadership experience as school leaders in various positions, educational leadership qualification, ethnic background or local language ability, and political affiliation were rated as more practiced selection criteria, while professional knowledge, professional skills, professional values, and personal qualities were rated as moderately practiced. Furthermore, the Friedman test revealed that the four most ranked criteria were previous experience as a school leader in various positions; political affiliation; ethnic background or local language ability; and qualification in educational leadership, while the four least ranked criteria were professional knowledge, professional skills, professional values, and personal qualities. This indicates that professional knowledge, skills, values, and personal characteristics were not employed as primary selection factors for principals. Similarly to these findings, Bush (2008) identified that school principals were assigned or selected based on political affiliation rather than professional knowledge, skills, and personal traits.

The qualitative data also revealed that school principals were assigned based on political affiliation, ethnicity, or language ability factors rather than professional expertise, abilities, values, and personal attributes. This suggests that the selection criteria and practices prioritized non-professional factors such as political affiliation, official pressure, and ethnic background over professional knowledge, skills, values, and personal traits. This finding is consistent with the findings of Tekleselassie (2002), Mengistu (2012), and Gurmu (2020) about the refusal of principalship for professional graduates. According to them, fewer competent and less professional individuals were appointed as school principals using political affiliation selection criteria and ineffective selection procedures.

The study's findings revealed that written examinations, interviews, performance appraisal reports, and personal records were often employed as selecting tools. Furthermore, the survey found that the written examination and interview were ranked the highest, while seniority in teaching and proposal presentation were rated the lowest. Written tests and interview were the most commonly used tools for selecting school principals, with seniority in teaching and presenting a plan being the least important.

However, the qualitative data showed that the results of written exams, interviews, and performance reviews were biased, vulnerable to subjectivity, and influenced by outside parties. Additionally, the study demonstrated how subjective and manipulated the written exams, interviews, and performance reviews were. Additionally, the development and application of accurate, pertinent, and reliable tests, as well as other selection instruments, are impacted by the competency of the members of the selection committee and inconsistent performance evaluation methods. These results are corroborated by Palmer & Mullooly (2015), who discovered that the selection panel influences the selection process and that it should be knowledgeable, inclusive, equitable, and experienced. Merit-based principal selection is hampered by selectors as well as selection tools, such as poorly crafted interview questions and procedures, according to (Baltzell & Dentler, 1983).

The study found recruitment and selection problems. These problems include selection criteria and methods-related problems, such as frequent change and inconsistency of guidelines and criteria; procedure and transparency-related problems, such as procedures and transparency issues; implementers-related problems, such as competency, experience, and fairness of implementers; and various malpractices, such as nepotism, favoritism, bias, ethnic base, and political affiliation.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The study revealed the principles and practices of school principals' selection policies, selection process, and selection criteria and methods. This study contributed to the growing body of knowledge on school principals' recruitment and selection. This means it showed the practices, status, and challenges of the school principals' recruitment and selection.

The study showed that screening phase criteria are subjective, attitudinal, and more related to political aspects rather than academic requirements. The current selection process for school principals is heavily influenced by political and ethnic affiliations rather than merit-based or competency-driven criteria. The absence of transparent, objective, and professionally aligned selection mechanisms has led to a haphazard recruitment process. Moreover, professional knowledge, professional skills, professional values, and personal qualities were the least used selection criteria according teacher respondents' point of view. Therefore, we can infer that school principals were selected and assigned based on non-professional and non-merit-based criteria.

The findings of the study revealed that selection criteria do not specify the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to be a school leader. Moreover, selection criteria were not aligned with school leaders' profiles and

competency standards. School principals' selection focuses on non-competency aspects. The study demonstrates that professional knowledge, skills, and ethical standards are systematically disregarded in favor of partisan considerations. Thus, we can conclude that the selection criteria were not competency-based.

The findings of this study indicated that written examination, interview, performance appraisal results, and personal records were implemented with subjectivity and favoritism. Besides, there was an incompetence of the selection committee members in preparing relevant, valid, and objective tests and administering them fairly. It is possible to state that school principals' selection criteria and tools were not implemented in the desired way.

School principals' recruitment and selection processes are affected by different factors. Lack of clearly defined selection criteria and methods, frequent change of guidelines and criteria, transparency problems, implementers' incompetence, unfairness, and nepotism are major problems. Thus, it is possible to infer that principals' selection processes and practices are hampered by different factors; due to these, principals' selection processes have not been performed in the designed way.

Recommendations

Although selection guidelines and criteria have been changing frequently, selection guidelines and criteria-related problems are affecting school leaders' selection. The MOE and the Regional Education Bureau should prepare clearer and comprehensive school leaders' selection guidelines. They should design competency and merit-based selection criteria.

Different factors are affecting school principals' selection process. So, the City Education Department and concerned bodies should take appropriate action to solve the problems and to improve principals' selection processes and practices. These can include ensuring transparency of selection criteria and selection process, enforcing the implementation of guidelines effectively, and taking corrective actions for malpractices.

Recruiting and selecting school principals are challenging tasks and require expertise from the selection panel. The City Education Department and Regional Education Bureau should prepare capacity-building training for selection panels on selection criteria, designing selection tools, and the overall selection process.

School principals' recruitment and selection issues were not thoroughly investigated in general, and particularly in Ethiopia. Thus, it is recommended that a large-scale study be conducted that comprises a large sample area and different school levels. Moreover, attracting, developing, and maintaining school principals are interrelated issues. So, it is suggested that a more comprehensive study be conducted that deals with selection, development, and retention policies and practices of school principals.

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APPENDIX A: DATA GATHERING TOOLS

A Questionnaire to be Filled Out by Teachers

Dear Teacher,

The purpose of this study is to investigate practices and problems of secondary school principals' recruitment and selection in the secondary school of Hawassa City Administration. The success of the study entirely depends on your genuine and timely response to each question. Therefore, you kindly requested to fill out the questionnaire honestly and accurately. The information to be obtained through the questionnaire is kept confidential and used for academic purposes only.

General Direction for Questionnaire

- No need to write your name
- Indicate your response by putting "✓" mark on questions with options in the box.
- Write a short and precise response for the questions that require a written response, and "others, if any" in the space provided.
- Follow the specific instructions at the beginning of each section
- Please do not leave any questions unanswered if the questions are addressed to you.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Part I: Demographic Data

1. Sex
 - A) Male
 - B) Female
2. Age (in years)
 - A) 18–30
 - B) 31–40
 - C) 41–50
 - D) > 50
3. Education level
 - A) Diploma
 - B) First degree
 - C) Second degree
 - D) Certificate
 - E) if any other, Specify _____
4. Total years of service as a teacher
 - A) 1–5
 - B) 6–10
 - C) 11–15
 - D) 16–20
 - E) > 20

Part II: School Principals Selection Criteria Survey

This survey measures what principals' selection criteria survey items. It has rating scales that range from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). It states how often these criteria are used to select principals [5: Strongly Agree (SA), 4: Agree (A), 3: Undecided (UD), 2: Disagree (D), and 1: Strongly Disagree (SD)]. Using the scale below, mark (✓) on the number / letter/s to the right of each question that you believe comes closest to your level of agreement and comfort.

No.	School leaders are selected based on ...	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1.	Qualification in educational leadership or management					
2.	Political affiliation					
3.	Ethnic background					
4.	Previous experience as a school leader in different positions					
5.	Experience in teaching (Seniority in teaching)					
6.	Performance in teaching					
7.	Gender					
8.	Anticipatory leadership roles in school					
9.	Professional knowledge					
10.	Professional skills					
11.	Professional values and attitude					
12.	Personal qualities					
13.	Others, if any other, please specify it _____					

Part III. Selection Tools and Procedures

This survey measures what principals' selection tools survey items. It has rating scales that range from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). How much do you agree with the statements? It states the tools and procedures are used to select principals [5: Strongly Agree (SA), 4: Agree (A), 3: Undecided (UD), 2: Disagree (D), and 1: Strongly Disagree (SD)]. Using the scale below, mark (✓) on the number / letter/s to the right of each question that you believe comes closest to your agreement.

No.	School principals or/ vice principals are selected by using ...	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1.	Interview					
2.	Written examination					
3.	Personal Record quality					
4.	Proposal presentation					
5.	Performance appraisal result					
6.	City Education Department management decision					
7.	Ruling Political Party decision					
8.	Leadership experience					
9.	Teaching experience/seniority in teaching					
10.	Others, if any other, please specify it _____					

Part IV: School Leaders Recruitment and Selection Challenges

1. What factors affect school leaders' selection?

2. What should be done to improve school leaders' selection?

Thank you for your cooperation!

Interview Guide for Principals and Vice-Principals

Dear Principals and Vice-Principals,

The purpose of this study is to investigate practices and problems of secondary school principals' recruitment and selection in the secondary school of Hawassa City Administration. The genuine information you provide has paramount importance for the success of the research. Therefore, I kindly request that you provide accurate information in this interview. The response you give will be kept confidential and used for academic purposes only.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

I. Personal Information

1. Sex _____
2. Age (in years) _____
3. Qualifications _____
 - 3.1. Diploma _____
 - 3.2. Degree (1st) _____
 - 3.3. MA/MSc/Med _____
4. Trainings
 - 4.1. Certificate trainings _____
 - 4.2. Diploma _____
 - 4.3. PGDSL _____
 - 4.4. M.A. in school leadership _____
 - 4.5. Others _____
5. Work Experience total years _____
 - 5.1. In teaching _____
 - 5.2. In current position _____
 - 5.3. Principalship in another school _____
 - 5.4. Other administrative positions _____

II. Selection criteria, selection procedures, and tools

1. What are the current practices of secondary school principals' recruitment and selection in Hawassa City?
2. What are the criteria to select a principal and/or vice principal?
3. How are principals selected and assigned in principal or vice principal positions?
4. What tools and procedures to be employed in principals' selection?
5. What are the contents of the written examination?

6. What are the focuses or contents of an oral interview?
7. What are the main challenges in school principals' recruitment and selection?
8. What should be done to improve the selection process of principals?

Interview Guide for Selection Committee Members

Dear Selection Committee Members,

The purpose of this study is to investigate practices and problems of secondary school principals' recruitment and selection in the secondary schools of Hawassa City Administration. The genuine information you provide has paramount importance for the success of the research. Therefore, I kindly request that you provide accurate information in this interview. The response you give will be kept confidential and used for academic purposes only.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

I. Personal Information

1. Sex _____
2. Age (in years) _____
3. Qualifications _____
4. Work experience total years _____
 - 4.1. In current position _____
 - 4.2. Other experience _____

II. Selection criteria, selection procedures, and tools

1. What are the current practices of secondary school principals' recruitment and selection in Hawassa City?
2. What are the criteria to select a principal and/or vice principal?
3. How are principals selected and assigned in principal or vice principal positions?
4. What tools and procedures to be employed in principals' selection?
5. What are the contents of the written examination?
6. What are the focuses or contents of an oral interview?
7. What are the main challenges in school principals' recruitment and selection?
8. What should be done to improve the selection process of principals?