PREPARATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS’ LEADERSHIP IN HENAN PROVINCE, CHINA

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PREPARATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS’ LEADERSHIP IN HENAN PROVINCE, CHINA

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ABSTRACT

Principal preparation and training is the key to school and system improvement. This study was intended to investigate the preparation and professional development of secondary school principals’ leadership in Henan Province, China. It allows for a deeper understanding of the current status of the school principals’ preparation and professional development and aims to develop constructive suggestions in improving the current status and resolving the constraints of this effort. Data was collected through open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with the secondary school principals and training providers. Observations of school principals’ routine work and training programs were also conducted to support the research findings. Thirty-seven school principals participated in an open-ended survey, seventeen school principals were interviewed and six training providers were selected from different training institutes to share their experiences and perceptions in three areas: (1) the ways they prepare for their roles; (2) the challenges and constraints of their preparation and professional development; (3) the challenges and constraints of their leadership practices. All interviews were recorded digitally and fully transcribed. Inductive coding was employed, to reduce, simplify and transform the data to facilitate data analysis. A classification of themes was then undertaken and emerging patterns were verified and confirmed. This case study outlines the findings by way of triangulating the data sets. The findings of this research study highlighted various shortcomings of policy implementation and standards, accompanied with some contradictions associated with the current demands of the principal’s role in meeting these demands. This research presented the following recommendations in support of policy implementation: (1) Principals’ professional development policy construction, (2) Promotion of formal and informal learning, (3) Resolving challenges in
preparing and developing professionalism, and (4) Solving constraints in principal leadership practices. It is with the hope that the proposed suggestions derived through this study, can be a merit in enhancing educational policies to facilitate the educational reform, as a stepping stone for further research in this area of study.
PREPARATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS’ LEADERSHIP IN HENAN PROVINCE, CHINA

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk meninjau penyediaan dan pembangunan profesional kepimpinan pengetua sekolah menengah di Wilayah Henan, China. Kajian ini dapat memberi pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang penyediaan dan pembangunan profesional pengetua sekolah dan bertujuan untuk meningkatkan status semasa serta menyelesaikan kekangan yang dihadapi. Data dikumpulkan melalui soal selidik terbuka dan temu bual berstruktur separa dari pengetua sekolah menengah dan penyedia latihan. Pemerhatian program kerja dan latihan rutin pengetua sekolah juga dijalankan untuk menyokong hasil penyelidikan. Tiga puluh tujuh pengetua sekolah terlibat dalam soal selidik terbuka dan tujuh belas pengetua sekolah telah ditemuramah. Selain itu, enam penyedia latihan dipilih dari institut latihan yang berbeza untuk berkongsi pengalaman dan persepsi mereka dalam tiga bidang: (1) cara-cara membuat persediaan untuk peranan pengetuaan; (2) cabaran dan kekangan dalam penyediaan dan pembangunan profesional; (3) cabaran dan kekangan dalam amalan kepimpinan pengetua. Pemerhatian pula dijalankan di tiga institut latihan yang berbeza. Semua kenyataan responden direkodkan secara digital dan disalin sepenuhnya. Pengekodan induktif digunakan untuk mengurangkan, memudahkan dan mengubah data untuk tujuan penganalisisan. Klasifikasi tema dilaksanakan dan corak baru yang muncul telah disahkan. Kajian kes ini menggariskan penemuan melalui proses triangulasi. Hasil kajian ini mengetengahkan pelbagai kelemahan dalam pelaksanaan dan piawaian dasar, disertai dengan beberapa percanggahan yang berkaitan. Kajian ini membentangkan cadangan-cadangan berikut bagi menyokong pelaksanaan dasar: (1) profesional pembinaan pembangunan kepengetuaan, (2) pembelajaran formal dan tidak formal, (3) penyelesaian cabaran dalam menyediakan dan membangunkan profesionalisme, dan (4) penyelesaian kekangan dalam
amalan kepimpinan pengetua. Cadangan-cadangan yang diperolehi melalui kajian ini bukan sahaja boleh dijadikan rujukan dalam peningkatan dan pembaharuan dasar pendidikan tetapi juga sebagai bahan rujukan untuk kajian selidik pada masa akan datang.
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
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<td>Gross National Product</td>
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In recent decades, education reforms have been implemented around the world. School principals have been recognized by stakeholders and governments as the catalyst for education reform (Bush, 2012; Chen, 2011). As a result, there has been an increased interest in school principals’ initial preparation and professional development towards better leadership practices inculcated in schools (Bush & Chew, 1999; Bush & Jackson, 2002; Harris & Jones, 2015). Therefore, the best ways to promote school principals’ continuous progress has been the priority for national educational development strategies in different nations. With the continuous advances in Chinese educational reform, school principals’ professional development is receiving unprecedented attention in China (Chen & Tian, 2006; Chen & Liu, 2012; Gao, 2016; Huang, 2014).

A primary and secondary school principal is perceived as an important conduit to promote basic educational development and implement educational reform (Bush, 2011; Hallinger, 2011b; Yukl, 2002), which is also a key factor in determining schools’ survival, development and success (Hallinger & Heck, 2009; Huang, Liang & Lin, 2010). Thus, the preparation and professional development of primary and secondary school principals, and its significance in promoting principal leadership, is a concern of many stakeholders in China (Chen & Liu, 2012; Feng, 2003b; Guan & Song, 2000). Moreover, with the rapid social development and the global competition, school principals are facing new expectations, higher requirements and greater challenges in China (Chen, 2010; Chen & Xu, 2009; Chu & Cravens, 2012). In order to keep pace with complex and dynamic social
and economic changes and to meet the ever-increasing expectations and challenges faced by schools, school principals need preparation and professional development programmes to equip them for their roles, social needs, knowledge and skills needed in the rapidly changing social-culture (Yan & Ehrich, 2009).

China is pursuing quality education and seeking ways to promote innovative education. In this context, school principals need to undergo a series of effective professional trainings to be capable of leading educational change (Chen, 2010). Schools cannot achieve their educational goals without effective leadership (Hallinger, 2011a; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Huang, 2013). Therefore, issues concerning the nature and role of leadership must form the foundation of any discussion of leadership preparation (Hallinger, 2006). In order to assist the school principals to deal with the challenges and adopting these changes of educational reform, while pursuing professional development, it is important to study the preparation and professional development of primary and secondary school principals’ leadership in China. The following sections present the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations, as well as structure of this thesis.

1.2 Background of Study

During the past few decades throughout the world, countless research has acknowledged that educational leadership makes a difference in student learning, school development, and educational reform (Bush, 2011; Hallinger, 2011b; Harris & Chapman, 2002; Leithwood, 1996; Stuart & Philip, 1997; Yukl, 2002). A school principal plays a
pivotal role in school improvement and school effectiveness, and is a crucial factor in determining school success (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Leithwood, 2002; Peterson, 2002; Sergiovanni, 1991). Moreover, Darling–Hammond and Meyerson (2009) highlights that the school principal’s selection, and their initial training and professional development has become an important focus of educational reform strategies in many nations.

In China, school principal training is perceived by the Chinese government as an important strategy to improve the educational quality, implement educational reform and achieve a successful quality-oriented education (Zheng, Chen & Lu, 2010). Since the 1990s, principal training in China has received increased attention, due to school principals being perceived as “those who are best placed to implement a range of education reform agendas driven by fundamental changes in governance, curriculum and management” (Yan & Ehrich, 2009, p. 54). Similarly, Hallinger (2011b, p. 305) affirms that “the role of school leadership in educational reform has reached the status of a truism, and has led to major changes in school leader recruitment, selection, training and appraisal.” However, the changes and complexities of the socio-cultural environment pose challenges to the school principals. Therefore, in order to meet the higher expectations and requirements of school principal leadership, the initial preparation and continuous professional development of school principals is regarded as an irreplaceable method (Feng, 2003a; Hallinger, 2003) for school principals to gain new knowledge, skills and abilities and to keep pace with the rapid changing world (Yan & Ehrich, 2009).

Today, China has entered into a new period of constructing a well-off society, but the Chinese education system is facing new challenges now and more than ever. Data from
the Educational Information Management Center of the Education Administration in China, reported an escalating numbers of 299,302 primary and secondary schools in 2014 (China Statistical Yearbook, 2015), which makes China a country with the largest education scales in the world, which cannot be served without the support of high quality school principals. Leadership preparation and professional development is viewed as an important strategy to improve educational quality and this will be well accepted by the Chinese government. In order to achieve that goal, school principals need to be equipped with certain values; knowledge and skills gained through their initial preparation and professional development programmes. According to Bush (2011), the preparation and professional development are crucial factors in the success of schools. In line with Stuart and Philip (1997), values, knowledge and skills are needed for school principals’ professional development and the achievement of desired educational goals. Moreover, Davis et al., (2005) emphasizes the importance of appraising and verifying the most effective preparation and development programmes.

According to Yan and Ehrich (2009), leadership preparation and professional development in China, has caught researchers’ attention mainly for two reasons: firstly, the school principal is perceived as the one who can promote school efficiency; secondly, school principals need to update their knowledge and skills to be able to adapt to the rapidly changing social-cultural environment. On the same note, Jin (2007) stated that promoting the professional development of primary and secondary school principals is the most important for establishing the fundamentals of Chinese basic education. Chen (2010, p. 3) reports that “with more than hundreds and thousands of principal professional development teams, they are yet to form a system for the new century, one that is mature and scientific, as a basis for discipline. Creating a characteristic Chinese ‘Educational
Leadership’, should be a priority, as it is important for the contemporary educational researchers and historic mission.”

A number of studies show that in China, “educational leadership” is in the process of exploration and development (Chen, 2010; Sun, 2009; Zheng & Li, 2007). Since educational leadership is linked to the needs of social reform, enhancing and promoting educational leadership is a necessary requirement and regarded as a modern concept of social development. In Davis et al., (2005), it is stated that effective programmes are research and context-based, however in reality, the preparation and professional development of school principal programmes still lack a strong and coherent research base. Some studies show that leadership research is mainly dominated by western theories, and the ideas of leadership practice are hugely influenced by western leadership concepts (Wen, 2004; Chen, 2010).

Chen, (2010) stresses that the Chinese educational leadership discipline must be based on the foundation of the Chinese context. Currently, China is in an era where the nation is undergoing educational transformation and reform. During this period, it is significant to emphasize the functions of educational leadership, where China is pursuing quality education. In order to solve the issues, challenges and achieve its educational goals, education leaders at all levels have to develop leadership awareness and inculcate effective leadership practices.
Generally, at all levels of schooling in China, education leaders over emphasize on management issues, but lack sufficient emphasis on leadership skills (Chen, 2010). Hence, it is crucial to strengthen and enhance effective educational leadership training methods. Otherwise, the educational reform strategies cannot achieve its objectives. According to Davis et al., (2005), school principals’ preparation and professional development programmes seek to reform and produce qualified and sustainable principals worldwide; in this case, China is no exception.

1.3 Statement of Problem

In 1992, the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Department and State Education Commission jointly published a report entitled, ‘Opinions on Strengthening the Construction of the Headmasters of Primary and Secondary Schools’ (SEC, 1992). This report proposes that the main evaluation of school principal’s work should be based on morality, capacity, perseverance, and achievement. Due to the lack of evaluation criteria and theoretical proof, it cannot properly reflect the reliability and validity aspects of the principals work assessment (Chen, 2010). Moreover, it also cannot meet the requirements needed for the professional development of principals. Hence, establishing professional school principals’ training system is required to train and improve principals’ leadership practices and promote quality leadership (Chen, 2010; Cheng, 2004; Sun, 2009).

The study of educational leadership is developing interest in China. There appears to be a lack of research about primary and secondary school principal leadership in China, due to the lack of native research-based and contextual-based studies on the discipline of
educational leadership. Instead, Chinese policy makers and scholars have transformed and replicated western leadership theories, ideologies and practices into the Chinese context (Chen, 2010; Lee & Pang, 2011). Unlike Western countries (such as, United States, United Kingdom and Australia), Chinese colleges and universities rarely offer educational leadership as a subject (Yang, 2003). Furthermore, Chen (2011) pointed out that although China has the largest education system, but the quality of leadership practices has regressed compared to other countries. The current condition cannot satisfy the needs of leadership development, as it restricts the leadership development at practice level and so the situation of Chinese leadership practices need to be improved both theoretically and practically. Therefore, improving the level of Chinese leadership practices has become a requirement of national development.

The school principal is viewed as the school leader, who is in charge of school development. Therefore, school principals must have the competency and capacity for teaching and management. As a result, it is important to select and appoint a candidate who is suitably qualified to handle the role of principal leadership. Yang (2006) states that the selection system is an important part of the principal professional development process, which endorses the scholarship of principals. Nevertheless, the selection system of principalship in China is facing a number of constraints. Some of these problems include the lack of specific criteria and provision of selection, the lack of social connections, and difficulty in administration (Hou, 2012). Therefore, perfecting the selection system of primary and secondary school principals to ensure the placement of quality principals, should be given due importance.
Currently, the overall quality of school principals cannot meet the educational development needs in China (Chen, 2010). China is facing numerous challenges to prepare and develop its school principals. The lack of adequate and excellent primary and secondary school principals has prevented the existence of an effective incentive mechanism to lead educational innovation (Jiang & Li, 2011). The educational leaders training system has not developed the standard training mechanisms and systems required to establish quality professional standards (Chen & Liu 2012). Feng (2003a) states that even with the constant development of school principal specialization, most of the training programmes are theoretical, and there is still lack of specific pertinence, applicability and guidance. From the perspective of professional orientation, the principal specialization is an independent profession, still in the process of personal growth through their own learning and development inside and outside of teaching and training, and constantly striving to improve professional standards. Past research also show that most school principals are ill-prepared to steer a school-wide transformation of strategic planning, curriculum, instruction, teacher development, performance review and other important elements of school management (Bai, 2006; Chen & Xu, 2010).

Leadership training is perceived as an orderly and effective method used to modify the trainee’s beliefs, attitudes and behaviors, expand their knowledge, update their skills, enhance their capabilities and improve their performance (Ngai, et. al, 2012). Leadership training is also a key factor that influences the preparation and professional development of school principals, by offering principals the opportunity to improve their management skills, update their knowledge, and enhance their competencies. However, various studies have indicated that principal training has been challenged by many problems (Bush & Jackson, 2002; Davis et al., 2005; Jackson & Kelley, 2002). One of them is that the
training content and training methods are not diversified at the local level (Davis et al., 2005). In the different areas of China, principal development is disparate, thus the school principal’s abilities, qualities, needs and problems are also different. Hence a single method of school principal training programme is not sufficient to meet the diverse needs (Feng, 2013; Sun, 2009).

Training content and training methods have become the key issues for school principals’ professional development in China (Zheng, 2009). There is evidence to suggest that the training model is still relatively traditional, and based mainly on theoretical and thematic learning, with training content found to be relatively backward (Chen, 2010; Zhao, 2005). In line with Feng (2003a), some of the training courses and principal effective practices are disconnected. Existing school principal trainings systems need to be reformed to a more scientific and systematic training system that can continuously develop principals’ leadership skills and enhance their leadership practices executed in a dynamic and multifaceted environment.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the preparation and professional development of secondary school principals’ in the Henan province, of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). This study will investigate and present the status quo of principals’ leadership, and understand the phenomenon of the preparation and professional development of secondary school principals’ leadership in the Chinese educational context. The goal is to develop a deep and clear understanding of the current issues, obstacles, challenges and paradoxes, gathered from current secondary school principals’ perspectives and
experiences in the principalship training and leadership practices. In particular, this research, through their experiences and understanding, will identify the extent to which preparation and professional development programmes impact school principals’ leadership practices. Their perceptions and suggestions may provide targeted and instructional advice for improvement strategies of secondary school principals’ leadership practices. This study will spur further research in the area of preparation and professional development of leadership among school principals.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research study are as follows:

I. To explore how the governmental training policies impact the preparation and professional development of secondary school principals’ leadership in Henan province, China.

II. To discover how secondary school principals are prepared for their present principal leadership role in Henan province, China.

III. To explore the constraints and challenges faced by Henan secondary school principals, in their preparation and professional development programmes.

IV. To explore the constraints and challenges of the principal leadership practices faced by Henan secondary school principals.
1.6 Research Questions

The following research questions have been formulated based on the research objectives above:

I. To what extent do the governmental training policies affect the preparation and development of secondary school principals’ leadership in Henan province, China?

II. How do the secondary school principals prepare for their present principal leadership role?

III. What are the constraints and challenges faced by secondary school principals in Henan province, China in their preparation and professional development programmes?

IV. What are the constraints and challenges faced by secondary school principals in Henan province, China regarding their leadership practices?

1.7 Definition of Term

There are four key concerns that had to be front and center and the terminology are defined as follow to allow a better understanding of this study.

I. Principal Preparation

School community can never keep in order without a leading character. Principals can only take over this substantial role when they have undergone training prior to their appointment. Principal preparation concerns on the compulsory pre-service for the new principals. This pre-requisite training aims to equip the beginners with leadership capabilities to be in position. The completion of the pre-service training is affirmed with
the principal qualification certificate system which appears as a qualification and ability recognition of the principals to be on duty to rule the school community.

II. Principal Professional Development

Principal professional development concerns on the later development of principalship ability. The available training programmes available in the country are in-service training and self-directed development training. The existing training accepts participation when they are already in the role and needed a boost of energy and supports, for example Qualification Training, Improvement Training and Advanced Training. The completion of the required improvement training and advanced training will add value to their leadership experience and their qualification recognition.

III. Principal Leadership Practice

Leaders are often related to leading improvement and advancement. Whether or not the principals are able to guide the school population towards the desired and guided goals, it is important to look at how the leaders are able to utilize their own leadership skills and traits to move forward with their group of teachers and students. In this study, the leadership practice concerns on the ability and leadership style of the school principals to reach unity within his population and achieve what they are required, for instances, school education excellence, students’ enrolment rate, and teacher performances.

IV. Principal Leadership Role
Leading a school population, school principals has to be always ready to cope with circumstances that come out of nowhere, either from the teachers’ team or the students. School principals, has been stereotyped to be the educators, managers of teacher and student affairs, and the goal keeper to meet the reformation requirements. The leadership roles undergone changes with the societal changes and the expectation shift onto the results from their leadership ability. Leadership role that they are playing are to coordinating all the mentioned tasks and ensure all of them are on the right track. Extensive leadership experiences are needed when it is to deal with affairs that involve different parties: teacher team, students, the Ministry of Education, the parents and the publics. Thus, apart from being the school leaders, they are the manager of resourcing and the influential personnel in school-public relationship.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The main contribution of this study is to provide a deeper understanding regarding the preparation and professional development of secondary school principals’ leadership in China. This study will provide empirical evidence to the knowledge base and international literature, and will be a foundation for further research in China and beyond.

1.9 Limitations and Delimitations

As stated in Hallinger & Heck (1996, p. 7) “any attempt to integrate a body of research into a coherent framework that summarizes empirical, conceptual and methodological issues, must begin with an acknowledgement of its limitations.” Due to the differences in context and the focus of schools located in the Henan province, the findings of this study is limited to the selected schools within this province and cannot be representative of the
whole province and whole of China. Nevertheless, the gross depiction will allow readers to conceptualize upon the common issues and the general phenomenon of preparation and professional development of secondary school principal leadership in China.

This study explores the preparation and professional development of secondary school principals’ leadership in China from the respondents’ perspectives. Instead of using a specific model as a framework, the relevant literature about educational leadership as well as the preparation and professional development of primary and secondary school principals’ leadership in China will be used to support the propositions. Therefore, the purpose of this study is not to prove any previous method and content of preparation and development of secondary school principals, but its intent is to understand the current issues, situation and challenges of the preparation and professional development of secondary school principals’ leadership in China.

1.10 Structure of the thesis

This thesis comprises of seven chapters. Each chapter represents its significance in allowing readers to have a clearer understanding and idea about the main concerns outlined in this study. The seven chapters are as follows: (1) Introduction, (2) Background of Chinese Education, (3) Literature Review, (4) Methodology, (5) Findings, (6) Discussion and finally (7) Conclusion.

Chapter 1, the introduction chapter begins with introducing the education system in China, and pays particular focus on primary and secondary education within the Henan
province. It also traces the education reforms advocated by the Chinese Education Department, showing the renewed interest in the professionalism and leadership preparedness of school principals, in line with their succession plan.

Chapter 2 (Background of Chinese Education) focuses on the historical background of China, traces the historical development of the Chinese educational system, as well as the evolution of principal leadership in China. This chapter also looks at the effects of the changing ideologies concerning the educational system, principal leadership practices, and the influence of the political nature of this country on the school management and leadership configuration. Overall, this chapter anchors the central idea of school principal leadership, with implications on the need to enhance professionalism in line with meeting the nation’s educational initiatives and missions.

Chapter 3 (Literature Review) reviews the relevant theories of leadership and provides an historical account of Chinese school leadership since the establishment of the PRC in 1949. The chapter attempts to relate leadership concepts with contemporary issues, obstacles and challenges faced by school principals. It also explores literature on principal preparation and their leadership development.

Chapter 4 (Methodology) outlines the research approach and design employed in this study, the population and samples of this study, as well as addressing the issue of validity and reliability of this research.
Chapter 5 (Findings) presents the detailed and systematic description of qualitative data analyzed from open-ended questionnaires, field observation report and semi-structured interviews with school principals.

Chapter 6 (Discussion) presents the results of this study and cover discussions on the professionalism of school principals and the impact of training policies on principalship preparation and professional development, in the Henan Province, China.

Chapter 7 (Conclusion) attempts to sum up the study with constructive recommendations, for similar research to be potentially replicated in other provinces of China.
CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND OF CHINESE EDUCATION

2.1 Introduction

In order to have a better understanding of the preparation and professional development of secondary school principal leadership in China, it is important to look at the Chinese educational system from a historical perspective. The political nature of a country is usually associated with national educational ideologies and its educational system. As stated in Crossley and Watson (2003), it is not fair to isolate educational factors from its political, social, economic, and other environmental elements in the growth process of education.

Different contexts have different influences on principal leadership practices. Kwan (2011) states that contextual elements should not be ignored in the study about school leadership development. Hence, this chapter provides an insight to the Chinese educational system as well as a review of the preparation and professional development of school leadership in China since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China until today.

2.2 Basic Facts of China

China is a sovereign nation located in the east of Asia. As one of the four most ancient civilizations in the world, China is a nation rich with more than 5000 years of history. Spanning across about 960 square kilometers, China is one of the biggest countries of the world. China has all kinds of landscape, ranging from the mountains of Tibet to Hainan’s
blue sea; and from the Inner Mongolian steppe to the stretch of Yunnan rice paddy plantations. Despite diverse local dialects, Mandarin is the main language used by the 1.35 billion inhabitants of China, making it the world’s most widely used language.

China comprises of 23 provinces, 5 autonomous regions (Sinkiang, Tibet, Inner Mongolia, Guangxi, Ningxia), 4 direct-controlled municipalities (Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjing, and Chongqing) and two special administrative regions (Hong Kong and Macau).

**Figure 2.1:** The geographical map of China
(Source: http://www.foomaps.com/china-map-6/)

The People’s Republic of China (PRC) was established in 1949 under the lead of Mao Zedong. Marxists’ and Mao Zedong’s ideologies have led to the construction of socialist China. Since the establishment of PRC, several crucial events changed the course of Chinese history. Events such as “The Cultural Revolution”, the “Great Leap Forward”, and the “Reform and Opening-up”, not only have had a great influence on Chinese social
policies, economics, and politics, but also a great impact on the Chinese educational development (Hu, 1991; Tsang, 2000). The economic reform began in 1978. Since then China’s economy has been growing rapidly. In 2016, it was the second-largest economy in the world by both nominal total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 11,392 billion USD dollars and a ‘Purchasing Power Parity’ (PPP) of 21,269 billion USD dollars (World Bank, 2016).

China is viewed as a potential superpower by many nations. Its present political system is labeled as “people’s democratic dictatorship” (Zhang, 2013); its ideological system is known as “socialism with Chinese characteristics” and its economic system is perceived as a “socialist market economy” by Chinese leaders (Chen, Gao & Zhou, 2009). The Chinese education that is under the Chinese government’s control, is influenced by these ideologies. It is in this context that the Chinese educational system has evolved through its widespread territory, coping with very different cultures, climates, and different levels of development. The context of this study is based on the Henan province, where China’s civilization began. Located in the central part of China, with an area of 167,000 km² (64,479 sq. mi), Henan is the third most populous province in China with a population of more than 94.36 million (China Statistical Year Book, 2015). Moreover, according to the Henan Province Bureau of Statistics (2016), Henan ranked fifth in the economic aggregate of China. Nevertheless, Henan is still considered as one of the less developed regions in China. In 2015, China was reported to have 9,370,500 primary school students, 4,048,100 junior high school students and 1,943,100 senior high school students (China Statistical Year Book, 2015).
2.3 The Chinese Educational System

China’s educational system is divided into several stages depending on the age of the pupils. It begins with early childhood education, followed by primary education, secondary education, then tertiary education. As of 2014, this system was composed of 209,881 nursery schools with 40,507,000 pupils; 201,377 primary schools with 94,511,000 pupils; then 67,851,000 students went to the 65,876 secondary schools; and lastly 3856 colleges and universities gathered 35,543,000 students (China Statistics Year-Book, 2015).

Since the establishment of the PRC, China’s educational system has evolved according to the political environment and historical changes. The Chinese government has been promoting educational reform and development, and has transformed the populous country into a strong resourceful country, equipped with the largest educational Chinese system in the world. The following section reviews the progress of the Chinese educational system since the establishment of the PRC.

2.3.1 People’s Republic of China (1949 - 1976)

The establishment of the PRC in 1949 arose with the closure of semi-colonial and semi-feudal social conditions in China. At this time, the country was isolated and overwhelmed by the West, hence, education became an important tool to rapidly achieve industrialization, enrich the nation’s ascendancy to achieve national goals. School principals at different phases, were given different functions by the Chinese government.
In the early days of the PRC (1949-1956), the main mission of the new government was to restore the national economy. During this period, the Chinese educational system followed the Soviet Union’s educational pattern (Feng, 2006; Zheng, 2003) by introducing a simplex school-running system, with schools being the ‘institutions of socialization’ (Feng, 2003a). The educational goals were to recover and develop the new educational system by fostering cadres and teachers to take the lead on deploying industrial construction, establishing specialized colleges and schools and reconstructing the national school structure (Chen & Hong, 2007). Under this mission, the ‘Institute of Education Administration’ was the first training center established in Beijing (Feng, 2003a). The training content used at this institute, reflected the social and political development needs of the national educational system and covered topics of philosophy, psychology and pedagogy. During the following decade, several other training institutes were established, and the local government used the same training methods and content to develop their school leaders and promote school education. During the early establishment of the PRC, the school principal training lacked in expertise and resources.

In 1956, China established the socialist basic relief system, and created conditions for the emancipation and the development of productive forces. During the process of socialist construction, the Chinese president Mao proposed Four Modernizations agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology (Di, 2014; Tsang, 2000). These new orientations were introduced to meet the needs of social development, and improve the quality of education. The school leader played the key role in promoting the development of education under the governance and control of national leaders. When the Socialist Transformation movement ended in 1956, the communist party of China stepped into a period that involved the total reconstruction of socialism. Following this,
the education system underwent a ‘great leap forward’ with the implementation of the Fourth Session of the National Education Administration. During this period, the professional development of teachers’ and school principals was downplayed and neglected (Tsang, 2000; Wang, 2002). During the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), China sustained serious losses economically, culturally and educationally (Cai & Du, 2003). Social development was extremely restricted. The Cultural Revolution focused on the economy and on politics, and advocated to abrogate education (Thogerson, 1990). At that time, students spent most of their time in political activities and school activities were based on the dictatorship of the proletariat. School systems were termed as “a proletarian school system” (Sui, 2012; Thogersen, 1990). The negative influence of the Cultural Revolution on education, science, and culture was extremely profound. Countless intellectuals were persecuted, schools were closed, and many research institutions were revoked (Cai & Du, 2003; Sui, 2012).

The Cultural Revolution led educational careers into a period of stagnation and backward development. The functions of education were completely denied (Sui, 2012; Tsang, 2000). School principal trainings came to a standstill (Feng, 2003a). As a result, the headmaster’s role became insignificant and lower qualified individuals were appointed to take responsibility of schools. This resulted in very low quality education (Kwong, 1988, Lin, 1993), as the level of professionalism among school leaders could not meet the demands of the four modernizations.

After the Third Plenary Session (1978), The CPC (the Communist Party of China) Central Committee attempted to recover the Chinese education. According to Wang
(2002), the school management and educational structure during this era, did not have a strong foundation. Moreover, there were inadequate numbers of schools, a lack of qualified teachers and a severe lack of teaching and learning equipment. According to the 1982 census statistics, 235,820,002 people, (around a quarter of the Chinese population), were illiterate or semi-literate (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 1982). This was a serious constraint to the development of education and modernization. Since the establishment of China in 1949, the political leaders have emphasized that education should serve and support politics. This is evident from Deng’s speech presented during the National Conference on Education in 1978 (Deng, 1978, p. 1): “schools should follow political direction as priority; schools should strengthen on revolutionary order and revolutionary discipline.”

2.3.2 Educational Reform and China’s Open Policy (1978 - 2014)

During the reformation, the modernization of China’s education started to establish itself with educational reform at the core (Fai & Wang, 2008). The development of education during this period evolved through three stages. The first stage (1978 to 1984) began with the ‘National Conference on Education’ hosted in Beijing by Deng, the Chinese vice-chairman and reformist, on 22 April 1978 (Cheng, 2012). Deng proposed the following suggestions for educational reform and development to improve the quality of education:

I. To enhance the level of teaching for the Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities in order to better serve the socialist construction. Deng particularly emphasized that developing Science and Technology was a priority;
II. To send a large number of students overseas to learn advanced technologies beneficial for the country’s development;

III. Teachers to be given due respect and authority (Deng, 1978).

Learning experiences from developed countries became an important resource for educational reforms in China (Fei & Wang, 2008). In the mid and late 1980’s, Chinese education began to progress through theoretical research and practice, and gradually formed the characteristics of China's educational philosophy (Fai & Wang, 2008). The strategic development of China’s education, its educational reforms, as well as the level of curricula and teaching was fully emphasized (Chu, 2008). From 1978 to 1984, restoring order was the main goal of education, which emphasized on the importance of knowledge for economic construction (Tsang, 2000). In 1979, the school principal training institution was re-established. This institution provided trainings and developed talents in a shorter frame of time, and this appeared as the new feature of school principal training (Feng, 2003a). With the recovery of educational order, education at different levels developed rapidly, and the basics of an educational system was thus formed.

With the improved educational structure, the government allocated educational resources to improve the quality of education during this time. However, the government allocations were provisioned for the minorities, and this brought about serious inequalities in educational allocation (Cheng, 2012; Tsang, 2000). From 1985 to 2002, the second phase of educational reform flourished. In May 1985, the Chinese central government issued ‘The CPC’s Decisions on the Education System Reform’ (CPC, 1985). This was the most important document guiding educational reforms in the 1980s (Feng, 2003a).
This document clearly stated that, “Education must serve the socialist construction, and that the socialist construction must rely on education” (CPC, 1985). It also raised the curtain on the comprehensive educational reforms applicable (Cheng, 2012). At this stage, reforming the educational structure was the main mission of the educational reforms strategy. However, the educational system had to adapt to the economic system for appropriate and simultaneous reform (Wang, 1994).

The central Chinese government then implemented the nine-year compulsory education, restructured secondary education, and developed vocational and technical colleges (CPC, 1985). Under the school management system, the principal assumed a full responsibility of the school. At this stage, the focus was on the internal distribution policy reform of primary schools and secondary schools to start implementing a staff appointment system and a school reward system. Educational reform initiatives placed emphasis on process efficiencies, and after the new educational order was established, schools administrative and managerial efficiencies were greatly improved. The ‘Outline of Chinese Education Reformation and Development (OCERD)’, also pointed out that the expanse of education, has improved the education quality and school efficiencies. Primary and secondary schools began to focus on ‘exam-oriented education’.

In 2001, with the promulgation of the ‘Compendium of Curriculum Reform of Fundamental Education’, a new curricula reform was implemented in primary and secondary schools to emphasize on quality-oriented education. The OCERD also reported on the resultant outcomes to be attained at the end of the 20th century: A nine-year compulsory education to eliminate illiteracy among young and middle-aged people in
China. The OCERD explicitly indicated that education should be directed towards quality-oriented education and this reformation strategy has been emphasized since then.

When China joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, the Central Committee of the CPC and the Chinese State Council, proposed a new educational strategy, “invigorating the country through Science and Education.” Since 2003, the nation has been focusing on educational reform. With the social development and the continued economic growth, educational investments have grown substantially and school operations have improved remarkably. The Chinese government has prioritized an action plan for invigorating education in the 21st century. Then in 2006, the Chinese government promulgated the 11th ‘Five-Year Plan’ with the aim of prioritizing the development of education and human resources. A jargon of “scientific development”, introduced by the Chinese Communist Party’s Sixteenth National Congress and the Third Plenary Session of its Sixteenth Central Committee, became the basic guiding principle of educational policy-making, educational reform and development since 2003.

In 2010, the ‘National Medium and Long-term Plan for Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)’ proposed that education should prioritize the development of an educational system featured with Chinese socialism characteristics (CPCC, 2010). The plan pointed out that quality improvement is the core task of education reformation and development. This plan also seeks to advocate educators into running a school, and encourage teachers and principals to take on bold practices. It also looked at perfecting the training system and developing the training plan, which helped cultivate, strengthen and improve the professional competencies of the primary and secondary school principals.
2.4    The Phylogeny of Primary and Secondary School Principal Training

The primary and secondary school principal trainings had experienced critical changes in social reform during the past decades in China. The Chinese government proposed different policies and strategies for developing school principal leadership. The following sub-sections highlight the main policies and documents issued by the Chinese government at different historical phases.

2.4.1 People’s Republic of China (1949-1988)

With the establishment of the PRC, teachers and principals played significant roles in restructuring China. Hence, the Chinese government started to pay attention to teachers and principals training. In March 1952, the government promulgated a set of school regulations that clearly outlined the roles of the ‘headmaster’ in charge of the system. After 1954, the Chinese government started to pay attention to teachers and principal training. At this time, the school principal’s role was mainly managerial. In 1954, the Chinese central government issued a set of ‘Instructions’ known as ‘Improvement and Development of Secondary School Education’. These instructions stipulated a systematic plan to train principals in batches and by rotation. Along with this set of Instructions, the first training programme was conducted by the Ministry of Education. According to Feng (2003a), the objectives were to improve the political and ideological outlook of school principals in order to execute school administration under a new educational system. A number of promising school principals who were eligible for school administration and national educational development underwent this training programme.
In the following year, the first education administrative training center was established in September 1955 in Beijing, after being approved by the ex-president, Mao Zedong. According to Feng (2003a), the guiding principle for running a school was to balance out between politics and professionalism, while combining theory with practice. The training content of this one-year programme consisted of philosophy, pedagogy and psychology (He et al., 1997). Since the training content was mainly dominated by political ideology, school principals were asked to be government cadre’s rather than professional personnel (Feng, 1996).

From 1958 to 1979, it was a period of inactivity, due to the social unrest between the ‘Right-leaning Ideas’ and the Chinese government, which led to the 10-year Cultural Revolution. Because of the political unrest, school principals’ leadership positions were seriously affected. In 1959, the Central Institute of Educational Administration was shut down because of political pressure. During the Cultural Revolution, all the school principals training institutions were closed and all the school principals training programmes were completely stopped by the government (Feng, 2003a; Jia, 2012). After the Cultural Revolution, all the social systems and social orders needed to be re-established. The quality of school principals could not keep pace with the Four Modernizations, and so the Chinese government began to focus on school principals trainings. Since 1980, the school principal training in China went through three main stages, which are an adjustment and recovery period, the transformational period and the rapid development period (Wu, 2009).
In August 1982, the State Education Commission of the People’s Republic of China issued an official document known as ‘The Opinion on Strengthening the Training Work for Ordinary Education Administrative Cadres’. This document contained the philosophy, goals, requests, content, and methods of school principal trainings in China (Feng, 2003a). However, according to Wu (2009), the training targets were found to be too general:

“To improve the ideological and political qualities, educational theoretical level and management skills.”

“To make the cadres training work institutionalized and regularized.”

(Source: People’s Education, 1982, p.45).

Furthermore, because of the lack of targeted training programmes for primary and secondary school principals, principals were not well prepared for their roles. In 1980, the Education Administrative Institute was re-established in Beijing as the ‘Central Academy of Educational Administration’ (Jia, 2012). Since then, training work resumed and rapidly developed in China. In October 1982, China’s State Education Commission introduced a revised version of the previous document named, ‘The Opinion on Strengthening the Training Work for Administrative Personnel of Primary and Secondary Schools’. The objectives of this revised version, were to improve the ideological and political qualities, educational theoretical level and management skills, and to ensure that the cadres training work is institutionalized and regularized. In August 1987, China’s State Education Commission officially re-issued ‘Opinions on Strengthening the Construction of the Headmasters of Primary and Secondary Schools’ and stipulated that training centres are important bases for educational leaders’ professionalism and development (SEC, 1992).
From 1980 to 1988, the Chinese government paid particular attention to the professionalism of educational management work. While numerous training programmes for educational leaders were organized, the role of school principals was not given due importance. Whatever trainings were conducted, it was based on political theories, educational theories and management skills. These training methods were also simple “chalk and talk” methods, as described by Chen (2011). Furthermore, Feng (1996) pointed out that many training institutions lack modern technology and advanced training methods.

2.4.2 Educational Reform (1989-2016)

Due to the lack of targeted training programmes, primary and secondary school principals were not well prepared for their roles under China’s educational reform. To improve the level of school principals and enhance their training, a series of documents and policies were issued throughout the last 26 years. The researcher conducted a document analysis to review and assess these official documents and government policies, 11 documents based on the policy contents and priorities highlighted in Table 2.1.

Based on Gong (2012) and Zheng, Chen and Lu (2010), there are four categories of training policies concerning primary and secondary school principals according to the changes of policy contents. The first category, Type I, refers to the national macro educational policy documents. The second category, Type II, refers to the training implementation documents issued by the National Education Administration. The third category, Type III, is about the educational cadres training plan documents, and the fourth
category, Type IV, is about personnel policy documents. School principal trainings were not merely about the training contents and training methods, but it was based on a policy package related to the national education development plan, basic educational reform policy and personnel system. The national training policy embodies the basic understanding, requirements and purpose of the primary and secondary principal trainings (Zheng & Lu & Chen, 2010).

Table 2.1: Policies on School Principal Trainings in China

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Names</th>
<th>Policy Focus</th>
<th>Policy Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opinion on Strengthening the Training for the Principals of Primary and Secondary Schools (1989)</td>
<td>Framework of school principals training; Appointed qualifications for training; Principals’ appointment and evaluation</td>
<td>Type II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinions of the State Education Commission on Post Training for Headmasters of Primary and Secondary Schools (1990)</td>
<td>Job training and implementation.</td>
<td>Type II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements and Position Requirements of Headmasters of Primary and Secondary Schools in China (1991)</td>
<td>Job training certification for principals.</td>
<td>Type IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion on Strengthening the Team Construction of Primary and Secondary School Principals (1992)</td>
<td>5-year job training rotation for school principals</td>
<td>Type IV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 2.1, Continued: Policies on School Principal Trainings in China

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<tr>
<th>Document Names</th>
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In December 1989, the State Education Commission promulgated the policy, ‘Opinion on Strengthening the Training for the Principals of Primary and Secondary Schools’ (MOE, 1989). This was the first systematic and complete guiding document for primary and secondary school principals training. In this document, school principal training was perceived as the strategic intent to comprehensively implement communist party and national educational policies. It also established a basic institutional framework for school principals’ training and development (Gong, 2012; Lu, Chen & Zheng, 2010). Meanwhile,
the government introduced the ‘Multimillion Primary and Secondary School Principal Training’ project. China’s school principal training entered the phase of standardization and systematization (Chen, 2010). At this time, the characteristics of the school principal training were fundamental, universal and compulsory (Guo, 2007).

In 1991, the State Education Commission issued another official document which is- ‘Requirements and Position Requirements of Headmasters of Primary and Secondary Schools in China’ (SEC, 1991). This formed the basis for school principals’ selection, appointment, assessment and training. The document defined the four main responsibilities of school principals. Firstly, the main duty of the school principal is to implement the national educational guidelines, policies, laws and regulations. Secondly, the school principal is viewed as a democratic manager, who is tasked with developing teachers’ initiatives, motivation and creativity. Thirdly, school principals are required to manage their schools by leading and organizing educational activities, and building collaborative relationships with parents and the broader communities. Lastly, the school principal is expected to play a guiding role in facilitating school educational development and create a good environment for educating students. In order to enhance the quality of school principals’ trainings, universities were expected to collaborate with local authorities to design training programmes and provide trainings, according to the directives of the Ministry of Education (Chen, 2010; Feng, 2003a). From 1991 to 1995, qualification training was the main training method. Both aspiring school principals and in-service school principals needed to participate in trainings, in order to be certified.
Since 1995, professional development programmes were carried out on the structure of national, provincial, city and county levels under the coordination and organization of the Ministry of Education in China. In 1998, the Ministry of Education promulgated, to have training and continuing education for all the primary and secondary school principals and full-time teachers, in order to consolidate and improve the system of primary and secondary school principal trainings and the post-holding certificate system, within three years (MOE, 1998). In December 1999, the Ministry of Education officially issued policy entitled the ‘Training Regulations for Primary and Secondary School Principals’ (MOE, 1999). This was the first administrative regulation that legally endorsed school principal training in China. It also defines the content, form as well as the training responsibilities for school principals. This document has stipulated that new school principals are required to be certified with official training qualifications, before they serve as a school principal. For those who wish to retain their position as school principal, will have to be re-trained every five years (MOE, 1999). In order to match this training policy, the local government established training policies and training systems to support school principals training development (Guan & Song, 2000).

In May 2001, the State Council issued the policy ‘Decision of State Council on the Reform and Development of Basic Education’ (State Council, 2001). This official document is intended to improve and regulate the management system of primary and secondary school principals in accordance with the law. This document also contains the criteria regarding the appointment system and the necessary qualifications required of primary and secondary school principals. In February 2002, the ‘Opinion of Ministry of Education on Further Strengthening and Improving the Training of Primary and Secondary School Principals (MOE, 2002)’ was implemented to further perfect the
training system and improve its quality by strengthening the programme pertinence and effectiveness. Efforts to build principal’s professionalization are driven by reform and innovation.

In September 2009, the revised document entitled ‘The National Eleventh Five-Year Plan for Cadre Training of the Educational System’ was promulgated by the Ministry of Education. The objectives of this document defined four general aspects of the training:

I. To fully implement large scale and high quality training programmes for educational cadres;

II. To monitor the educational system and build a collaborative, diversified, and effective training method;

III. To enhance the training system by promoting a scientific, systematic and normative training method;

IV. To fully utilize high quality training resources.

This revised document also pointed out that the key issues are how to improve the training quality, innovate the training mode and expand training types.

At present, school principal training in China is largely governed by the macro guidance of the Ministry of Education (Chen, 2010). There are four national training institutions, thirty-one provincial training institutions, over two hundred municipal training institutions and more than two thousand training institutions in China (He, 2011; Yan & Ehrich, 2009; Zheng et al., 2013). Training centres were set up to organize, plan, coordinate and guide school principal trainings and help improve their quality and
efficiency. Trainings assist school principals to develop the correct ideology for running a school. According to Chen (2010), this was done previously by a principal training network system.

Before the 1990s, Chinese school principal trainings used apprenticeship methods, as qualified teachers were then selected as school principals (Feng, 2003a). Since 1990, school principals formal training has improved greatly. The Chinese government had organized a large number of training programmes for school principals’ professional development. More than one million school principals participated in these training programmes (Feng, 2003a). During this period, the government authorities also issued a series of documents that clearly define the roles, responsibilities and competencies required of school principals. The school principal training system had become more scientific and systematic with collaborative and diversified training methods introduced. Through the years, principals’ professionalization was gradually established. As their training evolved towards institutionalization and standardization, school principals were valued for their independent roles. Through an open and diversified training system, the training content met the basic demands of social change, and this greatly enhanced the quality of education. At present, there are three types of certificate training programmes provided for school principals:

I. The 300-hour ‘Qualification Training’ professional certification for newly appointed principals;

II. The 240-hour ‘Improvement Training’ for principals equipped with certified qualifications;
III. The ‘Advanced Training Seminar’ is for a select group of outstanding principals (gu gan xiao zhang) who wish to enhance their leadership skills and knowledge.

(Source: MOE, 1999; Yan & Ehrich, 2009; Zheng et al., 2013, p. 490).

The trainers for these courses are usually university lecturers like research fellows and professors, who train principals in the philosophy of education, curriculum management, computer and information technology and educational administration. Besides, they also instill in principals the values of effective school management and the ability to lead schools with passion, vitality and compassion. Other activities of these programmes include face-to-face lectures, group discussions, school visits, internship programme and submission of a project paper (Chen, 2010). These trainings are organized by the Chinese government. However, it is known that school principals are not allowed to select their preferred training institution during the period of induction and improvement training (Lv, 2011).

2.5 School Principals’ Preparation and Professional Development

This section elaborates on the major issues concerning school principal’s preparation and professional development in Henan province, China. The following sub-sections further describe the preparation roles of secondary school principals, their qualifying credentials and the principal training system, which includes training curriculum, training method, training evaluation, training funding and training timeframe.
2.5.1 Principal Preparation

The principal as the prime leader of a school needs to be well equipped to manage their changing and challenging leadership roles. Presently, there are three forms of strategies that prepare secondary school principals for their leadership roles: pre-service and in-service trainings and self-directed development strategies. Among the principal trainings available include Qualification Training, Improvement Training, Advanced Training and other forms of training. Specifically, Qualification Training is the prerequisite leadership preparation programme that equips school principals with the necessary leadership roles. Improvement Training and Advanced Training are the training programmes held to continuously promote school principals’ professional development (Chen, 2010; Chen & Liu, 2012; Chu & Yang, 2009; Huang, Liang & Lin, 2010).

The self-directed development strategy refers to school principals who are seeking additional ways to improve and develop their leadership capabilities and extend their leadership expertise (Tang et al., 2014; Wilson & Xue, 2013). With Liang’s (2005) research in Beijing, the results illustrated that school principals’ leadership practices were based on their previous experiences. Walker & Qian (2015) also stress the importance of building human relationships and forging strong bonds with other principals. This is regarded as an effective way to promote leadership practices. Furthermore, Sun, Cheng and Deng (2015) also pointed out that training and reading are very important for the professional development of school principals.
2.5.2 Principals Qualifying Credentials

The principal qualification certificate system is the qualifying criteria and professional standards prescribed by the Chinese government. This certification prepares and trains principals for their leadership roles while equipping them with professional values, knowledge and skills (Jia, 2005). In China, most of the school principals are selected from qualified teachers (Liu & Li, 2012). According to the ‘Training Regulations for Primary and Secondary School Principals’, new school principal candidates must obtain a training qualification before they serve as school principals. As for those who want to keep their position as school principal, they have to be re-trained every five years (MOE, 1999).

However, Jia (2005) argues that the school principal’s appointment system and certification is merely a formality, because this qualification certificate has not been legalized. At present, the principal qualification certificate system still remains under the policy category, and is not conducive for the implementation of school principal training. Moreover, according to Tian, Meng and Fu (2012), there seems to be a disconnection between the school principals’ credentials system and the school principal trainings. Nevertheless, the certification exam is not very strict because it is well known that once the school principal candidates are selected, they will definitely receive their certifications, regardless of their performance. Besides, it has been reported that some of the school principals receive training certifications, without participating in any training (Xia, 2011b).

Although, Chinese government had promulgated a series of regulations on primary and secondary school principal qualification training, school principals’ qualification standard continues to use the standard implemented in 1991. The following are the
conditions stipulated by the ‘Requirements and Position Requirements of Headmasters of Primary and Secondary Schools in China’ (1991):

I. The academic credentials of primary school principals cannot be lower than secondary normal school principals;

II. The academic credentials of secondary school principals cannot be lower than college degree principals;

III. The academic credentials of senior secondary school principals cannot be less than principals whom are bachelor degree holders.

Comparing the credentials system with developed counties, Chinese school principals’ qualification standards does not consider the school principals’ administrative experiences (Liu, 2010). The ‘Instructive Teaching Programme for National Qualification Training of Primary and Secondary School Principals’ was promulgated in 2001. This establishes the primary and secondary school principals’ credentials system. According to Yang (2005), the document aims to promote the overall understanding of the school principal’s occupation, their roles, rights and duties, as well as their leadership and management ability.

2.5.3 Training Curriculum

The training curriculum is the crucial part of school principal training. Chu (2009) defined training curriculum as the scope of teaching content. Various studies confer that training curriculum has a direct impact on school principals’ job performance (Rao, 2015; Wang, 2011; Xu, 2011; Zhou, 2015). Principal training has been a tool to prepare the
school leaders for their on-the-job needs. Thus, knowing the curriculum of the training will enable the readers to have a basic concept of what are the skills and knowledge are embedded in the training and are targeted to inculcate into their soft and hard skills.

2.5.3.1 Principal Training Curriculum Development in China

Since 1989, China began to develop a clear training curriculum for principals (Zhang, 2011). Every five years, the Ministry of Education implements a new curriculum and teaching material according to their national economy and political development plans. During the exploration phase of “The Eighth Five-Year Plan” (1991-1995), the main training content of principal trainings comprised of political theories, education policies and regulations, basic educational theories, teaching and school management. At that time, the curriculum was standardized and unified (Zhang, 2011), and the training content was centred on the post requirements of primary and secondary school principals’. The teaching plan and the training content were simple and basic, and were linked to the political literacy and theoretical knowledge (Rao, 2015).

The consolidation phase in ‘The Ninth Five-Year Plan’ (1996-2000) addressed the requirements of market economy, technology reform and quality-oriented education. These concerns were embodied in the training content. The curriculum setting became more flexible and innovative. During this period, the training content began to shift from knowledge to practice. ‘The Tenth Five-Year Plan’ (2001-2005) training curriculum addressed the new curriculum reform, which included students’ moral development and mental health. In addition, the training curriculum emphasized the education reform, and individual needs of school principals’ professional development. The ‘Eleventh Five-Year

The role of the principal was clearly defined during this period (Chen, 2010). The ‘National Eleventh Five-Year Plan for Cadre Training of the Educational System (MOE, 2007)’ addresses the school principals’ training curriculum, more comprehensively. It covers laws and regulations, school management, curriculum reform, educational assessments, campus safety, hygiene management, information technology applications, funds management, system reform and developing a harmonious campus (Rao, 2015).

For the “Twelfth Five Year Plan” (2011-2015), the curriculum incorporated more advanced ideas and concepts and was found to be more systematic and hierarchical (Xu, 2011). The training content shifted the school management problems from the macro to microcosmic. During this period, the professional standards of school principals at different levels were promulgated:

I. Compulsory Education School Principal Professional Standards.
II. Regular Senior Secondary School Principal Professional Standards.

Over the various periods, the training curriculum had different characteristics. Before the “Eighth Five-Year Plan”, the training curriculum was designed pragmatically. Its purpose was to train the school principals to become school management specialists. During the implementation of the “Eighth Five-Year Plan”, the Ministry of Education
had clearly defined the training curriculum. As for the “Tenth Five-Year Plan”, the training curriculum comprised of a combination of an elective course and compulsory course, guidance course and local course, and required course and school-based course (Xu, 2011).

2.5.3.2 Training Curriculum Overview

At present, there are three major types of training programmes: Qualification Training, Improvement Training and Advanced Training. These training programmes are established based on the central model and requirements stated in the ‘Training Regulations for Primary and Secondary School Principals’ (MOE, 1999). Taking the training curriculum of the pioneering training providers in Beijing Normal University as reference, the curriculum will be elaborated according to the three training types.

I. Qualification Training

Being a head teacher of a Chinese secondary school, he or she should be socialist ideology literate and politically proficient. This major requirement has a remarkable presence ever since the establishment of PRC (Chen, Gao & Zhou, 2009; SEC, 1991), apart from being physically fit and with a qualifying educational background. Thus, the subject of constructing Chinese socialism and educational practice takes the lead of the training curriculum for the beginner in principalship. The participants will then be educated with modern approach of educational theory and leadership practices, inclusive of educational psychology, counseling skills and application of leadership theory in education. Owing to the obligation of achieving educational reform, national law and governmental policies that are enforced on the education system will be studied and reviewed in one of the course item. Apart from classroom activities, model school visits
and a six-month management practice internship are included to add value to the participants to practice what has been preached. Reports to conclude the training and passing the examination will end the beginner training with a professional certificate.

II. Improvement Training

After completing the 300-hour training, the school leaders who are already in position to serve the school community will nevertheless are exhausted with problem solving cases and affairs that often demands on skill advancement and knowledge boosting. The improvement training has a flexible course structure and the participants can choose among the elective courses offered. The basic courses at the stage offer two different natures of course contents: theoretical awareness and applied skills. Theoretical knowledge has never run away from the Marxist philosophy of education where the social functions of education are highlighted to meet the current societal demands (SEC, 1991). Applied skills, including effective leadership application, are educated through the study of the in depth scientific approach of school management and educational research to perform school evaluation for school excellence. Elective courses were outlined to provide freedom to the school principals to opt for the knowledge supplement according to their needs, for example educational counselling, foreign educational ideology study and modern educational technology for local education research. The participants are required to produce an introspective report to reflect on their knowledge harvest and the planning for their school management by the end of this 240-hour training.

III. Improvement Training
Improvement training offers a themed seminar based training for school principals with good appraisal with their excellent school management and research abilities, most importantly are keen to sharpen their leadership and management ability and keep up-to-date their research experience. The advanced training allows the school principals to be more specifically equipped with the desired knowledge and be practical by the end of the training. The seminar titles being offered this far are categorized into managerial seminar, strategic research skills towards education reform, stress management, and school excellence diagnosis workshop. Since this training is under a conditional participation, the participants needed to be well rounded in their performance to be eligible for the training. The participants' evaluations are subjected to the training requirement and are varied according to the course outline.

2.5.3.3 The Current Issues of Training Curriculum

Over the past decades, the training curriculum has been continuously revised. However, there are still many problems that needed to be solved. Chu (2009) highlights some of the challenges of the school principals training curriculum:

I. Subject-centered curriculum setting;

II. The core curriculum is not prominent;

III. The existing training curriculum does not pay enough attention to macro strategic management and microscopic classroom management;

IV. Teaching materials, qualification-training materials and improvement training materials are not divided according to hierarchy. This results in the preparation and professional development programmes being not clearly defined;
V. Training content is subject-centered but lacks the practical curriculum;

VI. The training materials are too traditional and unitary, and not appealing to school principals.

The current curriculum setting does not meet the school principals’ professional development needs, as the school principal training has been subject-centered rather than based on actual needs (Feng, 2003a; Han & Dong, 2014; Wang, 2011; Wang, 2013).

Also, one of the biggest concerns is that the training curriculum is not connected to school principals’ leadership practice (Chu, 2010). The content of the training curriculum is stipulated by the Chinese government. As a result, the training content is found to be less congruent with school principals’ actual demands (Militello & Berger, 2010; Tian et al., 2012; Wang, 2013). At the macro level, Rao (2015) pointed out that training content is important for theory and policy. Moreover, training content lacked a robust research foundation, training institutes and trainers that can subjectively design its content. Furthermore, there was no consideration given to school principals who require different knowledge and skills at different stages of their professional development. Gu (2011) also argued that the training content seems to strongly focus on theoretical aspects and not enough on practical delivery. Wei & Jiang (2011) further add that the training content is not aligned to the educational reform needs and the school principals’ development needs. Since the training curriculum is regularly updated every five years, the trainers are required to undergo training first, before they begin to train school principals (Wang, 2011). The question that arises in school principals’ professional development is how to utilize the theories learnt from these trainings to solve practical problems, and how to improve school principals’ analytical abilities.
School principals appear to have poor initiative as they rely too much on the education administration departments (Zhou, 2015). Moreover, Wang (2014) claims that there is no post-training follow-up with principals and vice-principals, while Gu (2011) indicated that the national training plan conflicts with the provincial training plans. Militello & Berger’s (2010) also found that training topics were sporadic and repeated, which the training theories did not tally with school principals’ leadership practices. Instead, the traditional theoretical part of the training mainly relied on educational experts’ report and the systematic analysis of the school context (Xia, 2011a). Since school principals did not have adequate experiences in leadership practice, it is difficult for them to understand the theories systematically. According to Song (2014), the conflicts that arose had an effect on the school principals’ training.

2.5.4 Training Methods

The training methods of the principalship development are guided under certain training theories and training ideologies. Based on specific training objectives, a suitable training strategy was used to design the training process and structure operating procedures (Lu, 2014; Zhang, 2011). Besides that, the training method is a tool to achieve the objectives of school principal training, as well as for implementation purposes (Huang, 2013; Yang, 2011). Effective training methods can also continuously improve school principals’ professional quality for example and emphasized in both the ‘Notice of the Education Department of Henan Province on Further Strengthening Education Cadre Training in the Province’ (Department of Henan, 2010)’ and the ‘Opinions of the State Council on Strengthening the Construction of Teachers’ Ranks (State Council, 2012)’.
2.5.4.1 Principal Training Methods

During the past decades, school principal trainings in China had undergone various developmental stages. Since the implementation of the “Eighth Five-Year Plan”, principal trainings were divided into three stages: compensation training, needs-based training and innovation training (Xia, 2011a). During the “Eighth Five-Year Plan” and “Ninth Five-Year Plan”, the education background of the majority of primary and secondary school principals’, was relatively low and these school principals lacked theoretical knowledge of education. Refresher courses became the main training methods for school principal trainings. As for the “Ninth Five-Year Plan”, theme training was the major component of school principal trainings, with some additional compulsory and elective subjects added on (Zhao, 2005).

With the application of information technology in teaching, training methods started to place emphasis on school principals’ varied needs. Desire-based training had become the mainstream in school principal trainings during the “Tenth Five-Year Plan”. The thematic lectures, educational diagnosis and research-based case studies were widely used in school principal trainings throughout year 2001. During the “Eleventh Five-Year Plan”, tutorial training methods were used for school principal training (Xia, 2011a; MOE, 2007). During the “Twelfth Five-Year Plan”, training aimed to cultivate a large number of outstanding principals in the territory, to encourage a balanced development of education. Currently, school principal training method mainly includes the following: subject-oriented training method, problem-based training method, participative training method, action research method, and network based training method, educational consultation training method and school improvement based training method. A
combination of theory, practice, problems and reflections go into developing a diversified training method (Xia, 2011a; Zhou, 2015).

Although, training methods look diverse, Dong (2014) and Zhou (2015) claimed that the trainings are ineffective. The Education Administrative Department incorporates unified training objectives, training materials and training syllabus into the school principal trainings (Dong, 2014). Training methods emphasize more on formalism, whereby most of the training programmes are based on listening activities (experience sharing), observations through campus visiting and ‘aural activities’ (Wang, 2014). In the actual teaching process, training institutes pay more attention to theory. Although training methods are a one-way delivery of the educational theory, it lacks communication and interaction between trainers and trainees.

Training methods rarely pay attention to school principals’ initiatives. Ignorance of the principals’ subjectivity during the training process, results in the school principal being passive and obedient, especially at county and city levels, where the atmosphere is more oppressive (Fan, 2009; Han & Dong, 2014). Traditional training methods emphasize on knowledge delivery to solve school principals’ common problems. Militello & Berger (2010) revealed that the training method design is not based on school principals’ actual experiences, and that it neglects the school context and principals’ background, which are subject and material-centered (Han & Dong, 2014; Lu, 2014; Wei & Jiang; 2011).
Nowadays, school principal trainings in China are more scientific and systematic by using more diversified training methods (Han & Dong, 2014; Wu, 2009). Nevertheless, Zhou, (2015) argues that each training method has its restrictions and functional limitations, and is not compatible with each other. Tian, et al., (2012) revealed that training institutes have been looking for ways of improving their training methods, but there has been no fundamental breakthrough as yet. Furthermore, network-teaching resources have not been fully developed and utilized (Han & Dong, 2014).

2.5.5 Training Evaluation

Training evaluation is a crucial part of school principal professionalization and it is an effective mechanism to promote school principals’ professional development (Chu & Cravens, 2012). The purpose of training evaluation is to improve training resource allocation and monitor the training plans. Training evaluation helps training institutes to develop the training content and training methods, define school principals’ training needs and improve the pertinence and effectiveness of training (Wei, 2015). Training evaluation also enhances and improves the quality of school principal training. Although school principal training in China has rapidly developed during the past decades, studies on school principals’ training evaluation is still at the start-up phase and has not established a feasible evaluation system (Chu & Cravens, 2012; Zhang, 2012).

China has not established systematic training evaluation standards for school principal trainings (Xia, 2011b). Training evaluation is not based on the training objectives but according to school principals’ subjective feelings, their personal impressions, evaluation report forms, the completion of training plans and training summaries, in order to draw
conclusions (Tian et al., 2012; Xiao, 2011b). According to Wei & Jiang (2011), training evaluations mostly are superficial, localized and simplistic. The uncertainty of objectives in trainings is still prevailing collectively. Since the training evaluation process is not of scientific quality, the outcome of the training results may not be as credible (Chen & Lv, 2012).

Training evaluations were carried out randomly, without observing any strict requirements (Chu, 2009). It was also discovered that training institutes did not strictly implement a post-holding certificate system. Instead, there were cases where by selected school principal candidates received training certificates, without participating in training. Training evaluation was a mere formality. According to Wang (2014), training institutes do not have a long-term tracking system in place to monitor training evaluations, of the school principals who participate in trainings. This is commonly understood about the school principals’ evaluation system.

Furthermore, the ‘Training Regulations for Primary and Secondary School Principals’ clearly point out that the education administrative department of the State Council is responsible for the macro control of primary and secondary school principals’ training (MOE, 1999). The education administrative department of provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities is officially responsible for the training plan, the supporting policies, the training implementation, inspection and evaluation (SEC, 1999). However, in reality, training evaluations are conducted by training institutes rather than these education administrative departments. At these training institutes, training teachers are responsible for assessing the training methodology and training content (Liu, 2011). The
Education administration department carries out some routine checks but this is not considered as a professional training evaluation. Most of the training programmes conducted by training institutes emphasize on summative assessment rather than formative assessment (Wu et al., 2015; Yuan, 2008; Zhao & Wang, 2007).

In 2015, the ‘Cadres Education Training Regulation’ was issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. This regulation stipulates standards for the management system, training content, training method and training evaluation. Article 56 states that “establishing and perfecting the cadre training evaluation system, strengthens the evaluation of cadre education training institutions, its programmes and curriculum” (CPC, 2015). Moreover, school principal training evaluation is merely based on the evidence of participants’ attendance and their written examinations. This is due to the lack of unified and specific evaluation criteria. The general evaluation criteria to assess school principals’ job performance are based on the following dimensions, “morality (德), ability (能), diligence (勤), and achievement (绩)” (Jia, 2004; Zhao & Wang, 2007). Evaluation methods have not yet established quality standards to execute formative evaluation (Hu & Wang, 2009; Zhang, 2012) As a result, the training evaluation is formalized and superficial and has become challenging to promote school principals’ professional development.

2.5.6 Training Institutes

In a training system, training institutions form the organizational foundation of system operations (Chu & Yang, 2009; Chu et al., 2009; Hu, 2013). Therefore, training institutes’ and trainers specialization have direct impact on the quality of school principal training.
At present, all training institutes (national-level, provincial-level, municipal-level and county-level) run primary and secondary school principals’ trainings at different levels, supported by universities, colleges of education and normal universities (Zheng et al., 2012).

In China, education administrative departments assign training institutes, because primary and secondary school principal trainings are monopolized by the Chinese national administrative power. This results many social institutes and private sectors not being able to provide in school principals’ training. However, Chen et al., (2011) reported that 35% of school principals had participated in non-government training institutes. With the continuous changes in training policies, non-government training institutes embarked upon the school principal training market. In 2011, ‘The Tenth-Five Year Plan of National Educational Cadres Training’ proposed to apply the qualification certification system to cadre training bases and establish an open and efficient cadre training system. This showed that Chinese school principal training institutes had begun to shift from a ‘closed’ training institute to that of a more diversified and professional establishment.

Full-time faculties and part-time teachers are the main resource for most of the training institutes (Chu, 2009; Zheng et al., 2012). The ‘Training Regulations for Primary and Secondary School Principal’s (1999) clearly pointed out “principal training institutes shall implement the combination of full-time and part-time teachers.” Currently, there are two prominent issues regarding training instructors. According to Chu (2009) and Song (2014), China has been facing a shortage of excellent experts and trainers for school principal trainings. It is also reported that trainers has a direct influence on the quality and
effectiveness of principal trainings. Highly competent training teachers are an assurance for the delivery of improved quality in school principal trainings. However, Chen, Chai, Fang and Lv’s (2011) pointed out that trainers’ teaching and their academic qualification levels are rather low. Many of them are not qualified and are not capable of training work. This results in low quality training. Some of the training managers lack the knowledge and skills for training purposes, and are not familiar with the educational rules and policies (Cheng & Ji, 2009; Fan, 2009; He, 2008).

In China, school principal training mainly relies on the national higher education institutions. Thus, most of the training teachers come from universities or colleges, while the rest consists of educational administration department officers and senior school principals. The quality of training institutions also has an impact on the quality of training managers and training resources (Liu, 2014; Zheng et al., 2012). The shortage and low quality of training teachers has become one of the important reasons that affects the quality and effectiveness of trainings. Besides, the quality and quantity of training instructors are a mismatch with training tasks. Chu’s (2009) pointed out that 56.7% of the training institutes were without full-time trainers, while Qian (2007) stated that the overall quality of training lectures is not high.

Militello & Berger (2010) also pointed out that trainers were not professionally equipped on the subjects they taught. Principal leadership requires practical guidance. However, in reality, most of the trainers lack practical experience in training school principals. Most of them, who come from universities and education scientific research departments, are mainly engaged in theoretical research. They do not know much about
the specific conditions regarding school principals’ leadership practices. The majority of
the trainers have superficial knowledge about the nature and features of school principals’
practices, which cannot satisfy the actual needs of school principals’ professional
development. Moreover, the number of trainers at county and city levels is relatively low,
especially high quality professional trainers who are proficient in school principal
management (Fan, 2009).

Another setback is that Chinese scholars pay less attention on trainers (Chen & Lv, 2010). Although, there is rarely any research done in the area of professionalization of
training institutes, the cognition of school principals’ professional development remains
at the level of training content and training methods used. School principal trainings have
not been separated from teachers’ trainings and other educational trainings (Chen & Lv,
2010). Chen (2009) pointed out that principal training institutes need to establish their
core competency, in line with training needs.

2.5.7 Training Funding

There is a training fund that safeguards school principal trainings. ‘Compulsory
Education Law of the People's Republic of China’ stipulates that the compulsory
education fund is the responsibility of the government departments at all levels (MOE,
2006). Nevertheless, the limited training budget is another obstacle that poses a challenge
in most of the areas of the Henan Province. Especially, training institutes at county level
with limited funds and poor conditions. Han et al., (2014) is an empirical study which
reported that only 21.1% of the respondents perceived that the training funds were
sufficient, 32.2% respondents felt it was ‘barely enough’, 36.3% respondents deemed
training funds as ‘not enough’, and 10.4% respondents reflected ‘not enough at all’. Chang’s (2005) also indicated that the lack of funding is the leading cause of school principals, not willing to participate in principal trainings.

Moreover, the “Training Regulations for Primary and Secondary School Principals” stipulates that the training funds of trainers and school principal trainings cannot be less than 3% of the total salary of faculty members and staff of schools (MOE, 1999). However, due to training funds, whether abundant or not, they are closely related to the local economic development (Dong, 2010). This is especially true in underdeveloped areas, usually without an abundant disposable educational expenditure for school principals. On the contrary, school principals in underdeveloped areas have greater demand for training than school principals who come from developed areas. Furthermore, school principals are not very enthusiastic about participating in trainings because they have to pay part of the training cost, despite having a training fund. This has dampened their enthusiasm for involving in school principals’ training. Dong (2010) also indicated that government agencies freely take administrative controls and that soft budget constraints are impeding the management of training funds. Several research studies have indicated that trainings have high costs but low effectiveness and is a key determinant of school principals’ professional development (Chang, 2005; Wang, 2010).

2.5.8 Training Time

There is a general believe that the effective use of time can improve the efficiency of school principals leadership performance (Claessens et al., 2007; Grissom et al., 2015; Hall & Hursch, 1982; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Jamal, 1984; Orpen, 1994). However, the
fact remains that Chinese school principals are preoccupied with administrative and management affairs, having to attend meetings and maintaining social networking. It makes them have less time to think about school development or their personal development (Chu, 2009; Liang, 2005; Zhang, 2012). According to the survey reported in Sun et al., (2015), school principals spent 45.98% of the time on daily administrative management affairs and 13.87% of the time in activities concerning continuing education, which include training and reading.

In Chang (2005), the research findings showed that 19.78% of the 182 school principals did not want to participate in trainings due to their busy schedule. Zhang (2012) pointed out that although school principals appeared very busy, their working efficiency was not as high. Liang (2005) showed that school principals spent most of their time with administrative management affairs. The investigation of 60 school principals by Zhu (2009) concluded that most of the school principals could not finish what they planned to do. They were also mentally and physically exhausted after work, and they did not have time for rest. At times, these school principals cannot carry out their original plans because of unforeseen circumstances that arose. The failure of effective time management has left negative impact on the principal’s leadership practices.

2.6 Impact Factors of School Principals’ Leadership Practice

2.6.1 School Principals’ Incentive Mechanism

According to the Organizational Behavior Theory, ‘incentive’ is defined as a psychological activity that involves an individual’s intrinsic motivation towards desired goals (Baker et al., 1988; Bloom & Milkovich, 1998; Eisenhardt, 1989). According to
Chu and Yang (2002), an incentive system includes a promotion system, compensation system and assurance system, which serve as an intrinsic motivation for school principals’ professional development. It implies that a good incentive mechanism is able to attract more personnel to pursue the school principalship as an occupation (Chu, 2005; Yang, 2003).

Chu and Yang (2002) stated that a promotion serves as an effective way of reflecting upon the professional values of principalship. It also enables the accreditation of professional expertise in the field. Obtaining professional status and reputation are the pursuits of professional practitioners, who aim at improving their professional development. A reasonable compensation system can also motivate school principals’ enthusiasm about their leadership. Wu (2009) confirmed that the implementation of performance-based salaries has a positive impact on school principals’ performance. Nevertheless, studies on the school principal’s incentive mechanism showed that principals tended to have very low levels of job satisfaction (Hu, 2006). This was evident among secondary school principals who were not satisfied with their salary levels. For some new school principals, their salaries were lower than teachers’ average salaries.

Study by Chen & Lv (2010), Qian (2004) and Shi (2003) further pointed out that the assurance system of primary and secondary school principal training is referred to in order to achieve the quality standards of principal trainings. According to Gong (2000), stimulating school principals’ enthusiasm to attend training is the precondition and guarantee of school principals’ training quality. Without providing incentives for school principal trainings, school principals generally displayed a negative attitude towards
training. According to Chang (2005), 51.7% of 182 school principals left early or did not take part in training. Only 22.2% of school principals participated with full attendance.

The incentive mechanism was established firstly in Shanghai since 1993. In order to evaluate principals’ leadership practices, Shanghai was selected for executing the first pilot project, and implementing the ‘Principal Rank System’. This was an incentive system that divided school principals’ rank into five levels and twelve grades. In 1996, based on the experimental results of Shanghai, Beijing conducted another pilot project, which divided school principals’ rank into five levels and ten grades according to school principals’ leadership performance. Ultimately, in 2001, the ‘Decision of State Council on the Reform and Development of Basic Education’ (State Council, 2001), was tasked at implementing the school principal rank system. With the rank system being constantly promoted in China, different regions had made their own different rules on the rank system.

The rank wage consists of graded salary, basic wage and performance pay. The Rank system advocates de-administration, intended to transform school principals from “post” to “profession”, and highlight school principals’ predominance in their professions. Linking remuneration to school principals’ leadership performance, largely enhanced school principals’ enthusiasm. Essentially, the Rank System is a catalyst for school principals’ growth, and it has a profound influence on principals professional development. According to the Rank System, school principals may be either promoted or demoted. Their overall performance is the benchmark standard for their appointment, salary, evaluation, rewards and sanctions received.
China has not established an effective incentive mechanism for school principals’ professional development. Yu (2012) describes the status quo of school principals’ incentive mechanism as “not valued by superior administrative departments, not recognized by school principals, not guaranteed by system and founds; does not have internal conditions and external resources” (p. 61). In reality, school principals’ leadership performance does not really link to their compensations received.

### 2.6.2 Principals’ Responsibilities, Rights and Interests

Since 1985, the ‘Principal In-charge System’ has been implemented in China’s education system. It stipulates that the school principal is the highest person in the hierarchy, who is the school’s legal representative, and who is responsible for internal school work with management autonomy. Bao (2004) and Feng (2003b) explained that the ‘Principal In-charge System’ is led by a higher authority, fully responsible to the principal, and democratically managed by faculties. However, many studies indicated that the Principal In-charge System has not been properly put in place (Feng, 2003b; Li, 2011; Li et al., 2006; Lu, 2003; Wang, 2014).

Chinese scholars generally believe that school principals’ responsibilities mainly include political responsibility, economic responsibility, legal liability, management responsibility and ethical responsibility. Precisely, political responsibility refers to the thought and behavior of principals that should reflect the will of the state, conscientiously implement the nation’s education policies, responsible for the ideological and political work of teachers and students. Economic responsibility means that school principals have
the financial responsibility towards the school’s assets, and the balance of income and expenditure. Legal liability refers to school principals whom are responsible for the issues that arise during the process of school management and operation. Management responsibility means that school principals bear the prime responsibility for the orderly operation of school work, including strategy-making, decision-making, and staff recruitment. Ethical responsibility refers to the managerial responsibilities of the school principal in handling public organizations. Principals have the subjective and objective ethical responsibility to achieve public interest (Ge, 2003; Xiong, 2010). However, in reality, policies provide a conceptual description of the ‘Principal In-charge System’, without providing a detailed division of their responsibilities. The Principals’ responsibilities are described as too broad and not clearly defined.

Yu (1999) summed up that principals should have five functional authorities, which are the right to set up agencies, personnel management, use funds, teaching management and school property management. Institutional setting gives the school principals the power to set administrative and operational matters according to the school needs, for example, the setup of an academic staff office, or student’s affairs office. Personnel management refers to the full management of school staff, including the setup of a school team cabinet, staff recruitment and staff dismissal. The right to use funds refers to principals having the power to govern the educational funding and donations as well as the use of funds for facilities and school property maintenance and repair, in accordance with the policies, laws and regulations. The right of teaching management empowers the school principals to conduct teaching and learning activities, develop teaching plans and programmes, integrate school curriculum programmes and develop school-based
curriculum. Property right refers to the rights that principals have to use school properties and monitor any illegal disposal of school properties.

Under Article 28 of the ‘Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China’, school principals are subjected to being appointed as teachers or other staff roles, as well as the rewards and punishment schemes (MOE, 2006). Xiong (2010) further argues that the principal’s rights are limited to the internal management of schools, especially in underdeveloped regions. In addition, the schools tuition fees and social donations received for the schools’ self-financing, is not for the disposal of the principals. Most of the schools are facing constraints of shortage in funding. The school principal also does not wholly own the rights to management and financial matters. Xiong (2010) also pointed out that under the influence of various factors, principals’ power is weakened and limited, and cannot be truly exercised.

Principals’ interests are associated with the economic rewards they receive due to their positions, responsibilities and performance. The ‘Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China’ stipulates that the government at all levels should protect the interests of teachers and implement social security benefits to improve their working and living conditions (MOE, 2006). The policy also stipulates that the average wage of teachers should not be lower than the local average wage of civil servants. However, there are still no policies or regulations that guarantee school principals’ interests. Over the years, principals’ salaries are generally executed according to teachers’ professional and technical positions wage. There is no wage protection system established for school principals (Lv, 2004). As it appears, principals are still not treated as an independent
profession by the Chinese government. A school principal is considered as a part-time teacher and principals’ occupational status is not reflected in the government’s interests.

To sum up, policies do not clearly define principals’ responsibilities, rights and interests. With their limited rights, principals interests are not embodied in their profession. As a result, there is an apparent imbalance in the current school principals’ responsibilities, rights and interests.

2.6.3 The Development of Teacher Teams

The Institute of Rural Education, (Northeast Normal University) issued a report entitled ‘China Rural Education Development Report (2013-2014)’. This was a huge research involving 3433 teachers. The research findings showed that there were 51.2% of teachers who went to the village schools according to the initial configuration, 56.9% of them transferred to county schools in the secondary configuration, and 36.7% of rural teachers expressed that they wished to leave their current positions. Among the teachers in the county, there were 67.3% categorized as “upward mobility”, 28.2% were under “parallel flow”, and only 4.5% thought of as “downward mobility”. 77% of the urban teachers did not want to teach in remote rural schools. 80.2% of the students wanted to become a teacher and only 38% of them were “willing to teach in rural areas”. Teachers were found in low performing schools, rural schools, high-performing schools, and urban schools. Numerous studies demonstrated that the shortage of teachers had seriously hampered the development of education.

There are several reasons for teacher shortage. It is a common problem currently faced by many rural schools. In recent years, various parts of Henan is expecting the number of
approaching teacher retirements, to bring about a sharp increase in teacher attrition. Besides, teachers leave their teaching post for various reasons, which also contribute to the shortage of teachers. Despite downsizing the number of teachers, supplementary teachers are relatively difficult to obtain. Teachers are usually not willing to teach in rural areas due to the geographical isolation, difficult working conditions and backward economy. To be more precise, teachers are aware that their wages differ significantly between economically developed areas and that of economically less developed areas, as well as between different types of schools.

Teachers prefer to work in urban areas and in high-performing schools. Teachers’ teaching tasks are very heavy in rural areas, where each teacher is required to take on multiple disciplines and multiple grades. Furthermore, the contradiction of staff allocation for government-affiliated institutions, remain very prominent. In November 2014, the State Commission Office of Public Sectors Reform, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance jointly issued the ‘Notice on the Unified Standard of Authorized Strength of Urban and Rural Schools’ (MOE & MOF, 2014). The purpose of this move was to unify the authorized standards for primary and secondary schools in rural areas with that of urban area standards. However, many schools in rural areas are facing the problem of the huge drain of students. According to the China Rural Education Development Report 2015, primary pupils in rural areas have reduced by 26,050,000, while junior high school students in rural and township areas have decreased by 11,902,000 and 27,540,000 respectively. As a result, the numbers of students in rural schools often face the trouble of teacher vacancies, which has a serious impact on the improvement of quality teaching.
The quality of teachers is an essential factor in determining the success of curriculum reform and educational reform (Li, 2005). Although, new curriculum reform advocates that teachers cannot only be executors of curriculum implementation, but also builders and developers. However, there is a huge gap between teacher quality and curriculum reform, due to the lack of knowledge among the majority of teachers regarding curriculum development. As a result, teachers are not capable of accomplishing the requirements of educational reform and developing the school-based curriculum (Li, 2005). Furthermore, various studies have found that teachers lack professionalism, they appear to have low levels of research capabilities and are poorly equipped with modern educational philosophies (Tang & Xu, 2000; Wang, 2007; Zhang, 2005). This is particularly found in undeveloped areas, where the teaching quality is rather weak, because teachers do not have enough knowledge in modern educational technology, and lack research awareness (An, 2013; Guo, 2013; Ma, 2015).

There is an imbalance in the teaching quality between developed areas and underdeveloped areas and this has become a significant concern. Numerous research studies have demonstrated that teachers differ according to seven dimensions: professional attitude, professional knowledge, professional competence, the philosophy of education, curriculum quality, psychological quality and information literacy. There is also evidence to suggest that the quality of teachers living in the city and county, is much better than teachers living in rural areas (An, 2013; Ma, 2015; Wang, 2007; Zhang, 2005). Due to the intense competition of teaching jobs in cities and towns, the education level and quality of teachers in urban areas is much higher than rural teachers. According to Li (2005), the education level of key (demonstration) school teachers was significantly higher than normal (general) teachers. The data also showed that key demonstration
teachers with bachelor degrees and master degrees accounted for 40.9%, while the average (general) school teachers only accounted for 31.4%.

2.6.4  Education Innovation

At the macro level, educational innovation can promote the economic, social and cultural development of a nation and enhance the core competitiveness of a country (Li & Wen & Liu, 2008; Liao, 1999; Zeng & Li, 1999). At the micro level, educational innovation is critically required for the improvement of school effectiveness and school quality (Wen, 2006; Yang, 2000). It is undeniable that the principal plays an important role in educational innovation under the background of education and curriculum reform. Changes in educational ideology comprehensively promote quality-oriented education and the conversion of internal operational mechanisms of schools, depend on school principals’ innovative consciousness, innovative thinking and innovative ideas. However, education innovation is confronted with great resistance and challenges.

From the perspectives of stockholders, people are reluctant to try new things, and are more willing to stick to conventional habits and traditional models. Some are hostile and offensive towards innovative changes. Innovative changes refer to schools that undergo a series of changes and reform. Generally, teachers, students and parents lack confidence in the implementation of innovative changes, because it touches on the core of the school system and their interests (Jiang & Li, 2011; Xu, 2008; Yang, 2000).
People’s hesitation, uncertainty and anxiety felt about the innovative capacities of organizations and individuals, can affect and stifle its execution. From the perspective of school principals, they receive less support, in terms of human, material and financial resources. This results in innovation executors falling into the dilemma of ‘make bricks without straw’ (Yang, 2000). However, the efficient execution of school innovation must be resourceful. One of the important factors that suppresses educational innovation is that principals are not daring to think, say or do things, because they are afraid of making mistakes. Jiang and Li (2011) further pointed out that innovative principal training is an urgent requirement for basic education reform.

2.7 System Implementation for Principals’ Preparation and Professional Development

Institutional factor has become a core factor that has an influence on the effectiveness and efficiency of education management in China (Sun & Qi, 2014; Yang, 2005). Since the implementation of ‘Opinion on Strengthening the Training for the Principals of Primary and Secondary Schools’ (MOE, 1989) in 1989, China has gradually established the school principal qualification and training systems. The establishment and implementation of these systems have an influence on school principals’ professional development. However, there are many deficiencies and imperfections found in the system implementation of school principals’ professional development.

Firstly, the school principals’ management system is not complete. There is no clear standard regarding school principals’ selection, appointment and promotion. Moreover, the existing standards cannot meet the requirements of the principal professional
Secondly, the existing systems are a mere formality. Thirdly, the supporting policies of principals’ preparation and professional development are inadequate and difficult to facilitate. In addition, the existing policies lack the inner link between each other, which restricts the implementation of training policies. More importantly, principal training lacks legal protection. As Ma (2005) pointed out, the imperfection of training policies has a negative impact on school principals’ selection, recruitment, evaluation as well as reward and punishment.

### 2.8 Quality-oriented Education and Curriculum Reform

China’s basic education is not able to satisfy the demand of social changes (Chen, 2010). Hence, the Ministry of Education of China had decided to implement an educational reform initiative by carrying out quality-oriented education and curriculum reform programmes. The ‘Decision on the Deepening Educational Reform’ and the ‘Promoting of Quality Education’ was jointly enacted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council (CPCC, 1999). Traditional Chinese education system reveres authority. It also places emphasis on high-stake examinations and teacher-centered pedagogy (Dello-Iacovo, 2009). In 1999 the State Council of the Chinese Central Government further added that China should establish “a vital socialistic education with Chinese characteristics”.

Quality-oriented education is known as “Su Zhi Jiao Yu (素质教育)” in Chinese. It is the principal guiding concept of education reform in China, translated into English as “quality education”. “Su Zhi Jiao Yu” is concerned about students’ well-rounded development, which includes “morality (德), intelligence (智), physical health (体),
artistic attainment (美), and labor (労)”. In China, “Su Zhi Jiao Yu” is perceived as the solution to change the situation of examination-oriented education. According to the Ministry of Education website, “Su Zhi Jiao Yu” refers to the “philosophy of putting people first and pursuing an overall harmonious, sustainable development and the strategy of revitalizing China through human resource development”.

The purpose of “Su Zhi Jiao Yu” is to meet the national needs, enhance the competitiveness of schools by promoting a school-based management, encourage school curriculum autonomy and increase pupils’ participation (Walker, Hu & Qian, 2012). After the policy got fully promulgated in 2001, quality-oriented education has been widely implemented at all levels of the Chinese educational system. According to Fan (2013), educational leadership is the central focus of educational reform. Schools need diversified investment models and running patterns to meet the needs of national human resource development. Additionally, to some extent, people desired a diversified education (Fai & Wang, 2008).

The examination-oriented education has been rooted in Chinese society for more than 1000 years and has dominated its educational system. It was perceived as the ladder towards power, wealth and social status. Its emphasis was on learning by rote, which stifles the creativity of students. Using this unified standard to cultivate talents, it led to the primary and secondary schools of disorderly competition and the break away from the needs of social development (Ye, 2011). Due to the extensive drawbacks of examination-oriented education, a curriculum reform was proposed under the banner of ‘quality-oriented education.’
The Chinese government has considered the new curriculum reform as an important strategy to satisfy the needs of social development and achieve quality-oriented objectives. Meanwhile, the Chinese government enacted two documents, ‘Central Committee Opinions on Further Strengthening and Reforming Moral Education in Schools’ (in 1994) and ‘Action Plan for Education Revitalization’ (in 1999), to vigorously promote curriculum reform in terms of system, structure and content. The kernel of the curriculum reform is to transfer traditional knowledge delivery in order to satisfy the different learning needs of students based on their interests and talents. This new curriculum is more connected to students’ real life. The shift is described in Dello-Iacovo (2009) as:

“A shift from attaching importance to knowledge delivery to the emphasis on forming active learning attitude, making the process not only to acquire basic knowledge and skills, but also the process of learning to learn and form the correct values at the same time.”

The shifts in curriculum have raised many issues and challenges for school principals, such as how to prepare their roles under the new curriculum. Li and Zhao (2006) argue that if a school principal, as the leader of an educational unit, only focuses on administrative roles, there will be a lack in instructional leadership abilities, which makes the promoting of new curriculum reforms very difficult. Curriculum leadership was proposed under this condition. The capacity to implement curriculum reform is one of the criteria to evaluate school principals’ performance.
The curriculum reform changed the centralized management pattern to a decentralized one, implementing curriculum management at all national, local, and school levels (Li, 2013; Xie & Ma & Zhang, 2013). The Ministry of Education is responsible for the overall planning, management strategies and national standards of the basic education curriculum. The educational administration at provincial level can separately formulate provincial curriculum plans and standards according to the national policy and local context. Schools can select and exploit the curriculum based on their context and students’ needs and interests (Li, 2013; Qin, 2003). Chu and Cravens (2012) stated that there are countless Chinese elementary and secondary schools facing transformational challenges in terms of school management. Therefore, the school principals training patterns need to progress from an emphasis on the exam-oriented education to a quality-oriented education.

2.9 Summary of the Chapter

The Chinese education system as well as the preparation and professional development of school principals have experienced a radical change since the establishment of the PRC. These changes had an impact on the educational objectives, educational policies, and educational reforms. Under this remarkable change, school principals needed to shift their roles from traditional managers to excellent leaders. The evolution of the educational and training systems has had an immense impact on leadership practice. Therefore, this notable change requires an enhancement and development of the professional skill set, such as how school principals should be prepared and developed in terms of professionalism, under new educational policies and new educational missions.
3.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to provide a theoretical overview of educational leadership and how it relates to and supports school principal preparation and professional development. The chapter begins by exploring the definitions of leader and leadership. It then looks at literature on educational leadership to draw associations with principal leadership in the field of education. Finally, the chapter closes with a review of supporting leadership theories that underpin the study of school principal preparation and their professional development in the realm of educational leadership.

3.2 Definitions of Leader and Leadership

What is leadership? Stogdill (1974, p. 259) pointed out that “there are many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept.” Basically, leadership is perceived as one who can lead a group of people towards accomplishing their common goals (Chemers, 2014). Bass and Stogdill’s (1990) presented 12 kinds of representative definitions about leadership, in the ‘Handbook of Leadership’ which summarizes leadership as follows: leadership is the core of any organizational structure; it has an impact on subordinates’ work efficiency. Leadership is also viewed as an influence-exerted process; a form of persuasion; a relationship, based on power.
Burns (1978) considers that the follower is an important factor of leadership, where leaders try to persuade followers to strive for certain goals. These goals reflect common values, motivation, aspiration, demand, and ambition between leaders and followers. Skowronek (1993) asserted that leadership is the capacity and process of affecting others to complete tasks. Aligned with the definition provided in Bolman and Deal (1991), it was agreed that leadership makes an impact on personal behaviors in order to profit the entire organization. Northouse (2012) believes that leadership is the emphasis on the manager's adaptability and flexibility for changes.

Maxwell (1993) defined leadership as the activity that influences people to strive willingly and enthusiastically for their organization’s goals. Leaders are influential in guiding the targeted group to reach the same objective. Chinese educators, Winston and Patterson (2006) synthesize the definition of leadership as a comprehensive concept, which is goal-oriented. By means of the management, leadership is the language and action that commands and influences others or group process. According to Robbins, Judge, Odendaal & Roodt, (2009), leaders establish direction by “developing a vision of the future; they align people by communicating this vision and inspiring them to overcome hurdles” (p.290).

Although, there is no united definition of leadership, the following elements are perceived as the fundamentals of leadership: (1) leadership is a process (Bass & Stogdill, 1990); (2) leadership leaves impacts (Bolman and Deal, 1991; Maxwell, 1993; Skowronek, 1993); (3) leadership involves a group of people (Chemers, 2014); (4) leadership is associated with desired outcomes. Based on the literature reviewed, the
researcher of this study views the nature of leadership as a process of interaction between leaders and followers, which involves the blending of leaders personality characteristics, behavior and authority, with the perceptions and motivation of followers, within a dynamic environment.

3.2.1 Leadership Theories

In the past 100 years, studies on leadership theories and theoretical foundations have been explored in various contexts and from different perspectives (Horner, 1997; Stuart & Philip, 1997). The controversy about how one becomes a leader has been frequently debated, and different theories of leadership have emerged over the past decades. The factors influencing leadership practice and how to improve leadership efficiency have been the research kernel. Since the 1940s, behavioral scientists and psychologists have been doing research on leadership from different perspectives. After decades of evolution, the study of leadership has been through morphology, ecology and the dynamics of leadership. Northouse (2012), in the book entitled “Leadership: Theory and Practice”, describes 11 leadership theories that were collectively viewed as different pieces of the leadership puzzle. After the second half of the 20th century, a multitude of leadership theories had developed over time (Goksoy, 2015). The following subsections account for some of the leadership theories commonly found in various leadership studies and are relative to the educational leadership of the school principals.

3.3 Educational Leadership

Educational leadership research has accelerated since the last century. Rapid social and cultural changes require a deep understanding of educational leadership theories.
Educational leadership theories are focused on how different leadership practices influence student achievement, teacher work satisfaction, and other components associated with school development (Bush, 2011; Leithwood, 1994). Nevertheless, there has been increasing importance given to training and developing school principals, as various studies claim that ‘principals contribute to school effectiveness and improvement’ (Hallinger & Heck, 1998).

Leadership is a social influencing process and can be defined differently based on the intention and the target group to be influenced. In this context, educational leadership, as suggested, is to relate to the school organization and how the leadership can unite the single unit in the school to achieve the same goals. The existing researches often highlighted about the central power unit – the school principal- to be the only application of educational leadership. However, there are informal source of leadership whom are indirectly influencing the individual in the school population, for instances deputy principals, heads of department or even a unit leaders in the organization. They tend to influence their peers and the students through their social influence or their knowledge and distinctive views. Not to forget the teacher colleagues also are viewed as a potential leadership influence (Macbeath & Dempster, 2009).

The multiplicity nature of leadership and the varied functions that the leadership possesses results in different perspectives to study about it. In this study context, the educational leadership is attempted be associated with six leadership views: (1) Trait Theory of Leadership, (2) Behavior Theory of Leadership, (3) Contingency Theory, (4) Path Goal Theory, (5) Transformational Leadership Theory, and (6) Distributed Leadership.
3.3.1 Trait Theory of Leadership

Trait theory is perceived as the earliest form of leadership theory, and is also well known as the ‘Great Man’ leadership theory (Higgs, 2003; Northouse, 2012). The argument about “leaders are born” and “leaders are made” led to further exploration on the attributes of leaders. Trait theory associates great leadership with people who possess particular physical characteristics, personality and aptitudes that distinguish them from non-leaders (Robbins & Judge, 2012; Stogdill, 1974). Bass (1990) synthesized the literature on leaders’ traits and identified six important key traits of leaders that can influence leadership efficiency: cognitive capacities, personality, motivation and needs, social capacities, problem-solving skills and tacit knowledge.

Trait theory declares that innate characteristics or traits make leaders different from followers. Judge, Bono, Ilies and Gerhardt (2002) suggests that trait theory can recognize underlying leaders among the non-leaders. Much focuses were placed on the personal characteristics of leaders (Goksoy, 2015). It was found that Stogdill (1948; 1974) listed 32 traits of leaders, of which none of them could be modeled as effective leadership. However, Yukl (2002, p. 236) supported the basic premise of the trait theory with the notion that “a person must possess a particular set of traits to become a successful leader”.

Since the past century, trait theory has continuously been an evolving branch of leadership theories. Nevertheless, the modern trait theory promotes that leader’ characteristics and traits can be learnt or trained. Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) demonstrates the six important traits of leaders as drive, motivation, honesty, self-
confidence, cognitive competency, and assignment knowledge. In the 1970s, there was no consensus about the personality and physical properties of a leader that would have an impact on all situations. However, as education reforms, the image of an ideal leader have shifted to be based on one’s individual beliefs, experiences, and needs.

Costellow (2011) suggested that leadership traits are one of the influential variables to the picture of an ideal school leader. School parents may always opt for head teacher with outstanding traits, such as courage, personality and intelligence as they perceived the possession of mentioned traits are likely to ensure high quality school and relationship management. Quoted from Costellow (2011’)s findings: “Students need a principal who are able to take care of their social and emotional developmental needs to help them develop life-skills and become better learners (Kress, Norris, Schoenholz, Elias, & Seigle, 2004)”. Thus, the leadership traits of a school principal leave an important presumption of the school community in assessing the leader’s ability and whether or not he is a good leader and manager. We might admire particular traits of someone but is not able to predict the ability and effectiveness of his leadership functions.

3.3.2 Behaviour Theory of Leadership

Behavior theory focused on leader’s behaviours and it was developed in the 1950s. Behaviour theory resulted through the pursuit for effective leadership (Goksoy, 2015). According to behavior theory leadership can be learned and so more attention is paid to the behavioral style of leaders. Behavior theory is about identifying the key factors that influence a leader’s behaviour, aimed at becoming an effective leader (Goksoy, 2015; Horner, 1997; Yukl, 2002). Studies on attitudes and behaviours of leaders grew popular
at that time. In the behavioral leadership theory, the leadership style focused on interpersonal relationships and their responsibility towards the personal needs of staff (Goksoy, 2015). The main outcome of the behavior theory developed various interests concerning leadership styles, new patterns of management, and the Managerial Grid Theory (Moorhead & Griffin, 1998; Yukl, 2002).

Initially, the pioneering study of behavior theory actually began in 1945 at Ohio State University. The purpose of the research team, who grounded this theory, was to identify the observable leadership behaviors and the perception of the followers towards the leaders’ behaviour (Bass, 1990; Northhouse, 2012). Twelves later after extensive research, the “Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire” (LBDQ) was developed (Hemphill & Coons, 1957). The LBDQ was a questionnaire that was designed to measure two essential leadership behaviors, namely ‘consideration’ and ‘initiating structure’. ‘Consideration behavior’ is about the respect, trust and understanding that leaders project onto their subordinates. This is also called people-oriented behavior. Whereas, the ‘Initiating structure’ concerns task accomplishments, whereby leaders set regulations and outline the roles and group activities for their subordinates to know what is expected of them in line with task-oriented goals. Hemphill and Coons, (1957) found that high initiating structure and low consideration were the least effective leadership behaviors of an organization. The results showed that a leader, who demonstrates a balanced performance of both structures, can increase working efficiency and job satisfaction among their subordinates.
In 1964, the Leadership Grid was developed as a leadership style model that assessed the effectiveness of a leader (Blake & Mouton, 1964, as cited in Horner 1997). The Leadership Grid aimed at identifying universal leadership behaviors that can be adapted to different situations. There are five types of leadership styles in the Leadership Grid, which was used to assess leaders. These include: (1) the ‘indifferent leadership style’, describes as leaders who do not care for both people and the production; (2) the ‘dictatorial style’ describes as leaders showing high concern for people, but low concern for the production; (3) the ‘accommodating style’, described as having a high concern for people and low concern for production; (4) the ‘status quo style’ described as having moderate concern for both people and production and (5) the ‘sound style’ that has high concern for both people and production.

Behavior theory aims to study the influence of leadership styles and behaviors on leadership efficiency. Behavior theory emphasizes on building good working relationship between leaders and subordinates. This theory tends to relate more to the leader effectiveness, unlike the trait theories that focused on the development of one to be leader through the possession of specific traits. Yukl, (2002) argues that the behavior theory oversees the behavioral influence of the leaders on the subordinate’ job performance. However, it is notable that leadership is dynamic and cannot be separated from a particular context. For example, a head teacher with a high initiating structure and consideration behaviour, nevertheless his teacher colleague would follow his guidance at pleasure. It is not deniable that high leadership effectiveness is attributable to a leader with good and widely accepted behaviour, as predicted by the behaviour theory of leadership. On the other hand, Horner (1997) pointed out that leaders should be receptive of environmental changes, so that they would constantly adhere to the objectives aimed
for organizational development. Leaders with the similar behaviour will not be result in the same effectiveness, thus appropriate style should be depends on situation they are being put in.

### 3.3.3 Contingency Theory

Contingency or situational leadership theory purports that different situations require different leadership styles (Goksoy, 2015). The contingency theory was a new type of leadership theory that emerged due to social and cultural changes that evolved over time. At this time, leadership efficiency within an organizational culture setting was a developing interest (Schein, 2010). The contingency theory arose through the claims that leadership may be differently applied in different situations, and that there is no best approach to leadership, as it depends on the particular context and situational factors. The theoretical core of the contingency theory is about identifying the most appropriate leadership style and management strategy for a particular situation. The key element of effective leadership takes into consideration contingency strategies (Horner, 1997; Yukl, 2002). This is supported by Blanchard (1985) that there is no best leadership form, but only the most appropriate leadership form.

Fiedler (1964) proposed the ‘Contingency Model of Leadership Effectiveness’. This model assesses the leadership effectiveness of leaders’, through their combined traits and behaviors exhibited in particular situations. The ‘Least Preferred Co-worker Questionnaire’ (LPC) was designed later by Fiedler in order to measure individuals’ leadership style according to situational factors (Yukl, 2002). The LPC model considers all factors that collectively determine the effective leadership, such as the leader-

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member’s relationships, the task structure, position and nature of the organization. Fieldler (1967) highlighted the eight possible combinations of the contingency model, ranked by order of effectiveness towards different situations. When the leaders and members have good relationships, task structure is clear, and position power is strong, then the leadership is most effective. However, it is not effective when the leader-member relations are bad but task structure is low, and position is weak.

Contingency leadership theory is relative to the school principals who are capable of knowing the interest of their teacher team and students and providing assistance sufficient to ensure desired achievement (Blase & Blase, 1999). The original situational leadership theory states that leaders should change their leadership styles according to the changes of their subordinates and the environment. Effective leadership occurs when leadership styles are compatible with subordinates’ maturity levels (Hersay & Blanchard, 1969; Hersey, 1985). Maturity level in this context refers to the different combinations of ability and willingness that people show in their workplace. Therefore, leaders must be able to distinguish and understand the subordinates’ maturity levels in order to achieve organizational effectiveness. ‘Situational leadership II’ is the second generation Situational Leadership model revised by Blanchard and his colleagues in 1985 due to some key concepts of situational leadership that could not be applied in real leadership practices (Blanchard, Zigarmi & Zigarmi, 1985). Situational Leadership II advocates that leaders should develop subordinates’ self-motivations to achieve organizational goals by combining personal goals and organizational objectives. Situational Leadership II asserts that effective leadership can motivate subordinates’ initiative, enthusiasm and creativity and that good leaders can help subordinates develop their competency and commitment (Blanchard, Zigarmi & Zigarmi, 1985; Graeff, 1997; Robbins & Judge, 2012).
Enthusiastic school principals will have a lower chance to have any demotivating teacher colleagues as their leadership will always be a motivating factor in their working interaction and mutual achievement.

### 3.3.4 Path Goal Leadership Theory

The Path-Goal Leadership theory, with reference to House (1971) is not a leadership perspective but a theory about how followers are motivated by the leader to achieve the designated goals and the central idea is to focus on the impact of follower motivation to the follower’s satisfaction and performance (Northouse, 2016). The theory advocates that effective leaders should assist the followers with clear goals and select the best path to achieve both personal goals and organizational goals, through the path of targeted goals (Evans, 2002; House, 1996; Schriesheim & Neider, 1996). Research shows that the satisfaction and performance of subordinates cannot be isolated. Subordinates’ satisfaction determines their job performance. Therefore, subordinates’ satisfaction can be a motivating factor for effective leadership.

Four leadership styles were identified in the original path-goal theory, which are directive, participative, supportive and achievement-oriented leader behaviors (House, 1996; House & Mitchell, 1974, p. 83). The directive leadership style is effective when tasks or projects are unstructured or complex and subordinates are inexperienced. Participative leadership focuses on mutual participation, where group members share their expertise and ideas in decision-making. Participative leadership works best when tasks are complex and team members are experienced. Supportive leadership focuses on relationship building and showing sensitivity to team members needs and best interests.
Achievement-orientation leaders set challenging goals for their team members by motivating them to attain the goals and reach the highest level of competency.

The Path-goal theory claims that leadership can be flexible to cope with what the situation demands. Hence, leaders need to be flexible to change their leadership styles, contingent to the environment and subordinates’ characteristics (House, 1996). Being the head of school community, it is challenging to demonstrate all the mentioned leadership styles concurrently. However, blending the bright side of each style into daily interaction and communication with the teachers will enable the teammates to be inspired to reach the collective goals – students’ performance.

3.3.5 Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership was first coined by Downton (1973), however it emerged widely after James Burns (1978). Burns demonstrated that the transformational leadership theory can inspire the enthusiasm of followers, create a connection and raise the level of motivation and morality in both the followers and the leaders themselves. In 1985, Bass expanded on the transformational and transactional leadership models and included the concept of Laissez-Faire (Clark, 2011). According to Bass (1985), transformational leaders inspired their followers by raising their awareness towards their organisational goals, encouraged them to go beyond their self-interest for the sake of their organisation and are able to address higher level needs.
3.3.6 Distributed Leadership

The concept of distributed leadership emerged in the 1950s, but was introduced in the educational field since 1990s due to the reformation of educational management systems. The early theorists of distributed leadership believed that leadership is distributed in some way or the other (Camburn, et al. 2003; Gronn, 2002; Harris, 2008). Chen and Xu (2009) viewed leadership as a collective behavior happening within an educational context, where the school principal distributes leadership functions among organizational members who oversee the completion of internal management issues and external coordination. On the other hand, Hatcher (2005) argues that within schools, the notion of distributed leadership may overlook the dynamics of power and influence, whereby leadership may be distributed but power and influence may not. Distributed leadership advocates that leadership should break away from organizational hierarchy, and build upon shared leadership practices instead (Malloy, 2012). In fact, Gronn (2009) suggests broadening the distributed approach of this hybrid leadership to ‘leadership configuration’. Due to the increasing challenges of school work load, the school principal as an individual cannot take all the responsibilities. However, Goksoy (2015) adds that distributed leadership is not about sharing administrative roles, but rather the sharing of decisions by school authorities regarding their subordinates.

According to Dinham, Aubusson, & Brady (2009), leadership functions effectively through team work. Furthermore, Gronn (2009) and Harris (2008) assert that distributed leadership helps people develop their potentiality to be leaders’ emphasis on the common performance of personnel. Harris (2008) also indicates that distributed leaders can make individuals realize their potentials and values by participating in the decision-making
process. Similarly, Ogawa and Bossert (1995) also pointed out, leadership is a distributed practice embodied in leaders’ working context rather than an individual activity.

Even if distributed leadership has been perceived as a perfect blue print for educational leadership, the empirical evidence about how it impacts school improvement is still insufficient, according to Hallinger & Heck (2009). On the same lines, Harris (2005) pointed out, distributed leadership need to be empirically studied rather than just treated as an abstract theory.

3.4 Roles of School Principals

“The head teacher plays a highly significant role in school management, and is the central decision-maker. Preparing, inducing and developing head teachers are a major responsibility of the education service.” (DES, 1990, cited in Coleman, 1996, p.3)

Originally, the role of the principal was to manage school related affairs. With social changes, traditional leadership is no longer helpful in the current social context. School principals are not only educators and managers, but are required to oversee school development and meet the requirements of educational reform. They are also needed to be problem solvers, resources finders and culture builders (Leithwood & Poplin, 1992; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). For these reasons, a growing number of researches pay attention to how school principals are prepared for their roles. However, according to Lattuca (2012), numerous school principals administer their schools, without being well-prepared for their roles. Therefore, understanding the roles of school principal is essential
Leadership is not just about the authority held by individuals. According to Chirichello (2010), there has been a deficiency in the number of qualified principal applicants. Moreover, the roles and responsibilities of school principals are shifting with the continued social changes. Principals are expected to administer staff, monitor students, interact with parents, manage the school budget, build relationships with other agencies and communities, as well as be knowledgeable with the laws related to these activities (SEC, 1991). In a school institution, the highest standard requirements are set upon the school principal, who is required to meet the demands of all internal and external factors (Jiang, 2006). Moreover, the ‘Compulsory Education Law of the People’s Republic of China’ stipulates that “the principal shall assume overall responsibility for the school and shall conform to the qualifications stipulated by the state”.

In the ‘Professional Classification of the People’s Republic of China’, the principal is described as an independent profession. The principal is the one who has the power of managing and taking decision. In China, the main roles of school principals are denoted in the list below:

- An organizational manager.
- The decision maker who is in charge of school affairs and managing educational resources.
- An educational leader.
- A facilitator who builds interpersonal relationships with staff.
The headmaster is expected to attend to staff’s personal needs, develop cooperation among staff, create a democratic and harmonious atmosphere in schools and promote creativity in teaching.

The moderator of conflicts.

The school principal is responsible for solving potential conflicts and be an agent of reform (Liang, 2005; Jiang, 2006; Liu & Li, 2012; Chen, 2010). In society, schools are expected to strive for excellence and stay efficient. The document ‘Requirements and Position Requirements of Headmasters of Primary and Secondary Schools in China’ also stipulates that the school principal is the legal representative, school leader, educator, and manager (SEC, 1991). The basic duty of a school principal is under the lead of the government administrative department or school board (private schools). The school principals are to be entirely responsible for teaching affairs, school administration and for improving the level of school management. The core objectives of school principals are to lead, educate and manage their schools according to the standards set by the state and pledge to instate quality education.

The major responsibilities of school principals are to establish their school philosophy and set the vision and goals of the school (Chen, 2010). The principal should plan and establish the strategic development of the school together with the school management team and school board members. Zhao and Wei (2000) further add that school principals should adopt innovative and creative methods of technology required for school management purposes.
Apart from that, school principals are accountable for ensuring that their schools always abide to the regulatory framework and national plans for the education reform and development (CPCC, 2010). School principals are regarded as the public relationship officer of the school, and the one responsible for building and maintaining good relations with parents, other schools, community organizations, and be able to create a conducive social environment for school development (MOE, 2013). All these standards show that the roles of a school principal have changed. Hence, as school leaders, principals are required to keep up-to-date with matters regarding educational reforms, and be equipped with innovative educational ideas that can promote improved efficiency. All of these depend on the foresight and macro decision-making abilities of the school principal.

3.5 Theoretical Framework of School Principal’s Preparation and Professional Development

The theories of leadership have been well discussed in the subsections above, and now it is time to look at the theoretical framework of this study. The nature of the principal preparation and professional development were evolved based on two theories: the Principal Growth Pattern theory and the Human Resource Development and Management Theory. The school principal leadership preparation and development is likely to be anticipated under the principal growth pattern: preparation period, adaptation period, competent period, mature period and innovation period (Wu, 2009). Thus, this study reviews the school principal’s preparation in line with the prediction of this theory, which is generally adopted in China (Ying & He, 2005).
The Human Resource Development and Management theory has to deal with the provision and assessment of training and development programmes in organisations (Mcguire, 2014). In this study, this theory lays a framework for exploring and examining the principal training program and to assess the management of the program in order to identify the challenges arise from its implementation. This is especially important that frequent review on the training program brings improvement to the training providers, school principals and indirectly to the school organisation as a whole (Swanson, 2001). The following subsections will discuss briefly about the theory for a better understanding.

### 3.5.1 The Principal Growth Pattern Theory

According to the principal growth pattern theory, it is important to take pre-service training to gain basic theoretical foundation and management abilities for school principal candidates to qualify for their jobs. They will learn to understand how to scientifically manage a school and have the right competencies to lead their school. Presently, principal candidates lack the knowledge of leadership theories. According to Wu (2009) and Chen (2010), school principals have their own school running ideology, they have a strong theoretical foundation and abundant school management experiences as well as having a good understanding of the regular patterns of school management.

During the ‘seventh five-year plan’, China’s National Education Committee conducted a research on “Chinese school principals’ growth pattern in primary and secondary schools” (The Training and Management of Primary and Secondary School Principals, 1992). The research findings show that the growth of Chinese primary and secondary school principals goes through four stages, which comprise of a pre-service session (about
5-7 years), an adaptive phase after being employed (about 2-4 years), a competent period (about 3-5 years) and a proficient period (starting about 10-15 year after pre-service beginning). In China, researchers appealed for the school principal training content to be based on the growth pattern theory (Chen, 2010). With different phases of school principal growth, the training needs are also different. School principal training should be based on the needs and characteristics of the different development stages, so that the trainings are more targeted.

The development of school leadership is also based on the Growth Pattern Theory. This theory has been implemented as a guide for school principal training, which is considered important by many scholars in China (Chen, 2010; Wu, 2009; Ying & He, 2005). Normally, the development of a school principal is based on theoretical studies, as practice gradually develops over time. The development period can be divided into five stages: pre-service preparation period, post-adaptation period, competent period, mature period and the innovation period (Ying & He, 2005; Wu, 2009; Chen, 2010). Peterson (2002) pointed out that school principals’ preparation and development programmes can meet individual needs, at different stages of a principal’s career. It can also equip the school principals with the acquired knowledge gained from training programmes conducted in authentic settings.

3.5.2 Human Resource Development and Management Theory

Human Resource Development Theory (HRD) is a modern concept of management recognized internationally. HRD involves large-scale complex tasks and tactical activities carried out to promote a successful organizational culture and attain organizational goals
The human resource management process includes human resource planning (selection, recruitment, placement, training, and evaluation), compensation management, performance management, as well as employee relations (Bratton & Gold, 2012). Training is the main method for human resource development (Mcguire, 2014). According to this theory, the school principal is an important human resource for running a school. Swanson (1995, p.208) defined human resource development as “a process of developing human expertise through organizational development and personnel training and development for the purpose of improving performance.”

HRD theory advocates that organizations can help employees improve their individual performance and meet challenges through trainings (Werner & DeSimone, 2011). HRD also considers training as indispensable. Similarly, school principal’s training is perceived as a strategic priority in developing school principals’ capacities towards school improvement and development (Bush & Chew, 1999). As Wang (1999, p.63) stated, “School principal training is a human resource development activity, and it is a part of modern life-long education.” The aim is to improve the knowledge, skills and to change the work attitudes and behaviours of school managers, thus developing their potential to improve management quality and efficiency. Providing relevant or skill targeting enrichment and training has been a merit to the school principals (Chen & Xu, 2010). Thus, it is under the understanding of this theory that, the human resource department are encouraged to prepare and establish self-enrichment programmes or necessary trainings as to improve their working efficiency increase their competency and reduce waste.
Human resource development theory was seen as necessary for one’s profession (Swanson, 2001). Therefore, in order to promote school principal’s professional development, school principal training system should refer to human resource development and management theories to improve school principals’ working efficiency and promote their professional development.

3.6 Summary of the Chapter

In summary, this chapter reviewed related literature on educational leadership practices, and theories that are relative to the principal leadership development. The studies reviewed have generally expressed about the primacy of school principals and recognised the importance of promoting the continuous development of school principals for improving their professional growth in leading the learning and academic success of their schools. Some other studies have also provided useful insights on school leadership research, highlighting the benefits that principals and schools can gain through the professional development opportunities provided for school leaders.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the research methodology employed in this study. In order to meet the research objectives, answer the research questions, identify and analyse the preparation and professional development of secondary school principals’ leadership in China, the qualitative research methodology is used. For its research design, a multiple-site case study is used in this study to enable cross-site comparison. This chapter will present the rationale for this research design, the population and sample, the research
instrumentation, data collection methods, and analysis procedures. This chapter will also
discuss the research setting, ethical issues, the pilot study, and the validity and reliability
of this research.

4.2 Research Orientation

This study uses an interpretive research paradigm, where according to Denzin and
Lincoln (2011; 1998, p. 3) the researchers’ job is “attempting to make sense of, or interpret,
phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them”. An interpretive methodology of
a qualitative inquiry is naturalistic, where researchers study the subject matter in real
world settings without any effort to manipulate the phenomena in order to make sense of
the phenomena under study (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 1998) The phenomena in this
study is secondary school principals’ initial training and professional development in
China, together with a specific case study located in Huojia, Shangqiu and Zhengzhou of
the Henan province. A case study design is used as it fits with the characteristics of
interpretive inquiry in this study (Yin, 2013).

Based on Merriam (1998)’s study, there are four essential characteristics of qualitative
case studies: particularistic, descriptive, heuristic and inductive. The particularistic aspect
of a case study concerns a specific situation, event or phenomenon. In this present
research study, the focus is on secondary school principals’ leadership preparation and
their professional development in the Chinese educational context. The Heuristic
approach enables a deeper insight and new understanding of the phenomenon of a case
from different perspectives. This study presents the perceptions of respondents from
various backgrounds and experiences, regarding secondary school principals’ leadership
preparation and professional development in Henan province, China. One of the types of
qualitative research methods that uses an inductive approach is thematic analysis, used to
analyse recurrent themes, ideas and notions from the qualitative data. The process of thematic analysis involves the identifying of themes that emerge from the data. This process of searching through the data is repeated to identify further themes and categories that are repeatedly verified, confirmed and qualified (Creswell, 2013).

Document analysis, open-ended questions, semi-structured interviews and field observation were the methods of analysis employed to assist the researcher in the data collection from secondary school principals in Henan province, China. Document analysis in a Chinese educational setting was used to provide the basic knowledge required about China. Open-ended questionnaires were distributed purposively to thirty-seven school principals in order to identify the issues that might be useful for this study and for further investigation. Semi-structured interviews with seventeen principals and six training organizers were conducted, where the researcher explored emerging themes as described in Merriam (1998). In order to get first hand data, the researcher also went to three training institutes to conduct field observations, to find out how school principals are trained, and what exactly happens in real situations.

4.3 Case Study

A case study is defined as a phenomenon that exists within a bounded context where researchers study complex phenomena within their context (Huberman, 1994; Merriam, 1998; Miles & Yin, 2013). The case study design in the current study involves a total of seventeen Chinese public secondary schools chosen from Huojia, Shangqiu, and Zhengzhou, where six schools were selected from Huojia and Shangqiu respectively and five schools from Zhengzhou. This study is based on a single case study with multiple
sites. The secondary school principals from the chosen schools were selected as case studies in this research.

The case study approach enables the researcher to gain deeper understanding about the preparation and professional development of secondary school principals’ leadership and its contextual situation in China. The case study approach is perceived by Yin (2013, p.1) as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context”. On the contrary, a quantitative method is too precise and numerical for capturing the school principals’ experiences, views, and feelings about their preparation and professional development. It cannot fully grasp the phenomena and processes involved (Punch, 2009). Hence, case study is chosen rather than a mixed-methods approach is because case study enables a detailed exploration of the phenomenon within its genuine state, that “especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”, as supported by Yin (2013, p. 13). However, Davis et al. (2005, p. 3) further clarifies that “the preparation programmes need in-depth research into the implementation and coherence of programme features”. Therefore, a qualitative method as it features comprehensiveness, holistic, and abundant descriptiveness will be employed in this study, as suggested in Berg and Lune (2004).

This case study aims to understand from a distinctive lens the respondents’ views, experiences and feelings about the preparation and professional development of secondary school principals’ leadership. This allows the researcher to explore the multiple realities of the same kind of environment principals evolve in (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This is consistent with the researcher’s point of view “in understanding how people
interpret their experiences, how they construct their words, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam, 2009, p. 5).

4.4 Research Sites

The research setting in this study is a representation of the study environment, in which the researcher explores the school principal landscape in Henan province, China. With the diverse economic and demographic contexts in the Henan province, it was not feasible to cover all schools in this province. The selection was narrowed down to seventeen schools from the Henan province, with six schools each from Huojia and Shangqiu, and another five schools based in Zhengzhou.

These cities were specifically chosen for various reasons concerning the suitability of this research study. Zhengzhou was selected for its location and its wealth of educational resources that attract elite students from all over the province. Zhengzhou is the capital city of Henan, with the most populous province in China with 77,872,000 inhabitants (China Statistical Year Book, 2015). It also implies that Zhengzhou has the largest student population in China. According to the Henan Statistical Year Book (2013), there are 980 primary schools with 705,194 students and 371 secondary schools with 460,887 students in Zhengzhou. Shangqiu is a moderately developed city, located in the east of Henan province. There are 2,412 primary schools with 774,692 students and 446 regular secondary schools with 516,155 students (Henan statistical Year Book, 2013). Shangqiu is a typical region like many other regions in terms of economy and education development level in Henan province, thereby being selected as the case of this study. Huojia is a county with a geographical area of 473 square kilometres and 430,000
inhabitants, located in the Henan province. It has 26 secondary schools, and is a less
developed area compared to Shangqiu and Zhengzhou, with less educational resources
and lower school principals’ quality. Huojia, Zhengzhou and Shangqiu have different
levels of development and its respective ways of how different matters are handled,
specifically principal training.

4.5 Sampling Procedures

The researcher had selected seventeen secondary school principals from 3 cities
(Zhengzhou, Shangqiu and Huojia), across the Henan province. A purposive sampling
technique was employed in this study and thirty-seven school principals were chosen to
respond to an open-ended questionnaire. Purposive sampling was the sampling strategy
chosen to ensure representation of noteworthy participants necessary to address the
research questions that guide this study. This sampling strategy has the similar design as
the qualitative research in Sumintono et al. (2015) as it shared the same research objective
as this study. The samples chosen in the research are from a broad range of characteristics
and are responsive to the research objectives. Sampling purposively in this study allows
the engagement of the participants who are able to meet the specific criteria. According
to Punch (2009) many factors should be considered in purposive sampling and it is
especially important to look at the settings and boundaries of each case study. It is for
these reasons that the selection of cities, school locations and principals’ leadership
performances were considered at the beginning of this study.

Despite of the large population of school principals in the three selected cities, 37
school principals were given their response through the open-ended questionnaires and
17 were chosen for in-depth interviews. This sample size design for a qualitative study is appropriate for most study, as validated by a clinical research (ANON, 2011). For a qualitative research, unlike the quantitative research that focused more on the sampling of probability, demands on the in-depth examination of the purposeful samples which is exemplary a ‘information-rich cases’ (Morse, 1989; Patton, 1990; Sandelowski, 1995). Sandelowski (1995) has highlighted on the design of sample size of a qualitative research to be statistically ‘non representative stratified (Trost, 1986)’ to enable the inclusive of respondents with varied demographic characteristics to achieve ‘representative coverage and inclusion’. This particular requirement is achieved in the research as participants are from varying demographic data and are able to provide response which is rich in information and from different perspectives.

4.6 Pilot Interview

Initially, an unstructured interview protocol was designed and piloted with school principals’ in order to obtain their general views, concepts, and understandings about their leadership preparation and professional development as secondary school principals’ and to organize the research design for the main study. The pilot interview was conducted from October to December 2015. Five participants were selected: three secondary school principals and two officers from a training institute. According to Yin (2013), a pilot study helps the researcher to enhance the quality of data collection and further discover the relevant issues that may arise during the data collection phase. The feedback received from the pilot interview helped the researcher to improve the interview protocol and enhance her interviewing skills.
The actual interviews were conducted during the months of January to March, 2016. Prior to this, the researcher ensured that the semi-structured interview questions were amended based on the pilot interviews conducted. To further ensure data reliability, the interviews were self-administered by the researcher. Before the interviews were held, the researcher had contacted the participants to obtain their consent to participate in this research study and to fix a date for the interview schedule. All the interviews were conducted in Chinese, to suit the language preference of the research participants under study. The interviews were also recorded and transcribed in Chinese. Subsequently, the researcher went to three different training institutes to conduct field observations at the county, city and municipal levels.

4.7 Data Collection Methods

The purpose of this section is to explain and elaborate on the data collection methods used in this study. According to Creswell (2012), multiple sources like open-ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and observations can present a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under study. There are four subsections that present on the method employed to collect research data: (1) documentation, (2) open-ended questionnaire, (3) semi-structured interviews, and (4) observations.

4.7.1 Documentation

As Bowen (2009) pointed out, documents provide background information and historical insights, which can help researchers understand what is underpinning the phenomenon. Merriam (1988, p.118) states: “documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to
In this study, the two types of documents selected are categorized as exterior and interior documents. Exterior documents include publications issued by the Chinese government and the Ministry of Education in the past decades, for instance, government pronouncements, training policies, laws and regulations. The interior documents come from selected schools and local education bureaus. They comprise of rules, regulations, reports, portfolios and plans regarding school principals’ preparation and professional development. The documents from each selected school and local education bureau provided historical and contemporary information regarding school principals’ preparation and professional. In order to access these exterior and interior documents, the researcher is required to get official permission from the respective government department and school principals.

4.7.2 Open-ended Questionnaire

An open-ended questionnaire was utilized in this study. According to Gillham (2008), open-ended questions can supplement a semi-structured interview. According to Punch (2009), open-ended questionnaires enable large amounts of information to be collected in a short period of time. Open-ended questions also allow respondents to boldly express themselves in writing, due to the confidentiality clause. Moreover, open-ended questions allow the respondents more time to think and reflect before penning down their responses. The open-ended questionnaires (see Appendix D) were administered to 37 secondary school principals to capture their perceptions and views about their experiences and their perspectives towards the school principals’ initial preparation and professional development. The open-ended questionnaire was developed based on the research questions to ensure the objectives are achieved. The questionnaire was being reviewed prior to its utilization.
4.7.3 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews with school principals and training providers were conducted immediately after they have completed the open-ended questionnaire survey, in which only seventeen out of thirty-seven secondary school principals were chose due to their suitability to the study. These were the research samples selected purposively to participate in a one-to-one semi-structured interview. In addition, six training providers were also interviewed. As the implementers of school principals’ trainings, the training providers are involved in the whole process of training. Identifying the issues and challenges regarding school principals’ preparation and professional development from their individual perspectives further validate the research.

All interviews were conducted in Mandarin and each interview lasted between 60 to 90 minutes. These interviews queried about the topics and issues related to the preparation and professional development of secondary school principals’ leadership practices. The interview questions had been furnished after the completion of the pilot study to ensure the appropriateness of the question to the study objectives. According to Creswell (2013), interviews are the most popular data collection tool used in qualitative research. Moreover, Punch (2009) added that interviews are an excellent approach to understand people’s insights, values, and definitions of circumstances and constructions of reality. Refer to the interview questions of the school principals and training providers shown in Appendix F and Appendix G. All the interviews were recorded and were subsequently transcribed in Mandarin by researcher for data analysis purposes.
4.7.4 Observations

Observations are also a prominent method for data collection in qualitative research. Field observations were conducted in this study as it provides a holistic perspective of the contextual settings (Punch, 2009). The researcher conducted observations at selected school principals’ training classes and seminars. However, prior permission was obtained from the Chinese Educational Department before carrying out site visits. The researcher also had asked permission from each of the school principals to remain in their campus, to carry out further observations on how the principals execute their jobs. This enabled the researcher to observe how the school principals were prepared for their daily routine work and discover how they equipped themselves for their professional leadership roles. The researcher also witnessed regular meetings and informal talks chaired by these school principals. The researcher also obtained permission to observe the principals training classes.

4.8 Data Analysis

During the field study, the researcher took note of the behaviors and activities of the participants as well as general observations of the surroundings. Data collection and analysis phases were carried out consecutively. The data analysis phase began after the completion of the observations and interview sessions were held with the chosen respondents. During the data analysis phase, the qualitative data obtained through the observations and interviews were transcribed, coded into different categories and analysed according to the research questions and research objectives of this study.

4.8.1 Transcribing

All interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder during the transcription phase; interviews were transcribed by listening to the audio recordings and transcribed
into written transcripts. According to Davidson (2009), the audio recordings need to be transcribed into written form, as it is the written representation of speech that facilitates a more thorough analysis. Bailey (2008) also pointed out that data transcribing involves judgments, data interpretation and data representation, and that transcribing is not a straightforward technical task as it seems. In this study, all interviews were transcribed verbatim, in Mandarin. After the transcriptions were done, they were sent to the participants for further checking and clarification. When the ‘member checking’ process was completed, the data was then translated to English to facilitate the thesis writing process (see Appendix K).

### 4.8.2 Coding and Categorizing

Coding is a process done during the qualitative data analysis phase whereby the raw data is reduced, simplified and transformed into a more manageable form to facilitate the analysis and interpretation of qualitative data (Bazeley, 2013). According to Punch (2009), there are three types of coding methods: open, axial (or theoretical coding), and selective. Coding is also used to generate abstract conceptual categories for theory building purposes (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). A thematic analysis was employed after the codes were categorised into broad themes, to analyse the roles of school principals, examine the principals’ views about their leadership preparation and development. The results from the analysis also enable the identification of the challenges that these principals encountered with their leadership practices (see Appendix L). Data from questionnaires were coded ‘R’, ‘I’ comes from interview with principals, while ‘T’ represents training organizers.
4.9 **Validity and Reliability**

Validity and reliability is given importance in any research (Yin, 2013). According to Noble and Smith (2015), qualitative research is frequently criticized for lacking scientific rigour and transparency in the analytical procedures. It is also criticized as merely a collection of personal opinions subject to researcher bias. Therefore, besides the attempts taken to minimize researcher bias, the fundamental concepts of validity and reliability in qualitative research is necessary to ensure credibility of the research findings. In assessing the reliability of qualitative research findings, the credibility of results is based on the soundness of the research process in relation to the appropriation of the data collection methods used and the integrity of the final conclusions. In this study attempts were made to also ensure that the research subjects selected to participate in this research, did not have any connection with the researcher. To further deal with issues of reliability and validity, triangulation is used to control bias and improve the validity and reliability of the research findings.

In this study, multiple sources like document analysis, open-ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and field observations were triangulated, as indicated in Merriam, (1998). Member checking was the other strategy to ensure the credibility of this research. Once the study was completed, the interpretation of the findings was sent to the respondents to verify that the interpretation of their viewpoints is authentic and reliable. Participant feedback or member checking, as described in Denzin and Lincoln (2011), can also be used to also check the researcher’s inferences of the findings. According to Mays and Pope (2000), member checking can minimize the biases and the incidences of
misinterpretation of the researcher. It can also determine the accuracy and completeness of the research.

Before running this study, the research instrument was pilot tested in order to detect any flaws, and to make the necessary revisions to the interview protocol, before conducting the study (Punch, 2009). Two educational leadership experts from the Institute of Educational Leadership of University of Malaya (UM) had reviewed and validated the interview protocols prior to utilizing it. This is to ensure that the questions are in line with the research objectives and research questions. In addition, two bilingual (English and Chinese) language experts checked and verified the translation of interview questions and open-ended questionnaires to ensure the consistency of the questions and objectives. As a further measure of validity, three principals with more than ten years’ of principalship experiences provided their opinions on the guiding questions of the interview protocol and open-ended questionnaires. The pilot study interview protocol is appended in Appendix C.

4.10 Ethical Issues in Qualitative Research

Empirical research in education inevitably carries ethical issues, because it involves collecting data from people, and about people (Punch, 2009). ‘Harm, consent, deception, privacy and confidentially of data’ were also summarized by Punch (2009) as the main concerns of ethical issues. In this study, the researcher attempted to reduce the Hawthorne Effect, as described in Berg and Lune (2004) by trying to ensure that the participants felt at ease about participating in the interviews by arranging to conduct the interviews at their place of work, based on their availability of time and convenience. Participants were also
assured that the interviews were only used for purposes of this research study and that all the information they shared were highly confidential and anonymized in this study.

4.11 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter aimed to outline the qualitative methodology for use in this study to explore and understand the preparation and professional development of secondary school principals in the cities of Huojia, Shangqiu and Zhengzhou of the Henan province, China. In order to achieve the research objectives, interview data obtained from the case studies of multiple sites were transcribed and analyzed. Issues of validity and reliability regarding trustworthiness of data and ethical considerations were also outlined in this chapter. The following chapter will present the research findings and results of.
5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the key findings derived from the analysis of thirty-seven open-ended questionnaires, seventeen semi-structured interviews and six training providers. Field observations conducted during the training classes were also analyzed to support the findings. Moreover, relevant official documents from the years 2000 to 2016 about principal selection, training and development were selected for document analysis. The following two sections present the demographic background of the participants, followed by the data analysis which answers the four research questions of this study.

5.2 Demographic Background

School principals’ leadership development and demographic background is associated with school principals’ career growth, background and past experiences. By investigating school principals’ education background, teaching and administrative experiences, it can help the researcher to better understand the process of school principals’ leadership formation and development. Therefore, in this section, the school principals’ demographic information, qualifications, years of teaching and administrative experiences will be presented.
Table 5.1  Demographic Profile of 37 Principals (Survey Participants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39 years</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 years</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest academic qualification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure as principal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in principal training preparation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 37 respondents participated in the Survey, n=37.

According to the school principals demography in Table 5.1, 25 (68%) of them were male, and 12 (32%) were female. Based on age groups, 4 (11%) of them were over 50 years old; 15 (40%) principals were between 30-39 years and 18 respondents’ (49%) were aged between 40-49 years. Based on their academic qualifications, nine principals (24%) have diplomas, 26 principals (71%) have a bachelor degree (71%), and 2 principals (5%) have a master degree. Majority of the respondents (16 principals or 43%) have worked as principals between 6-10 years, 10 principals, (27%) have under five years of
principalship, 7 principals, (19%) have 11-15 years of principalship (and 4 principals, (11%) have had 16-20 years of principalship. Regarding training to become principals, 28 (76%) of them had participated, while 9 of them did not (24%).

Table 5.2  Demographic Profile of 17 Principal Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under 30 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest academic qualification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma in Vocational Studies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure as principal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 years and above</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in principal training preparation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 17 principal interviewees, n=17.

As for the 17 principals interviewed, 12 of them were male (71%), and 5 of them were female (29%). Regarding age, only one of them was less than 30 years (6%) and six of
them were over 50 years old (35%); two of them were between 30-39 years (12%) and eight (47%) principals were between the age of 40-49 years. Regarding their highest academic qualifications attained, four principals (24%) had diploma’s, nine of them (53%) had undergraduate degrees, two of them (11.5%) were master degree holders, and two senior school principals (11.5%) underwent secondary normal school education. Only one principal (6%) held this position for less than five years; four of them (24%) held this position for 6-10 years; seven principals (40%) were in office between 11-15 years, and three others (18%) were in this position for 16-20 years, and two of them (12%) worked as a principal for more than 20 years. Regarding their involvement in principal training preparation, 14 principals (82%) were involved in pre-service trainings and 3 (18%) of them were not trained before taking up the posts.

Table 5.3  Education and Career Profile of 17 Principal Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Identifier Code</th>
<th>Education, Teaching and Administrative Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-1</td>
<td>Normal university—physics teacher—class advisor—dean of teaching affairs office—school principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-2</td>
<td>Normal college—Chinese teacher—class advisor—secretary of youth league committee—vice school principal—school principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-3</td>
<td>Normal university—Chinese teacher—class advisor—grade teacher—dean of teaching affairs office—vice-school principal—school principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-4</td>
<td>Normal university—mathematics teacher—class advisor—vice-dean of teaching affairs office—vice-school secretary—school principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-6</td>
<td>Normal College—English Teacher—class advisor—secretary of youth league committee—school principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-7</td>
<td>Normal university—geography teacher—class advisor—vice-dean of teaching affairs office—dean of teaching affairs office—school principal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Continuation of Table 5.3  Education and Career Profile of 17 Principal Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Identifier Code</th>
<th>Education, Teaching and Administrative Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-8</td>
<td>Normal university—Chinese teacher—class advisor—dean of general service office—vice-school secretary—school principal—secretary of youth league committee—school principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-9</td>
<td>Secondary normal school—mathematics teacher—class advisor—vice-dean of teaching affairs office—vice-school principal—school principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-10</td>
<td>Normal university—mathematics teacher—class advisor—accountant of centre school—vice-school secretary—school principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-11</td>
<td>University of Science and engineering—chemistry teacher—class advisor—teaching and research group leader—dean of teaching affairs office—school principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-12</td>
<td>Normal university—English teacher—class advisor—vice-director of discipline --- director of discipline---vice-school secretary---school principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-13</td>
<td>Normal university—mathematics teacher—class advisor—dean of teaching affairs office --- vice-school secretary--- school principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-14</td>
<td>Normal College --Chinese teacher---director of discipline---school principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-15</td>
<td>Normal College---physics teacher--- class advisor--- vice- director of discipline--- vice-school principal--- school principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-16</td>
<td>University of Science and engineering--- mathematic teachers---director of discipline---vice-school principal---school principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-17</td>
<td>Normal university---Chinese teacher---Class adviser--- vice-dean of teaching affairs office—vice-school principal---school principal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 5.3, only two of the school principals graduated from universities of science and technology, nine of them graduated from normal universities, two of them graduated from normal colleges and four of them graduated from secondary normal
schools. Besides, all the school principals are with teaching experiences and 14 of them worked as a teacher advisor before being appointed as a school principal. This is reflected by the words, “a good teacher is the foundation of a good school principal” (Sukhomlynsky, 1999, p.1). Moreover, the majority of the school principals had management experiences and worked as school middle-level cadres, such as dean of teaching affairs, secretary of youth league committee, teaching and research group leader and vice-school principal. This also indicates that school principals had rather rich administrative experiences, and that their leadership capacity was due to the accumulation of their work experiences.

In China, most school principals were appointed by education departments based on their excellent work experiences. The demographic information shows that all school principals went through the process of being a teacher and a middle-level leader. None of them appeared to have majored in education management and administration. This provides an opportunity to provide empirical evidence on how are the Chinese school principals prepared for their principal leadership role, whether through formal and informal learning to positively improve their leadership capacity.

Besides the school principals, six training providers were interviewed to obtain their views on principal leadership from a principal trainer’s perspective. Table 5.4 illustrates the demographic profile of these six training providers. Among the six of them, there was only one female training provider. The rest were males. In terms of age, one of them was 30-39 years old, three of them were 40-49 years old, and two of them were in the 50 years and older age category. As for their highest attained academic qualifications, two of them
had bachelor degrees, another two had master degrees and the remaining two had doctoral degrees. Regarding their working experiences as training providers, three of them had less than 5 years, two of them 6-10 years, and one had 11-15 years’ training experience. As for their roles in training institutes, two were training managers and the rest of them were training teachers. Two of them pursued their trainings at county level, municipal level and provincial level training institutes.

### Table 5.4 Demographic Profile of Training Providers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 years above</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest academic qualification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Institutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County level</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal level</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial level</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: 6 Training Providers, n=6.*
5.3 **Presentation of Research Findings**

In this chapter the research findings were obtained through the triangulation of data collection methods namely, document analysis, interviews with principals and training organizers, and observations at schools and principal training institutes. Moreover, official documents, open-ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and field observations were used to analyse and answer the four research questions in this study. During the interviews, audio data were digitally recorded, transcribed and coded according to themes. Through a thematic analysis, codes were selected from broad themes such as roles of school principals, principal preparation, professional development of principals, leadership practices and leadership challenges (see Appendix L). In line with research ethics and for further confidentiality purposes, the names of principal interviewees were not revealed. Instead, the names of school principals were represented by identifier codes, such as I-1, I-2, etc. (see Table 5.3). Further identifier like ‘R’ that symbolizes data from questionnaires, ‘I’ denote interview with principals, while ‘T’ represents training organizers. The following subsections present the data analysis based on the four research questions of this study.

5.3.1 **Research Question 1: To what extent do the governmental training policies impact the leadership preparation and development of the secondary school principals in Henan province, China?**

This research question seeks to investigate the impact of training policies on the preparation and development of secondary school principals’ leadership in Henan. Training policies function as a guide and legislative approach for securing school principals’ professional development and to ensure the implementation will be a complementary factor in education reform (Zhou & Zhu, 2007). There are 11 national
and provincial policy documents and development plans that were studied and analyzed to examine the structure of the governing order and action plans that appear to have an influence on cultivating and improving the professionalism of the school principals. The document analysis intents to provide a clearer understanding of the relevant training policies that can help the education administrative departments and training organizers to innovate their training systems in order to promote school principals’ professional development. Moreover, this investigation helped to provide the theoretical basis and knowledge required for establishing the school principals’ professional development system. The following subsections elaborate on the governmental training policies from the perspectives of school principals’ selection system, qualification system, training system, evaluation system as well as their incentive system. The researcher has also included a brief historical account about the evolution of training policies. Regulations and policies regarding school principals’ selection, qualification, training and evaluation are listed in Appendix I.

5.3.1.1 School Principals’ Selection System

School principals’ capability building and development defines their overall quality. In appointing the leader of a school community, a regulating policy is vital to ensure that the selected leader possess the appropriate qualifications and professional demeanour of a school principal. According to Yang (2005), a well-regulated principal selection system is the key features required to pledge and sustain the excellence of principals. Conversely, Chen (2010) found that the overall quality of school principals is not usually in line with the educational development needs and that this matter should be addressed.
The national education reform and development plans, as well as the published policies dated 28 years ago, have been emphasizing on the principal selection criteria enforced in the nation. After the issuance of the ‘Opinion on Strengthening the Training for the Principals of Primary and Secondary Schools (MOE, 1989)’ and ‘Opinions of the State Education Commission on Post Training for Headmasters of Primary and Secondary Schools (SEC, 1990)’, the Chinese government started to be aware of the need urge of a regulatory policy in standardizing the principal selection and the position responsibilities. In 1991, the PRC State Education Commission put forward the ‘Requirements and Position Requirements of Headmasters of Primary and Secondary Schools in China’ as the answer to the urge (SEC, 1991). The general requirements of selecting and appointing school principals are based on the following criteria which include basic requirements, major responsibilities and job requirements. There are three defining criteria used to stipulate the job requirements of school principals, which are political proficiency, qualification, educational background and physical capability of the recipient (SEC, 1991).

(a) Political Proficiency

Walker et al. (2012) highlighted that adherence to mainstream political ideology is a widely prescribed part of a principal’s job, where almost all principals in China are Party members and as such work within the cadre system. They are expected to work hard in delivering moral education and be committed to the socialist ideology, which is reflected in their job requirements stipulated in the ‘Opinion on Strengthening the Training for the Principals of Primary and Secondary Schools’ and ‘Training Regulations for Primary and Secondary School Principals’ (Feng, 2003a; MOE, 1989; MOE, 1999). Besides that, they are expected to conform to the national laws and the Party policies and implement
the national educational guidelines, policies and regulations. They are also supposed to ensure loyalty, maintain unity, prioritize strong collectivistic ideology, and be willing to sacrifice their interests for collectivistic importance (Jia, 2005; MOE, 1989; MOE, 1999). The principal has to be able to manage the school work, create a conducive learning environment for students and build collaborative relationships with parents and other stakeholders. Corrective action in perfecting the principal appointment has never ceased, as the State Council launched the ‘Decision of State Council on the Reform and Development of Basic Education’ in 2001 to revise the appointment and selection system of school principals (State Council, 2001).

(b) **Qualifications and Educational Background**

Education background and qualifications are the key selection criteria that are taken into consideration during the school principal selection process. In December 1999, the Ministry of Education issued the ‘Training Regulations for Primary and Secondary School Principals’. This regulation has legally endorsed the principal qualification training in China (MOE, 1999). It states that the qualifications of a Chinese secondary school principal must not be lower than a college degree holder, and that a qualified senior secondary school principal must possess academic credentials higher than a bachelor degree. Primary and secondary school principals have to attain first class for their secondary and advanced level primary school teacher qualification. According to MOE (1999), candidates are expected to have working experience in the education industry and be certified with professional training credentials. 2 years after the principal training requirement was gazetted, the policy ‘Decision of State Council on the Reform and Development of Basic Education’ was issued to improve the principal appointment and selection system.
(c) Physical Capability

While health condition is one of the defining criteria in selecting a school principal, it is crucial that school principals are in good health and are capable of fulfilling their job responsibilities. However, the fact remains that many of the school principals are unable to meet the actual needs of primary and secondary schools, due to their low qualifications. The document ‘Requirements and Position Requirements of Headmasters of Primary and Secondary Schools in China’ shows that the qualification of school principals is ranked low. Similarly, SEC (1991) reported that the quality of school principals is slightly weak.

With the continuous reformation of the Chinese education system, the school principal selection process is becoming competitive. In 2001, the ‘Decision of the State Council on the Reform and Development of Basic Education’ highlighted that primary and secondary school principals shall be selected and managed by the national education administrative departments (State Council, 2001). The State Council also declared that there is a need to redefine the qualifications of school principals and gradually establish open and fair practices when selecting school principals.

The ‘Outline of China’s National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)’ clearly states that the nation needs to reduce the criteria for school principal selection (CPCC, 2010). Nevertheless, at present there is still no changes made to the standards and rules regarding the selection of school principals. Thus, the ‘Decision of State Council on the Reform and Development of Basic Education’ sets out to ensure that the management and contract systems of primary and secondary school
principals, is in accordance with the law. It is also needed to further define the qualifications of school principals and gradually establish public recruiting and competition for the position of school principal (State Council, 2001).

Since the establishment of the PRC, primary and secondary school principals were selected and appointed directly by the government or education administrative departments. At present, some regions have started implementing contract systems. However, some operations are still under the control of the local administrative departments. The administrative officer is the main representative body of the selection process, without the involvement of stakeholders like teachers, parents and the community. Therefore, the election of administrative leaders is still traditionally approached, and the selection of school principals requires administrative authorization. Inevitably, the personal preference of government leaders will somehow affect the selection of school principals. Thus, the different employment standards in many regions have resulted in the inequality of school principals throughout the nation.

The selection and hiring of school principals is subject to the candidate’s appraisal and teaching achievements, without considering other criteria like teaching ability, qualifications and academic diplomas. Thus, it can be seen that the school principal employment system in this nation is merely a formality and non-competitive. The government perceives that principalship is just an administrative function. The government emphasizes that the candidates should be more politically obedient to Communist rule instead of being concerned about school leadership and principal professionalism. This situation caused many school principals to become conventional
leaders, as they focused their efforts on administrative housekeeping. Many of the school leaders displayed authoritative leadership, which appears to exhibit a lack in professionalism.

At present, the regulation of primary and secondary school principal employment in Henan, is based on the candidate’s qualifications, the employment procedure, the job contract and evaluation. The principal rank system emphasizes the occupation of the principal as a profession while the appointment system places emphasis on the principal as a school leader. In summary, it may be concluded that the Henan province has not yet established a complete school principal selection system.

5.3.1.2 School Principals’ Qualification System

In 1999, the ‘Training Regulations for Primary and Secondary School Principals’ (MOE, 1999) stipulates that the prerequisite of school principals is to participate in principal trainings within the prescribed time to obtain the relevant certification. Article five of ‘Notice of the Education Department of Henan Province on Further Strengthening the Education Cadre Training in the Province’ also stipulates that all parts (of Henan province) should strictly implement the post-holding certificate system. It regulates that all new principals, including the kindergarten director, must upscale their qualifications and participate in at least 300 hours of training within half a year, after being appointed as a school principal (Department of Henan, 2010).
A qualified school principal must be certified with the necessary training qualifications, as the prerequisite for employment as a school principal (MOE, 1999, p. 2). However, a review of Article 5 indicated that there is a contradiction in two of the clauses stipulated in Article 5. One clause highlights that school principals are required to obtain training qualifications before serving as school principals. Within the same article, another clause addressed the prerequisite of 300 hours of training after serving as school principals. This appears as a contradiction and further implies that this government regulation does not provide clear clauses for the school principals’ qualification system. If training certification is not one of the essential conditions for school principal selection, and so is pre-service training, then many of the candidates who apply for this post, may not be capable of handling school principals’ work.

School principal (I-1) also did not participate in any training programmes prior to her appointment as a school principal:

"I did not take part in any training programme before I was a school principal. I was obliged to take this position. My school’s situation is special, due to the establishment of a new campus; the financial debt of my school had more than 50,000,000 CNY (Chinese currency, equivalent to 7279821 USD). Under this situation I was forced to be appointed as the school principal by the government. But, later I had participated in national secondary school principal training which was organized by the Ministry of Education." (I-1)

Various studies report about the phenomenon of taking up the position of school principal before undergoing training. This is not only in Henan province but the whole nation (Dong, 2010; Feng, 2013; Ma, Zhang & Mu, 2009). As a matter of fact, the qualification system of school principals is supposedly a formality. A stringent,
professional qualification system has not yet been established, although the State Council has promulgated in 2012, the ‘Opinions of the State Council on Strengthening the Construction of Teachers’ Ranks’ to upgrade the quality of the education system in this country (State Council, 2012). The document highlighted about the chief assignments to be drawn up for the teaching team in schools. It also proposed a stricter verification and evaluation process to be imposed for the principal qualification system. This is because of the need to further establish and further develop the professionalism of school principals, for both pre-school headmasters and principals of various school ranking. The State Council also emphasizes on raising the quality and reputation of the teaching team and school principals. The Council also encourages the Management to have the autonomy in formulating and creating their teaching and management styles (State Council, 2012).

In reality, this certification is a kind of formal recognition. School principal who possess an all-rounded training qualifications tends to outperformed from his peer and is easily to be appointed by the government (Jia, 2005; Xia, 2011b). This is supported by one of the school principal’s (I-14):

“If you can finish all your assignments and with full attendance, you will pass,... you can get the certificate.” (I-14)

Another school principal added:

“As long as you are involved in the whole process of training, you definitely will get the certificate. Even though you can take leave during the training. In our country, the laws, regulations, as well as policies are non-binding. ” (I-16)
The fundamental reason of this phenomenon is due to the primary and secondary school principal qualification certificate system that has not been legalized and unified, causing it to be disorganized and not less efficient. Nevertheless, the ‘Training Regulations for Primary and Secondary School Principals’ stipulates that serving principals must participate in Improvement Training every five years within the prescribed time, and obtain an ‘Improvement Training Certificate’ as the prerequisite for renewal of post (MOE, 1999, p. 1).

5.3.1.3 School Principals’ Compensation System

The compensation and promotion systems are the evaluative processes that assess the working performance, personal values and professionalism of school principals. This is an incentive scheme to guide and motivate school principals towards enhancing their professional development, and also act as a guide for their future work (Chu & Yang, 2002). According to Hu (2006) and Wu (2009), an unreasonable salary system is not favourable to the professional development of school principals. However, the compensation system for school principals has not been established in this nation yet (Chen & Lv, 2010; Hu, 2006; Yu, 2012). In addition, without establishing specific qualification standards the identities and responsibilities of school principal tend to be ambiguous.

The ‘Opinions on Strengthening the Construction of Headmasters of Primary and Secondary Schools (SEC, 1992)’ stipulates that ‘primary and secondary school principals are involved in school management, certain amount of teaching, and are required to participate in teacher evaluation of professional and technical posts (SEC,
Furthermore, it has also been published in the ‘Opinions of the State Council on the Implementation of the Outline of China's Educational Reform and Development’ that all school principals as well as certain school administrative staff are responsible for setting the wage scheme for levels 3-6 (State Council, 1994). The promulgation of these two policies shows the dual roles of the school principal, involving school management and human resource management. Besides that, the promotion scheme for school principals and teachers are identical.

The nature of school management by the principal varies substantially compared with the teaching role of teachers. The current compensation system has somehow ignored the complexities of a school principal’s job. It is also quite unreasonable that the salary scheme of school principals is the same as that of teachers. Moreover, school principals who achieved senior title could no longer be promoted. Most of these school principals are lacking of the enthusiasm and motivation, which result in a holdup in their careers and professional development. One of the school principal’s claimed that the retirement remuneration for the school principals is much lower than teachers, adding that although schools principals earn the reputation of being the school leader, but their job rank and salary is equivalent to that of a teachers post. This is confirmed by the following comment made by school principal I-14 below:

“Principals’ responsibility and pressure are bigger than teachers, but their income is no different from teachers...” (I-14)

From the above excerpt, we can see that the school principals are not satisfied with the compensation system. Therefore, this issue about establishing a reasonable compensation system for school principals, need to be further addressed.
In 2008, the ‘Instruction for the Implementation of Performance-based Pay in Compulsory Education Schools’ clearly defined that “the performance-based salaries of school principals are verified by the personnel and finance departments. It is determined by the overall evaluation results of the school principals.” This post-performance payment system actually includes post wages, salaries, performance pays and allowance subsidies. However, this performance payment system has not been fully implemented. Lv (2004) and Wu (2009) have revealed that school principals are dissatisfied with the existing wage, which they feel does not justify their highly stressed jobs, as commented by one school principal:

“Good work that deserves good pay is not reflected in school principals’ pay. The assessment of the education bureau for school principals’ performance is less specific, and this does not guarantee the school principals’ legitimate rights.” (I-8)

Schools with higher student enrolment and monetary resources tend to have better subsidies from the government. In contrast, those schools located in the outskirt areas and small towns have a lower chance to be financially assisted. As a result, school principals rely solely on their monthly income and have no available funding for any value adding initiatives.

In recent years, the government had issued a series of strategies and policies to raise the wages of school principals. However, in comparison to the other public service sector workers, the wage level of school principals remains low. The tremendous contrast in the salary and responsibilities of school principals has dampen their passion towards teaching.
In addition, Gong (2000) stated that even with a quality training programme, school principals are still not encouraged to participate in these trainings, if there were no incentives.

5.3.1.4 School Principals’ Evaluation

School principals’ evaluation is essential for assessing the leadership performance of school principals. A systematic and rigorous application of scientific methods can provide useful feedback for the professional development of school principals and for school improvement. Nevertheless, at present there is no scientific or systematic assessment for the principals’ evaluation. In 1992, the ‘Opinions on Strengthening the Construction of the Headmasters of Primary and Secondary Schools’ that the school principals evaluation should take into consideration the local context (SEC, 1992). Principals are evaluated based on their working ability and political integrity; they will be assessed comprehensively based on their ‘德 (Morality)’, ‘能 (Ability)’, ‘勤 (Diligence)’ and ‘绩 (Achievement)’ (Jia, 2004; Zhao & Wang, 2007). The evaluation can be further cross referenced with the ‘Requirements and Position Requirements of Headmasters of Primary and Secondary Schools in China (SEC, 1991)’. However, there is still no clear and unified evaluation index in place for a fair assessment for all candidates.

Subsequently, after three years, the ‘Opinions of the State Education Commission on the Primary and Secondary School Principals Training during the Ninth Five-year Plan’ (SEC, 1995) was issued to implement the ‘Opinions of the State Council on the Implementation of China's Educational Reform and Development (State Council, 1994). Although there is no clear guidance on the evaluation process for school principals, the
policy has highlighted that principals need to undergo principalship training and be certified with the ‘Qualification Training Certificate’ before being appointed, following which they will be awarded the ‘Improvement Training Certificate’ to be able to continue serving as a principal. This requirement is stricter to ensure the principals and the newly appointed candidates will continue serving and participating in professional development.

Annual appraisals and tenure evaluations are part of the performance evaluation of school principals. Annual appraisals are concerned with the personal summary while tenure evaluation is carried out every five years. Wise and Darling-Hammond (1984) suggests that performance evaluations should be based on the combination of two levels (Individual and Organizational) and two purposes (Improvement and Accountability), where the four combined outcomes facilitate in the evaluation process. The purpose of the evaluation is to review the duties and performance of school principals, in order to determine promotions, demotions, rewards and penalties. Currently, the principal evaluations involve summative rather than formative evaluation which assesses generally the professional growth of school principals. According to Uren and Tovey (2001), most teachers are not in favour of performance evaluations as evaluations are not effective in appropriately assessing their job performance. The overall quality standards of these evaluations are found to be lacking and not that reliable. Up till now, the nation has not yet established any scientific evaluation standards for school principal leadership evaluation.
5.3.1.5 School Principals Training System

This section presents the findings about the school principals training system and its policies address concern on the training institutes, the sources of training funds and training evaluations. This is to identify the influence of the governmental policies on the training system in three perspectives: (1) training institutes, (2) training funding, and (3) training evaluation.

(a) Training Institutes

In 1989, the ‘Opinion on Strengthening the Training for Principals of Primary and Secondary Schools’ (MOE, 1989) was issued by the Ministry of Education. This was the first systematic training policy that serves as a guide for the implementation of trainings for primary and secondary school principals. During this time, school principal trainings were perceived as “comprehensive and in line with the national education policy and strategy” (MOE, 1989, p. 1). However, it was proposed that the provincial, municipal and county level trainings should be implemented by normal universities and colleges, colleges of education, teachers’ colleges for vocational studies and other training institutes.

In 1999, the ‘Training Regulation for Primary and Secondary School Principals’ confirmed that qualified universities can also provide training for school principals (MOE, 1999). However the ‘Opinion of Ministry of Education on Further Strengthening and Improving the Training of Primary and Secondary School Principals (MOE, 2002)’ wise suggested the execution of principalship training to be managed under a single education body with ‘closed’ training institute instead of distributing the training service authority
to different training centre to ensure a standardized training plan and structure. The opinion was then superseded with a justified view of entrusting cadre training to be executed by the colleges, universities, scientific research institutions and social institutions level to that of a more diversified and professional establishment, proposed in the ‘National Eleventh Five - Year Plan for Cadre Training of the Educational System in 2007 (MOE, 2007)”.

Apart from that, the ‘Outline of China’s National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)’ also states that to set up competitive training institutes and provide quality training services, the municipal and country level training institutes should be removed (MOE, 2007). During the document analysis process, the researcher found that training policies do address the ways of improving and developing school principal training institutes. However, the standards of assessment and the accreditation of training institutes have not yet been established. Furthermore, the government does not have enough quality training resources.

(b) Training Funding

Schools need financial support to ensure the normal operation of the schools. According to the ‘China Educational Reform and Development Outline (CPCC, 1993)’ and the ‘Decision of the Central Committee of the CPC on Several Major Issues Concerning the Building of a Harmonious Socialist Society (CPCC, 2006)’, it is stated that financial education funding constitutes 4% of the Gross Domestic Product. This was to secure government finances allocated for education funding. However, schools at cities and county levels often fail to achieve the target due to many counties not having financial
reserves for education. There is a huge gap between targeted funding and actual funding (Chen, 2012; Liang & Zhang, 2010). As a result, the government’s financial allocation is inadequate for meeting the needs of school development.

Moreover, school principals are facing the problem of raising funds. Principals need money to improve their school infrastructure, support teaching activities as well as school management. The shortage of fund is caused by many problems, such as school debts, an overall poor quality of teachers and low enthusiasm among teachers and staffs. Currently, schools are entirely funded. The payment of teachers’ and school principals salaries are at the disposal of public funds.

Training funds are essential for the professional development of school principals. The ‘Notice of the Education Department of Henan Province on Further Strengthening the Education Cadre Training in the Province’ (Department of Henan, 2010), declared that the nation should increase the funding investment and enhance the efficient usage of training funds. However, it does not clearly indicate how to improve the efficient usage of training funds, with a feasible plan. It is parallel in the ‘Opinions of the State Council on Strengthening the Construction of Teachers' Ranks’ issued by the State Council where the funding of training should be supported to ensure that educators and school principals are able to undergo necessary trainings in order to equip themselves with optimized teaching standards and qualifications. In addition, the financial expenses for training purposes should be enumerated in the annual budget planning, where 5% of the total sum of budget should be used for intensive training (State Council, 2012).
The ‘*Training Regulations for Primary and Secondary School Principals*’ (MOE, 1999) points out that school principal trainings rely on funds from the government and through other multiple channels. Part of the educational funds is utilized in school principals’ trainings. However, this regulation does not specify the source of the multiple channels and the authorities responsible for fund collection. This implies that raising funds through multiple channels may be difficult to implement. Besides, specific training expenditures are made by the regional education administrative department. However, due to the regional economic differences, each region does not have a unified standard for training expenditure, and this result in the large regional differences. Moreover, there has not been school principal training fund properly set up. Self-raised fund is a challenge for school principals who come from underdeveloped areas, as this causes many school principals to forgo training due to insufficient training funds.

(c) **Training Evaluation**

Training assessment and evaluation is an important criterion for school principal professionalization. Training evaluation allows an intensive corrective action to be taken to promote school principals’ professional development and to address quality assurance in the areas of training, planning and execution (Chu & Cravens, 2012). Policies issued by the government have never ceased to highlight the importance of training evaluations. Since in 1994, the ‘*Opinions of the State Council on the Implementation of the Outline of China’s Educational Reform and Development*’, placed emphasis on the job evaluation of school principals (State Council, 1994). In 1999, the ‘*Decision of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on Deepening Educational Reform and Promoting Quality Education*’ (CPCC, 1999), clearly outlined the criteria of training evaluations. According to this policy, the Education administrative departments of provinces,
autonomous regions and municipalities are in charge of primary and secondary school principals’ training work. They are responsible for formulating the regions’ training plans and supporting policies of primary and secondary school principal trainings. They are also fully responsible for the implementation, inspection and evaluation of primary and secondary principal trainings in the regions (SEC, 1999).

In adherence with the national policy, the ‘Notice of the Education Department of Henan Province on Further Strengthening the Education Cadre Training in the Province’ emphasizes on conducting onsite training evaluation, by training participants and other third-party evaluators in order to strengthen the formative evaluation and performance appraisal of education cadres. Evaluation results may be used to attune the training tasks and funds (Department of Henan, 2010). This information shows that training evaluation has been gradually creating awareness that is increasingly being recognized by the government.

With the same ideology, the State Council in their issuance of ‘Opinions of the State Council on Strengthening the Construction of Teachers’ Ranks’ highlighted the need to establish stricter training evaluations, regardless of the level of the evaluation procedure. The appraisal system is encouraging, as the rewards given are based on the participants’ performance assessed throughout the training (State Council, 2012). The evaluation results are announced in order to allow supervision and monitoring of central concerns and to ensure that the necessary measures are put in place. Overall, the training evaluation process looks into the evaluation of the subjects only. It does not clearly denote who the
third-party assessors are, and the training evaluation index. This makes it difficult to fully comprehend the training evaluation process completely.

5.3.2 Research Question 2: How the secondary school principals are prepared for their present principal leadership role?

The secondary school principals, prior to their in-service period, they are required to complete the pre-service qualification training to get them ready for the new level of obligations (Chu & Yang, 2009). Improvement training and self-directed development strategy are to reinforce their management knowledge and to keep their leadership skills up-to-date and sharpen their research ability to be innovative. Being appointed as the head teacher in the school, specialization and skills require continuous development and learning through the training and institutional teaching (Zhou, 2015).

The data analysis of the interview with the school principals has revealed a variety approach to deliver the training curriculum, for example: face-to-face lectures, group discussions, school visit, internship program and submission of a project paper. Moreover, the study found that, apart from formal learning procedure, the leadership role and abilities that they acquired presently are owing to the informal knowledge gaining ways. Thus, the findings that correspond to the second research question will be presented into two categories of learning mode: formal learning and informal learning.
5.3.2.1 Formal Learning

The preparation and professional development programme is an important means of equipping school principals with the professional competencies and self-consciousness needed for their professional development. The professional development of school principals through formal learning is beneficial for the sustainable development of schools. The following sub-sections expound how school principals were prepared and influenced by formal learning.

(a) School Visits

One of the modules of the training is to visit school with good reputation and outstanding performance. Participants will spend a Several school principals revealed that they have a deeper understanding regarding the concept of “school culture” through the school visits made to other schools.

Several responds are positive to this knowledge delivery method that:

“School principal training is necessary... We should visit those schools with the similar school context and management mode, it will be more effective.” (I-4)

“Both Qualification Training and Improvement Training has too many theories... school principals should involve the whole process of school management during the field visiting. We can spend half month to study theory, and half month stay in a particular school to participate in their school management.” (I-10)

“Trainings brought me the greatest experience. When I went to other schools for visiting, I was always being attracted by their school culture... Especially nowadays, establishing distinctive campus culture has become the new tendency of school running in the nation. Without this knowledge, school principals will be less capable.” (I-13)
It is obvious that school principal I-13 was impressed by the school culture of the school he visited and school principal I-4 and I-10 were in favour that school visit is able to add value to their learning. To a large extent, these testimonies also suggested that this school principal gained the knowledge of improving his school culture and this would have inspired him to adopt new ideas of leading his school in a better way.

(b) Acquire Updates on Educational Developments

The development of school principal leadership keeps continually evolving alongside the development of the whole society. Undeniably, trainings expose school principals to the new developments in education, which gives them different perspectives on the formulation of the school mission, administrating schools and planning their school vision. One school principal gives his example as below:

“Previously, our school lacked school vision planning. At least through training, I know it is not just a slogan. Although we learn about professional guidance in theory, I found that training is a way of getting to know the various developments in education. For instance, the awareness created about the effect of exam-oriented education on school effectiveness and quality education in the future.” (I-2)

Another school principal further noted that:

“After the training, some of the schools changed their management style in terms of using a more humanistic approach with their teachers and students. So, I think training is necessary. If you always stay in school, your way of your thinking most likely won’t change. You have to be open-minded and learn some new theories and management experiences from high-performing schools.” (I-8)
School principals also pointed out that training enables them to master the dynamics of education and educational development trends, as expressed by one school principal:

“Through trainings, I learnt to understand more about some current national educational policies, which also improved my theoretical knowledge. I found that it effectively improved my school management ability.” (I-6)

In addition, another school principal further explained:

“The trainings helped me carry out the education policies more firmly. I think trainings also guide school principals’ with their leadership practices, as they are the executors of education policies.” (I-9)

According to the principals testimonies, training programmes had a positive effect on school principals, as they learnt to understand the professional concepts of principal leadership development. Trainings equip school principals with the knowledge needed for better planning and accepting new ideas. Training also helps school principals change their out-dated school management methods, and makes them more open-minded to viewing school development from different perspectives.

Moreover, by comparing the advanced theories and concepts gained from training programmes, school principals have been able to discover their shortcomings of their leadership practices to update their professional concept. One school principal expressed:

“Training makes me feel that I need to continuously update my educational concepts. I think the important function of trainings is to improve the theoretical level and expand the knowledge of school principals.” (I-14)
The nation has implemented an exam-oriented education for thousands of years. Since the 1990s, quality-oriented education (素质教育) was introduced as the national education reform initiative for its intended focus on school effectiveness and quality education across China (Chu & Cravens, 2012). It is because of the increasing competition, especially among Asian societies, schools are under societal pressure to inculcate a more holistic approach for student development. This has led them to pay close attention to redesigning their curriculum improved instructional practices. Ideally, curriculum training should be offered as part of the training programmes for school principals. Training programmes should also focus on developing school principals on the new concepts of curriculum reform, as this can help school principals to plan and promote the new school-based curriculum in their schools. The findings suggest that through training programmes, school principals have developed a deeper understanding of the professional concepts of leadership development and application.

The principals interviewed have reached a consensus about how trainings provided the theoretical knowledge that helped them improve their leadership practices. Below is an excerpt taken from an interview conducted with a school principal:

“I was inspired during the training, I think training improves my theoretical level, deepens my understanding of educational policies, educational laws and quality oriented education. As a school principal, the trainings helped me to enhance my sense of mission and inspired me to do a great job. It also improved my educational teaching management level, strengthen my determination and confidence to continue pursuing an education career. I was able to reflect.” (I-17)

Expectation from the authority on the function of training programme in school principals’ leadership improvement is still in the development stage. At this stage, the
training providers are the resource for theoretical knowledge in leadership growth. Below the comments from a training organizer regarding the impact of trainings on his participants:

“Currently, there are no leadership degree courses to develop the leadership competencies of school principals in China, and so, school principal trainings are useful for providing principals with the required knowledge and skills needed for school management... for the most part, the training curricular played a role in the school principals’ theoretical attainment.” (T-3)

(c) Urge of Role Changing

School principals are the frontlines of education. They are the educators and leaders, who have experience in both teaching and school management. The development in the education sector also requires principals to shift their roles from a transactional management style to a research-based type. Trainings have an influence in urging school principals’ to change their roles from an ordinary administrative role to an all-rounded leader in coordinating progress and growth of the school community. A school principal also pointed out that training programmes help them understand the essence of curriculum reform:

“Trainings can improve school principals’ theoretical level and further improve our understanding about the school-based curriculum, which is very difficult to implement, without theoretical guidance and support.” (I-11)

Training also acts as an external stimulus, which plays the role of promoting self-reflection among the school principals. School leaders who are often engaged in unceasing interference often spend time on self-improvement. Some of the school principals
commented that training programmes although less extensive, tend to be mainly complimentary. The following are remarks from two school principals:

“Participation in the training programmes enabled me to expand my knowledge about leadership.” (I-14)

“The preparation programmes helped me to understand more clearly what I should prepare in line with my work.” (I-16)

(d) Leadership Capacity-building

The majority of school principals highlighted the positive side of trainings and said that trainings prepare them better for the job. At the same time, there are also a few principals who commented that trainings provide them the opportunity to compare and contrast their views about leadership with other principals:

“The training was very effective. In particular, it has helped me become more competent. The training has broadened my horizons through my exchanges with other peers.” (I-3)

“I valued meeting with colleagues, I know my own strengths and weaknesses and I know how to address the problems I face through my leadership practices.” (I-2)

The following school principals also highlighted that trainings enable them to balance their workload more effectively:

“It is difficult to be a school principal as it involves a very heavy workload. During the preparation programme, I now better understand the work of school principals, and this is a great help for my future work.” (R-6)

“Trainings had a certain effect on me... it expanded my horizon and I was able to learn about school administration from other advanced school leaders.” (I-8)
Another school principal added:

“Training expands my horizon and widens my mind. Meanwhile, I fully understand the qualities of being a good school principal. It has been a profound experience to have gained more insight regarding school principals’ leadership.” (I-15)

In addition, the preparation and professional development programme also helps school principals to better understand their roles, as remarked by school principal I-13:

“Before participated in Qualification Training, I was not very clear about my roles. I thought I was just a manager, but after having joined the training, the first thing that came to my mind was that I have a lot to catch up on regarding school principal leadership. This training further helped me understand what my school mission and responsibilities are.” (I-13)

Two other school principals commented:

“In my opinion, the preparation programmes are effective. They help you to predict issues and seek solutions in advance. It helped me know what I should do when faced with leadership uncertainties. Therefore, in my view, the preparation programmes are effective.” (R-20)

“Through the preparation programme, I have gained a deeper understanding about leadership and I feel much more prepared. I can improve my leadership practices. For example, I realized that I should also need to rethink the curriculum and train teachers to have community engagement. This would improve my leadership ability.” (R-23)

According to the findings, most of the school principals highlighted that trainings have a positive influence on their professional competencies. As one school principal explained his view:
“Training mainly improves my macro-management ability. Moreover, I can master the art of leadership better... It also provides better strategies for school development. I also had participated in the training programme named School Principals’ Leadership Art, at the Capital Normal University. It was effective for improving the skills of school principals’ leadership practices.” (I-3)

The positive comments from the principals in this study, reinforced that training programmes can improve their professional competency. The other school principals added that:

“The main harvest of training is improving my post competency; it also has a positive influence on school principals’ execution.” (I-6)

“I had participated in a public management training for two weeks. It helped to improve my abilities in execution and coordination, and I found it very effective for school principals’ work.” (I-4)

Another school principal remarked:

“I participated in pre-service training when I was a vice-school principal. This taught me about the school principal’s roles and mission. During my tenure, I participated in various forms of trainings which have greatly helped me with my school management skills. I think the most important component of school principals’ leadership kernel are educational beliefs and concepts. Others include educational philosophy, school spirit and school culture. I also think that the most effective training is internship. You can emulate some measures from other high performing schools.” (I-15)

The majority of school principals emphasized that they acquired knowledge and skills through training and this fulfilled their job responsibilities. Furthermore, the training institutes also pointed out that trainings can improve the overall quality of school
principals. A few school principals also indicated that the training content can be applied to their leadership practices. One school principal elaborated on how he and his teachers benefited from the professional development programmes that he participated in:

“During the past six years of having participated in training programmes, I found several trainers to be very impressive... Generally, I think that the trainings were very useful. I have used some of the training material in delivering a speech to our teachers, and I found it to be very effective. School principal training is not just limited to teaching school principals how to implement their work, but also teaches them how to guide their teachers, and how to work well with the class adviser and with other teachers. After delivering the content to teachers, they also felt that they benefited from it.” (I-12)

It is apparent that trainings are very helpful for school principals in equipping them for their roles. For example, Qualification Trainings provide theoretical orientation, which can help school principals adjust to their leadership role. Improvement Trainings are perceived to equip principals with the knowledge and skills which they receive generally after they have gained some practical experiences. As for Advanced Trainings, the aim is to cultivate high-performing school principals. This implies that each training stage is set according to its training qualification, with its own different functions and influences.

5.3.2.2 Informal Learning

Informal learning was also a means whereby principals found indirect ways of enhancing their leadership competencies. The analysis of the combined qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questionnaire responses and the interview transcripts revealed that the majority of the school principals, who participated in the study, were
actively seeking additional ways to improve and develop their leadership capability. As one principal explained:

“Being a school principal is not easy; this position is not just simply a management role. The school principal’s work is very diverse and difficult; I therefore have to adequately prepare myself to meet the job requirements, although there isn’t a wide range of trainings and self-development courses provided for me.” (I-4)

(a) Learn from other School Principals

The data showed that the main source of informal learning was through guidance and coaching by another experienced principal:

“My previous principal is the main guide for my leadership practice.” (I-5)

“When I was a teacher I used to pay attention to my school principal’s work and schedule. I also used to communicate with other school principals, to try to understand their thinking.” (R-20)

“To be honest, I had learnt a lot from other leaders when I was a teacher...That is, from my former school principals’. I always communicated with other school principals, and I learnt how school principals run their schools and engage holistically.” (I-11)

The excerpts above highlight that learning how to perform a job well can be via observing principals at work. Social interaction in schools is also a way of sourcing out first-hand realities about school leadership. This also makes them aware of the
complexities in an educational institution, where students and teachers interact. Learning informally from other principals is a common approach that serves as a guide:

“By communicating with former school principals, we can learn about their ideology of running their school. By reviewing the school curriculum, I can make my own policies, and learn how to make my school a better environment for the teachers and students.” (R-16)

(b) Communication

Communication is nevertheless a daily task for a school leader. Conversation with the authority, teacher colleagues, parents, public and the students is unceasing and the major way to delivery message and indirectly his influence of leadership. In the interview feedback, the school principals believe that communication is a mean to solve issues and problems that principals face as a school leader. Two principals explain this:

“I engaged in discussions and sharing sessions with experts and high performing school principals to learn more about their good management experiences.” (R-25)

“I participated in all kinds of activities, and public events where I had to express myself, and in doing so, it builds my confidence in being able to influence others. At the same time, I also learnt through other principals’ sharing’s. In this way I could reflect upon my own self-deficiencies.” (I-2)

Conversely, there is a negative side to such open communications among principals, as pointed out by one school principal:

“We have some communications. But such communications are not without reservation and disclosure. We lack open communication. In fact, many of our problems cannot be openly communicated with other schools due to conflict of interest and competition.” (I-7)
A few principals have ventured out, beyond China, to explore new perspectives of school leadership from international school leaders:

“I have learnt from successful educators abroad about school leadership and management.” (R-23)

“I went to Taiwan, to understand more about the absorption and retention of Chinese culture.” (R-31)

(c) Accumulation from Past Experience

In preparing and developing their leadership skills, principals in this study talked a great deal about learning from others:

“I followed high performing school principals to learn good management practices from them.” (R-25)

“I designed and built my leadership ‘blueprint’ upon the influence of others, particularly other experienced school principals.” (R-2)

“To improve the level of my personal specialized knowledge, I learnt from the experiences of other successful educators, I expanded my horizon and improved my abilities as a school leader and school manager by learning from others.” (R-23)

“In recent years, I have been learning really hard from old school principals, who enabled me to learn some really useful things that could help with my work. Also, some of my classmates are school principals, and so if I encountered problems I called them for consultation.” (I-10)

The data showed that principals in China have an ambition to make themselves more aware about the dynamics of their jobs and are willing to learn from others. It was notable
that very few principals talked about the direct influence of formal training upon their practices as a school leader.

Undoubtedly, the accumulation of past experiences has a big influence on school principals’ roles. As the data revealed, all the principal respondents had teaching experiences or administrative management experiences before they served as school principals. Their past experiences were very helpful for their current leadership roles, according to one school principal:

“I was a substitute teacher for two years before I became a school principal, I was an accountant of a central school... After graduation, I did one year substitution in a primary school, and then shifted to a central school responsible for teaching management affairs. After that I became an accountant of the central school and was promoted as a school principal in 1999. From my viewpoint, my past experiences have a big influence on my current role.” (I-10)

In a similar sense, other school principals also shared their views:

“My leadership is mostly demonstrated through my practices at work, which is guided by my accumulated experiences. I also read about how to manage a school and how to improve my personal leadership qualities.” (I-9)

“In fact, my biggest professional development is to do with my leadership practices. As I gained in terms of experiences, there were also problems accumulated along the way which I had to deal with. It was a process involving thinking, reflection, conceptualizing and problem solving. I can say that I managed my school based on my personal experiences.” (I-7)

“Before being a school principal, I was already prepared for the role. I had experiences as a business controller and vice-president. I had ambition. I was daring to execute my practices. This is how I accumulated my experiences for this role.” (R-23)
(d) Reading Books and Self-motivation

Building human relationships and forging strong bonds with others were consistent themes that emerged from the data. This is typical of a Confucian approach to leadership that pays attention to harmonious relations at work (McDonald, 2012). Hence, it is no surprise that a few principals felt that Confucian philosophy influenced them in terms of managing their school. Another salient finding from the data was that many of the principals in the sample relied on self-learning, mostly by reading books, to prepare for their leadership role. For these principals, reading books about educational management, pedagogy and psychology was considered an essential and key aspect of their leadership preparation:

“I read books about leadership and school improvement. I learnt about advanced educational management concepts through reading.” (R-22)

“I studied hard to learn the knowledge of pedagogy and psychology.” (R-24)

“I mainly rely on self-study and I’m conscientious about reading books. Several times I participated in the Principal Forum and in school principals short training courses, since I became a school principal. In 2004, our education bureau organized a National High-level Forum in Shanghai, which I attended and in 2010, I went to Beijing for a school principal training. During my tenure I have been participating in all kinds of trainings and forums. But, I mainly rely on self-study and learning through reading.” (I-10)
According to the principals’ comments, some of the school principals read books to gain knowledge on how to solve the problems of school management. As one school principal said:

“After reading, my outlook changes, as I can see the problem from a different perspective. Also by reading I’m able to understand the problem more comprehensively.” (I-1)

School principals believe that reading is a good way to improve their theoretical attainment. As one school principal indicates,

“Reading plays an important role in improving school principals’ humanistic qualities and preparedness for a conducive school culture. Also, as a school principal, you must like to study first, then you will enjoy reading.” (I-17)

The comments from the principals in this study suggested that learning to be a principal, is about their personal self-development and that the responsibility to learn and prepare for their role, was essentially, their own. In direct contrast, formal training was viewed by the principals in this study, as being the core responsibility of others, at the provincial level. Several principals in this study talked positively about their formal training and its impact upon them. Most commented at length about their informal learning processes and practices.

Self-motivation is another important factor that drives school principals’ informal learning. As one school principal remarked:

“Actually, school principals’ preparatory work is difficult and diversified. It ranges from having to have theoretical knowledge to professional management; we play both roles as administrator and educator and we are required to know about their
responsibilities. Pressure in a way is motivation. Only by pressure am I motivated to make some progress, and that is how I will know what duties I am capable of. So, self-motivation to me is one of the necessary power tools for school principals’ preparation.” (I-4)

Another one added:

“I mainly rely on my own professional self-growth, which I gain through the internet, reading and learning from high performing school principals. I feel that training only has a small impact on school principals’ leadership practices and self-development has a bigger impact on my professional development compared to trainings.” (I-10)

Another view is expressed below:

“In order to meet the post requirements as a school principal, I study hard to equip myself with professional knowledge by looking for all kinds of learning material and participating in trainings. I do believe that a school principal is the fundamental entity of a school, without which a school will not be able to function well. This is a motivation for me to study, enrich and perfect my leadership abilities. Also because the job is not a simple management job, school principals need a lot of experience to be capable of handling their job.” (I-14)

In summary, school principals expressed their opinions on how they were prepared for their current leadership roles. The data showed that the principal preparation and leadership development training program achieved its knowledge sharing through ‘formal learning’ and ‘informal learning’. Formal learning was the training provided locally or as part of a university degree, whereas the informal learning includes a variety form of learning that the principals acquired before taking up their post or during their tenure and training program.
5.3.3 Research Question 3: What are the constraints and challenges faced by secondary school principals of Henan province, China in their preparation and professional development programmes?

Training is an effective method of promoting the professional development of school principals. Therefore, understanding the constraints and challenges faced by school principals, are significant in order to improve the quality of school principal training. According to the principal respondents, the major constraints and challenges they face were to do with the following: training content, training method, training evaluation, quality of training institute, training fund, training time and incentive mechanism.

5.3.3.1 Training Content

Training content refers to the curriculum that is taught to school principals when they undergo principal trainings. A well prepared training content provides participants with knowledge needed for enhancing their leadership competencies. During the training sessions, participants were given handouts and some useful teaching materials, as part of the course materials of their principal training programme.

(a) Unable to Meet Principal Leadership Needs

During the interview, most of the school principals expressed that the training content was unable to meet their actual needs. Moreover, curriculum overlapping is another critical challenge faced by school principals in this province. The following excerpts regarding training content are extracted from the principal interviews:

“The training content is always repeating, and is not targeted... In my view, I think the training organizer should investigate the school principals’ training needs in
advance, to understand what kind of training we really need and what kind of training can help us manage our school better.” (I-2)

“Local trainings sometimes conflict with superior-agency trainings, which is not only a waste of time and resources, but also affects the normal management of schools.” (I-4)

“It doesn’t help that much sometimes. Most textbooks are unified and compiled by the Ministry of Education; the content is comprehensive but lacks focus.” (I-3)

“I think training should help school principals to solve the most concerned and the most urgent problems during their school management.” (I-1)

It is noted that the current training content is somehow unable to meet the professional development needs of school principals. The majority of school principals said that they did not undergo any training needs assessment before beginning their training:

“Training institutes ideally should improve the curriculum…the trainings are not ideal... The training content that they taught in class neither came from textbooks nor self-study. Some of the training content were purely theoretical and even then, some theories are not in keeping with the development of time.” (I-7)

The findings reveal that there isn’t a unified training course material designed for school principal training. The training teacher (trainer) bases the training content on the course syllabus. The following is an extract from the interview with school principal I-14:

“China does not have training materials. Training teachers were very casual when they were training school principals... Training institutes do not have their own course material.” (I-14)
Training organizers were also aware about the reality concerning training content, as expressed by training provider T-2:

“Training content does not just exist in school principal trainings, but for all trainings in China. At present, the National Training Plan has improved it a lot, but the same problem is still occurred... There are provincial-level backbone teachers, and also teachers who just their career. Backbone teachers can be teachers for those who just started to work. This is one of the reasons that caused training ineffective.” (T-2)

The research findings seem to suggest that the training content failed to connect with the leadership practices of school principals and this appears to be the main constraints and challenges of school principal trainings.

(b) Inconsistent With Principal Leadership Practices

There is evidence that the training content is arbitrary and not consistent with what is practiced by school principals. The following are testimonies by several school principals about the training content:

“I feel that the training content can rarely be applied in our practices... it is merely theoretical, not practical... To be honest, some training is like a ritual. This kind of trainings is not as effective. So, I think the impact is not that obvious.” (I-9)

“I participated in school principal training for one month. But when I returned to work to face my annual work plan, I found that it actually didn’t help much.” (R-7)

“Generally, the training institute invited high-performing school principals to give us lectures and some of them were experts in the field. In that way, I learnt ways of improving my leadership competence. However, after the training, I realized that the theories they taught were totally not the same as in the actual situation. Some of the training content like how to manage your school and how to be better prepared for your role. But I wish training institutes would take into consideration the education condition in rural areas and practical problems of school principals.” (I-11)
School principals are expected to apply the theoretical knowledge which they learnt from training classes on their individual practices. However, some principals felt that the training content did not satisfy their professional development needs:

“Training content cannot satisfy school principals’ professional development needs. Firstly, most of the training curriculum still emphasizes on knowledge and skill training. Secondly, the curriculum is not updated and cannot be applied to the present situation.” (I-5)

From the above information provided by the school principals, we can see that the school principals were not optimistic and felt unsatisfied with the trainings they participated in. School principals expected to solve the problems they faced in their actual situation, via these trainings. The following school principal (I-3) expresses his discontent about the training he attended:

“Lots of content was covered, but our practical work needs were neglected. I participated in trainings when I just became a school principal. I was nervous and afraid because I felt that I may not be able to handle my job. At that time, I felt that I need to be trained urgently.” (I-3)

The importance of training has been recognized by many school principals. However, they have also reiterated the significance of the training content being applied to the particular context. In this nation, the tasks of school principal trainings are distributed to normal colleges and universities, by the education administrative departments. After the training venues are selected, participating school principals will be sent to the various training institutes. Training institutes devise their own training content according to the training requirements stipulated by the government authorities. However, it was found that the training content lacks sufficient attention to the actual needs of school principals,
based on their levels, regions and stages of professional development. Some of them may come from different regions and their schools performance outcomes may vary. For instance, school principals who come from underdeveloped regions may run schools with poor school conditions. Therefore, it is difficult for them to apply advanced theoretical concepts to their own schools, as commented by school principal I-4:

“School principal training is necessary, but what’s important is practice. The training should be based on the actual context of schools. The quality of teachers and students are also different. We should visit those schools with similar school context and learn from those principals… it will be more effective.” (I-4)

(c) Lack of Practical Sessions

As previously mentioned, the training programmes are knowledge-oriented, but principals are not able to apply their learning in their practices. Some of the training courses seem to be disconnected from the actual practices of school principals. As a result, integrating knowledge into actual practice has been the core factor that restricts the effectiveness of school principal training. “Learn and apply” is the motto that drives school principals for training. It is also evident that school principals are more eager to apply the knowledge and skills they had learnt from trainings, into their leadership practices. One principal expressed his opinion about the training he attended:

“The training was not very effective because in reality, leadership practice is restricted by the teaching environment.” (R-23)

It is crucial that school principal trainings should be factored in under the quality-oriented education and educational reform initiatives. The training content should therefore be more targeted and linked closely to the leadership practices of school
principals, which is in line with educational reformation, as expressed by school principal R-23 below:

“I think I am quite weak in terms of curriculum leadership, especially as our nation is emphasizing new curriculum reform; I wish the training programme can focus and improve on curriculum leadership and professional skills.” (R-23)

From the perspectives of school principals, it is clear that the training content needs to be relooked at and reorganized according to the new on-going education reformation in the nation. Besides, curriculum leadership training is an area that needs improving, as many of the school principals still lack knowledge and practical skills in this area. Another school principal revealed that the training content is still not aligned to the current education reformation, as well as the actual situation. They are more concerned with motivating and guiding teachers so that the academic achievement of students may be improved. One of the principal respondent also claimed that it is difficult to give consideration to both curriculum and the school’s reputation on academic results as most of the schools are competitive based on student’s score and the enrolment rate. The open ended questionnaire respondent R-23 further pointed out that the training content should emphasize more on the new reformation of education.

5.3.3.2 Training Method

The researcher enquired about the training method from the school principals who attended the trainings. The researcher was informed that, they sat still listening to the trainer’s prepared presentation. The training providers invited experienced principals to share their knowledge and school leadership experiences with the participants. The knowledge sharing sessions included ‘Trainer to Trainee’ and ‘Trainee to Trainee’
interactive sessions. This is good for the principals who often have many teaching classes every day. It is only when they can have peer communication and informal learning, that they are more encouraged.

Apart from that, it was found that, when there was no group discussion going on, the participants appeared to be disinterested in communicating with each other. Instead, they were found engrossed with their smartphones, browsing and texting while waiting for the session to proceed. One school principal described the training method as follows:

“They invited some high performing school principals to give lectures regarding management skills and developing personal qualities. Some training institutions hired professors from various colleges or universities to give lectures regarding theoretical concepts. We also visited some high-performing schools and observed how they manage their schools. We also communicated with other school principals and exchanged our views on our management experiences. The training we had participated was short... only four days or five days... maximum not more than one week... but generally it focused more on communication.” (I-10)

(a) Theoretical Emphasis

There has been a general dissatisfaction experienced by the principal participants regarding the training method adopted in the principal trainings. Some of the school principals complained about the training method used at various institutions, which are theory-based with no practical use:

“The quality of the provincial and municipal trainings is relatively low. There are several training courses taught by training teacher. I had participated in trainings organized by Henan Normal University and Henan Education Institute. Their original intentions were very good, but the end result was not so good. The training at East
China Normal University is very strict, but most of the training method used does not help much." (I-1)

“School principal trainings still mainly emphasizes on education and teaching. Both Qualification Training and Improvement Training cover too many theories. These trainings are mainly lecture-based and lack the practical aspect. From my viewpoint, during the field visits, school principals should be involved in the whole process concerning school management. We spend half a month studying about theories, and another half month staying in a particular school, just to participate in their school management.” (I-10)

“During the training process, the trainers give lectures on the platform, while the school principals passively accept the teachings... It is more of a theory course, with less practical emphasis.” (I-8)

(b) Two-way Communication

Many school principals pointed out about the lack of communication between training teachers and trainees. As a result, the training atmosphere is rather depressing, and school principals were always under a passive learning atmosphere that made them feel less motivated when undertaking the training programme. Below is a typical excerpt from one school principal:

“The opportunities for two-way communication were rare... the training times were too short. Moreover, in the limited time, trainers need to complete different disciplines and training tasks, which result in less communication between trainers and trainees.” (I-7)

(c) Combined Trainings

School principals pointed out that trainings are currently being conducted for both school principals and vice-school principals. The participants felt that because of the
hierarchy that exists between school principals and vice-school principals, the school principals trainings should not be combined with the trainings of vice-school principals. As one school principal said:

“The training institutes placed academic affairs school principals, logistics principals and school principals together. After attending so many trainings, I have still never seen a school principal training exclusively for school principals.” (I-11)

“I cannot understand why the training institutes mix school principals, vice-school principals and party secretaries together during the trainings; I do not think we should be put together as our responsibilities are different with one another.” (I-4)

This issue has caused many school principals lack the interest to participate in trainings. The following training organizer from a training institute attempts to clarify this issue:

“School principal trainings in Henan province can be divided into several modules, as arranged for vice-principals, school principals, and school secretaries. The intention for training institutes is to train school principals in batches according to their hierarchical and professional field… However, it is very difficult for training institutes to identify their actual leadership positions as the participants indirectly claim to be school principals, when they register for school principal trainings. We only realize who they are when they show up for trainings. That’s when the problems come out.” (T-2)

As training institutes continued to conduct targeted trainings with both principals and vice-principals, the school principal participants expressed their opinion regarding this issue:

“But as the training organizer, you should have a different purpose of training school principals and vice-school principals; you should try to avoid the occurrence of this phenomenon. You should know what kind of courses principal training involves, and what kind of courses vice-principal training involves, and after all, there is a huge gap between school principals and vice-school principals.” (I-4)
On a positive note, several school principals talked about the effectiveness of the training method used in the trainings:

“It was effective, especially the case study analysis on educational management. It helps me as a school principal to diagnose and solve the problems of school management.” (I-5)

“Among all the trainings that I had participated, I think theme-related case studies are very helpful. We shared our experiences and thoughts with other school principals, about school administration and management. We could reflect and compare our real situations. I also liked the topics on education justice, the problems of left-behind children and students’ mental health.” (I-2)

“I had participated in well-known school principal training. From my view, I personally think that I can gain the most from school field trips, especially through self-reflection and thoughts of high performing schools. However, the time spent was too short.” (I-3)

“Shadow training” was another aspect that the school principals favoured:

“In 2013, I had participated in ‘shadow training’, which was organized by Henan province and China Mobile. Throughout the whole journey I shadowed a school leader, and followed whatever the school principal did. I learned a lot, ...yes, I really learned a lot. I benefitted a lot from the advanced management module, teaching philosophy and philosophy of schooling. I found this training effective and very good.” (I-12)

“I think ‘shadow training’ was the most effective method, because I could communicate with experts and high-performing school principals and gained ideas about their management experiences and school operations.” (I-6)
From the above excerpts, it is obvious that school principals prefer experiential teaching. Their preferences for practical-based courses were part of the “shadow training” sessions which they participated in an actual school environment. School principals had the opportunity to observe other school principals’ leadership styles and management behaviors. This helped them understand the philosophy of schooling and management methods. Nevertheless, there were negative sentiments disclosed regarding the training sessions:

“Although we had the chance to visit quality schools, I found that the context of each school is different. Therefore, what I had listened to and observed is difficult to apply and implement in my own school.” (I-7)

Although, the intention of practical courses is to provide a real scenario for school principals, it is somehow difficult to obtain the right fitting school, because every school has its own context. Therefore, although school principals visit other high-performing schools, but the management methods may not be suitable for their own school due to the different context of each school.

5.3.3.3 Training Evaluation

According to Phillips & Phillips, (2016), training a targeted group of personnel involves the transfer of learning. Therefore, having an effective training evaluation is necessary to maintain training quality and to identify any inadequacies in the training implementation and the programme design. Throughout the trainings, the principals were notified about the end-of-training evaluation on the programme implementation and self-evaluation which includes feedback on the overall training quality. On the last day of training, a questionnaire and a self-evaluation form were distributed for all participants to
express their opinion on whether the programme had met the objectives and their own expectations. However, the school principals generally felt that the evaluations conducted by the education administrative department and the training institutes, are not reasonable:

“Before the training finished, they set aside a short while for us to fill up a questionnaire. They will take a short moment to share what we had gained from the training. Some training were organized by training institutes, and some were organized by our local education bureau, but generally the evaluation was not tightly organized.” (I-10)

(a) Monitoring and Follow-up

Training evaluation is actually an important means to assess the training effectiveness. The leadership practices of school principals need follow-up diagnosis and guidance from training institutes. However, all the school principals noted that there is no follow-up or monitoring of their leadership practices after trainings were finished. If school principals encountered any problems concerning their school leadership, they will look for solutions by themselves:

“I generally have to think by myself and seek for solutions by myself.” (I-7)

“Trainings were conducted but there was no follow up. They just informed us to attend training, after that they gave us some course material, and then started the lectures.” (I-9)

A training institute administrator also shared his view about the principal training evaluation:

“There is no specific index for training evaluation in Henan. There is a large difference between the National Training Plan and school principal trainings. If a training institute wants to bid for a training programme, they need to submit a
programme proposal, then experts will evaluate the proposal. After being approved, the training institute can implement it. The training evaluation by trainees, is supposed to evaluate the trainers based on quality training.” (T-2)

Other trainers shared their opinion about the training evaluations that they participated in:

“There isn’t any policy regarding principal training. Without specific execution standards, many things cannot be implemented and carried out... There is also no specific standard to evaluate school principals’ training results.” (T-4)

“After the training finished, the training institutes conduct the training evaluation, which I did several times by filling up a questionnaire survey online, and also through on my email.” (I-12)

Training evaluation is just a final achievement test, basically in the form of an open book... They never conduct a training needs analysis before the training.” (I-10)

(b) Lack of Rigorous Evaluation

It can be seen that the evaluation process lacks stringent tracking measures that can be beneficial for the professional development of school principal. Without a systematic evaluation system in place, the school principals also felt that participating in trainings would not make much of a difference in their professional development:

“There is no big difference whether the training effect is good or not.” (I-11)

However, there was a lot of positive commentary gathered from the training institutes regarding the school principal training. The researcher was intrigued to know why the school principals perceived their principal trainings as not effective, despite the positive
commentary found in the training summary, gathered from the training institutes. Here was the response from principal I-4:

“You cannot say that the training has no effect. The training institutes did ask us to fill some evaluation forms, without revealing our names; I believe this evaluation might be relatively pertinent.” (I-4)

5.3.3.4 Quality of Training Institutes

Training institutes are responsible for training activities, and for determining training effectiveness at the end of the training. Han & Dong (2014) and Wu (2009) found that school principal trainings in China are moving from the conventional one-way communication to a more scientific and systematic mode of training. Although, training methods underwent improvement after years of progress, diversified training methods are widely implemented to create a dynamic learning method. However, Zhou (2015) discovered that each training method has its restrictions and functional limitations and cannot be compatible with each other. Thus, training institutes have been in search for advancing and perfecting their training methods, but there has been no fundamental breakthrough (Tian, et al., 2012).

In this study, there were three levels of training institutes involved in the field observation, namely county level, city level and provincial level. The quality of the training institutes was evaluated based on the training facilities, quality of trainers’ and the learning environment in the institutes. At the county level, it was found that the facilities available were not well developed and that there is still room for improvement. The Information Technology related classes, are not computer-aided. Presentation slides were shown throughout the class. Provincial training centres are well developed and
equipped with a special computer room for the Information Technology class, whereas the city level training centres are average compared to both county and provincial level.

In term of trainers, provincial and city level training centres provide professional trainers who are experienced to deliver speeches and conduct sharing sessions with the participants. County level trainers performed slightly worse than the other two levels, as the assigned trainers are still at the elementary training level and are yet to be proficient in superior training skills. The learning environment in provincial training centres is conducive and comfortable, as participants found it relaxed and conducive for learning. Since the trainings were often held during summer breaks, the training centres in the city and county levels were often found to be less comfortable as a result of hygienic issues due to the absence of cleaners during the summer holidays.

It is important that training institutes are comfortable for participants who attend the trainings, despite their busy schedule and having to sacrifice their family time to attend these trainings. Thus, it is important that training institutes ensure the continuous improvement of the training programmes and maintain the quality of the training institutes.

(a) Principal Leadership Needs

The profound shortcoming of the institutes is that the quality and quantity of training faculties cannot meet the professional development needs of school principals. This matter was pointed out by the following two school principals:
“Training institutes did not pay enough focus on school principals’ actual needs. Also, training experts are rare.” (I-4)

“To be honest, the competent teacher trainers at the county level is limited. Actually, they did not have any teaching experiences. After they graduated from colleges and universities, they were assigned to training schools. Some of them were employed there because of connections. In reality, trainings are casually arranged, and many training teachers know nothing about leadership theories.” (I-14)

The above comments provided by the school principals suggest that the quality and quantity of training teachers are obviously unable to meet the training needs and the leadership development of school principals. This has resulted in school principals having a very negative impression about training teachers.

(b) **Credibility of Trainers**

The training teachers do not have practical experience in actual school leadership, as they have not been a school principal before. This was pointed out by one school principal:

“The training staffs are not school principals.... they are pseudo-experts.... They are dealing with top-level school leadership, without having actual experience as a school leader. Conducting school principal trainings in their own training institute, in my opinion, is not useful.” (I-1)

According to the opinion of the principal participant, knowing the actual needs of school principals is important as it can then be useful to look into ways of improving the quality of preparation and professional development for school principals.
Most of the training teachers are just academic staffs from universities or educational scientific research departments who do not have the experience of school leadership. They do not know the real context of principal leadership practices and therefore, their trainings may be disconnected from actual leadership practice. The following are comments from school principals regarding the training teachers’ capabilities:

“Some of the training teachers are just ordinary teachers. They are teachers from teacher training schools and colleges of education. They do not have much administrative management and education management experiences.” (I-7)

“The training teachers’ theoretical knowledge may be high, but because they do not have experience as school principals, therefore, the theory they teach in class cannot be connected to school principals’ real practice.” (I-11)

“Generally, training teachers of teacher training schools, at the national level are not qualified. School principal training classes should be taught by managers, but we were lectured by ordinary teachers. These are teachers who have never been a school principal for even a day... neither have they managed a school for even a day.” (I-15)

Another school principal commented that training institutes should pay attention to the concerns raised by school principals regarding the suitability of the present teacher trainers who do not have actual experiences in school leadership. This principal points out the situation and problems that training teachers may face:

“We may be principal trainees, but training organizations and the relevant departments should listen to our advice and concerns regarding teacher trainers. We as the front-line governors know best about school leadership.” (I-1)

Regarding the above information, school principals implicitly emphasize their dominant position in school principal leadership, and further pointed out that training
teachers should respect the experiences of school principals. They also feel that the present training teachers are not qualified for their role as trainers. Although some of them were not satisfied with the quality of training teachers, the following school principal gave a positive comment regarding the training teachers:

“To be honest, some of the teachers are very nice in giving the training.” (I-10)

(c) Shortage of Trainers with Professional Expertise

Most of the training institutes do not have sufficient training teacher experts. The shortage of training experts has become a bottleneck that restricts the professional development of school principals. The following are comments made by training organizers regarding the training teachers:

“Training institutions lack qualified training resources and training teachers” (T-2)

“Teacher trainers are not strong enough. On the one hand, it is also about quantity,…there is a lack of training teachers, which results in work overload; on the other hand, the teachers’ quality is not good, …those who really know about educational leadership are rarely … Our training teachers do not have the experience as a school manager, so it is difficult to know or grasp school leadership ideology.” (T-1)

“The qualification system and evaluation system for teacher trainers have not been properly established, and this is the main reason for the low quality training resources.” (T-3)

Even some of the training teachers were developed from former trainees, one training organizer said:
“One of the training teachers worked in many training institutes in Henan province. He was a much unknown teacher previously... He worked in our institute since 2007. The effect was very good. We guided him. He also struggled by himself.” (T-2)

“Real experts need to have forward-looking ideas and broad visions, but we lack this kind of training teachers in China.” (T-6)

The importance of training institutes’ capacity and training teachers’ specialization was made evident by both school principals and training organizers. They acknowledged the lack of qualified trainers as a concern for the preparation and professional development of school principals. In addition, the excessive number of training institutions is another reason for the mediocre quality of training institutes. Currently, the education administrative department, and Government Department are the main sponsors of training institutions. According to Dong (2010), the current training institutes and the investment of training funds are not entirely regulated by the system, but it has political influence with the government.

5.3.3.5 Training Fund

The limited training fund is an obstacle and challenge faced across most areas of Henan Province, especially in underdeveloped areas without an adequate educational budget for school principals’ trainings. This perspective of challenges is to see in details in two factors: high demand of training fund and lack of government support.
(a) **High Demand of Training Fund**

There is a greater demand for principal trainings in the Henan province compared to more developed areas of China. School principals are required to pay a proportion of the training fee, and this has been an added burden for school principals. In some cases, the high costs tend to fade away their enthusiasm for attending principal trainings:

“Generally, the training expense is covered by our school, but the training colleges also have a training fund to support the training expenses, ...but we pay most of it. Training expense is mainly our course material fees. The cost of school visits was high... about several thousand dollars...Due to the high cost covered under the public funding of schools, I felt hesitant to go for the school visits.” (I-10)

“I do not have the money to participate in trainings, although I have to attend trainings, because the policy stipulates that trainings are linked with job promotion. Moreover, I think that there is an imbalance in the level of trainings offered for school principals. The quota for school principal advanced training in our region is limited and there are even fewer opportunities for us to go to Beijing to attend advanced training.” (I-2)

(b) **Lack of Governmental Support**

In recent years, training funds provisioned by the government has been reduced. There appears to be a contradiction between the increasing training demand by school principals and the shortage of training funds. The following are the different opinions gathered from training organizers regarding training funds:

“Because of the lack of funding for school principal training in Henan province, I need to hire experts in order to ensure the quality of training. But I need sufficient money to do this...What I receive from the government and the education administrative department is not enough to support my training programme... this impacts the school principal trainings, especially in underdeveloped areas.” (T-2)
“School principal training mainly relies on government funding. These trainings are administered by the Personnel Department of Henan Province. However, in Henan province, government funding is restricted. It is an embarrassing situation to ask school principals to pay for the training fee. Under the political and economic situation, it is not good to receive money, so as a result, we do not conduct the training.” (T-1)

For a long time, school principal training institutes at the national level have limited funds and poor facilities. Under the current system of education, the training fund for school principals actually depends on the local economic development. However, this is not the only reason. Networking and political connection is another important factor that determines the investment of school principal training funds. As one school principal commented:

“The magnitude of training funds depends on how strong your relationship is with the local government and education administrative department. If you know the leader of the local education bureau, definitely you would have more opportunities and funding approved to go for training.” (I-2)

This situation implies that the administration of training funds has not been fully established and is regarded as biased. School principals along with training organizers have showed that the shortage of training funds has become a big issue concerning school principal trainings. Firstly, the investment of training funds usually has rigid constraints. There are no specific provisions made for training fund allocation, except for verbal orders from the education administrative departments. The shortage of training funds can impact the professional development of school principals. Moreover, some training institutes do
not wish to take over the entire responsibility of running school principals trainings as remarked by one of the training organizers:

“Without enough training funds, we can only reduce the size of the training class and the number of school principal participants.” (T-1)

Meanwhile, the restricted training funds have had a negative impact on the recruitment of quality training teachers and the execution of principal trainings on the whole.

5.3.3.6 Training Time

It is evident that efficient school principals are associated with proper time management (Claessens et al., 2007; Grissom et al., 2015; Hall & Hursch, 1982; Jamal, 1984; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Orpen, 1994). However, it is reported that in China, the principals are challenged by managing their time as their job tasks are preoccupied with administrative management affairs, attending meetings and networking. This leaves them less time to think about their professional development (Chu, 2009; Liang, 2005; Zhang, 2012). The Researcher found that the principals were generally busy, even during their summer breaks. In welcoming a new school term, the school leaders are required to attend meetings and prepare an agenda for school management and teacher management, as instructed by the Ministry of Education. Unfortunately, trainings are often scheduled during summer breaks when school leaders are busy preparing for their new school term and are usually preoccupied with newly added policies by the ministry. Participating in trainings also interrupts their family time and their work schedule.
(a) Principals Busy Routine

Several school principals pointed out that they are very busy with their daily routine work and this is one of the main reasons for not participating in school principal trainings. The following are the comments and reasons provided by various school principals about their busy routines and not being able to participate in principals trainings:

“I need to attend to a mass amount of appraisals and evaluations that makes me very busy at work, I do not have time for training. Sometimes, I participate in training programmes for short periods, but this impacts my routine work.” (I-2)

“Nevertheless, there are too many things that need to be done at our school. As a school principal I need to manage everything concerning my school, and so there is no time to consider training. School principals also face problems managing their school and distributing their work, but I do not have time for training.” (I-8)

“I define the role of a school principal as a housekeeper. They have to manage everything. Rural schools are too small, and they do not have proper infrastructure and facilities. Some of the primary schools in villages and towns do not even have a vice-principal and that makes the principal not have time for training, to improve our personal management competency.” (I-15)

“I have no energy to think about others and cannot even finish my assigned tasks.” (I-14)

“Routine school management, plus meetings, and having to deal with all kinds of school inspections. Basically, from the beginning of the semester, my work schedule for the semester is already fully assigned, but in between, there are a lot of ad hoc meetings that I need to attend.” (I-5)

“Being a school principal means that your work is never done. It is very difficult to get out of administrative affairs. Moreover, within a short training period, it is impossible to absorb and digest a great deal of information … considering my energy level and limited time.” (I-11)

“It’s hard for school principals to participate in trainings due to the limited of time we have. This is a very common problem we face especially in our region... Our leave
system is also very strict, regardless of whether it is for official business or for personal reason. If I want to take leave for one week I need to obtain approval from the relevant authorities.” (I-10)

From the above interview excerpts, we can see that school principals spend a lot of time with their daily school management affairs and it is difficult for them to find time for training. Some school principals expressed that they looked at other alternatives such as finding another participant to attend the training on their behalf:

“If I do not have time, I will ask my vice-principal to replace me and attend the training. As a school principal I am really busy. It leaves me no choice but to ask my vice-school principal to attend the training on my behalf.” (I-7)

“During one of the trainings I attended, I remember witnessing a participant signing under a different name and I asked him why. He told me that his school principal was busy and does not have time to attend the training, so I replace him.” (I-2)

Such practices also indicated that school principals do not always realize the true value and importance of participating in school principal trainings. They consider trainings as a task assigned by their superior which required them to fulfill.

(b) Principal Teaching Duties

Some principals get their subordinates to replace them for training, because of their heavy teaching schedule. This is very common especially in under developed regions, where the working time of school principals conflict with the training schedule:

“I also teach classes at school, if I want to go for training, it is possible during the vacations, but during class time I am occupied with teaching, so I cannot go for training at that time.” (I-9)

“The time for intensive trainings should not be too long, especially for school principals who have classes. If I attend training, I will have to cancel my class. This
is a big problem. Also, if the training was not compulsory, I will not want to participate.” (I-10)

The findings from the principal interviews show that principals teaching schedule and their daily school management duties are the main reasons why they can’t always participate in school principals’ training. Battling with the lack of energy and time has become a big challenge for them. In addition, effective time management is an area that these school principals need to pay more attention to, as this can affect the efficiency of their leadership practices.

5.3.3.7 Training Incentives

Training incentives should be provided to entice school principals to participate in principal trainings. Salary is the incentive, which plays an important role in improving the work enthusiasm of school principals (Lv, 2004; Yang, 2003). Moreover, the professional status and reputation of school principals are the main pursuit for their professional development.

(a) Poor Incentives

School principals are motivated if there is an incentive mechanism and a reasonable compensation system in place. This can be seen as a motivating factor that drives school principals to be more proactive with their leadership practices. Wu (2009) demonstrates that performance-based remunerations tends to have a value-added effect on school principals’ performance. However, under the education reform initiative, school principals are pressured with the heavy workload and poor wages received. Below are some comments by school principals regarding incentive mechanism:

“Without good incentive mechanism, it’s just a waste of time.” (I-11)
“At present, school principals have big responsibilities and heavy workload, but our salary is not much different from teachers. It has caused many of us to be not willing to work as school principals, especially in our area... Moreover, there are too many inspections that we need to do. We need to work overtime when we do inspections but we don’t get paid for working overtime. Our giving and receiving are not in direct proportion, and so many qualified professionals do not want to be school principals.” (I-10)

School principals in this province, lack the initiative and motivation to participate in trainings. It could be partly due to the absence of a post training follow-up with participants who may like to know about the effectiveness of the trainings and whether they are getting the most out of the money and time spent at these trainings. This was pointed out by school principal I-11:

“After the training has finished and all the work is done, nobody seems to care about the effectiveness of the training. Actually training institutes should evaluate the training effectiveness. We go for trainings because of the national policy, rather than our willingness.” (I-11)

(b) Training Qualifications for Job Promotion

Some school principals expressed that by participating in school principal trainings, they would be awarded with a qualification certificate that entitles them for a job promotion. Some of the school principals felt that this was an incentive for them to participate in principal trainings:

“School principals have to attend all kinds of trainings, in order to get the qualification certificate from the education administrative department. This certificate will be useful for our future promotion.” (I-10)
“I do not want to participate in trainings, but I have to do so, because the policy stipulates that trainings are associated with the promotion.” (I-16)

The following is a comment made by a training organizer regarding promotions:

“Nowadays all the school principals attend trainings, just for getting a qualification certificate. Everyone needs this certificate.” (T-2)

From the above comments, it is clear that some school principals attended trainings to obtain training certificates, rather than to improve their leadership capacity. This shows that some of the school principals do not realize the importance and the need for principal professional development. Their passive participation at trainings, was revealed by one of the school principals:

“Trainings are assigned by superior government officials. Most of the school principals are passive participants at trainings, rather than willing to participate actively.” (I-8)

Similarly, a training provider also shared his opinion about the passive involvement of school principals during trainings:

“School principals are not active during the training process... they did not pay much attention to the training.” (T-1)

The following are further views of training organizers regarding the attitude of principal participants during the trainings:
“Some of the school principals’ appeared disinterested in learning and seemed not motivated to actively engage in the training. They don’t value the trainings and they seem to lack of critical thinking.” (T-3)

“For some participants, they come with the attitude that they do not want training but since they have been asked to come, they show up for the training.”  (T-2)

It is evident that trainings are based on the administrative orders imposed on selected school principals. Many of them comply to these orders as instructed by the education administrative departments. This tends to demotivate some of the school principals, who feel that they are forced to participate in trainings. Regardless of the training schedule, some may even arrive late, leave early or are absent from the training classes. The following school principal shared his observation of some of the participants at the training sessions he attended:

“When the training class was held in our region, it is common to see school principals in class for two days and then after, they leave. School principals who live near to the training place, will leave immediately after the roll call... I observed that the training teachers had no choice. There were too many trainees for the training teachers to manage. Also they can’t be overly strict with the trainees... sometimes they do not even know these school principals.” (I-10)

Here are the views of a training organizer, who expressed that trainings for school principals were not highly valued by the government and that it restricts the professional development of school principals:

“Actually, another big challenge is that the government and education administrative leaders do not highly value school principal trainings... It is not like the National Training Plan, which has instructive policies and people to manage it. In Henan Province, only the Henan Education Institute has two school principal training classes per year, and this only began in the recent two years.” (T-2)
5.3.4 Research Question 4: What are the constraints and challenges faced by secondary school principals of Henan province, China regarding their leadership practices?

In order to better understand the leadership practices of school principals in Henan, China, it is crucial to comprehend the constraints and challenges that they faced. The constraints in practising their leadership ability that we are looking at are on identifying the hindering factors that weaken their leadership influence and application. Six aspects of constraints are outlined in the sub-sections below: (1) education reform and new curriculum reform, (2) principals responsibilities, power and benefits, (3) school fund, (4) teacher management, (5) principals busy schedule, and (6) principals innovative capacity.

5.3.4.1 Education Reform and New Curriculum Reform

Quality education has been the focus of the educational reform initiative since 2001. However, the curriculum and education reforms have brought about a series of constraints and challenges that have impacted the leadership practices of school principals. In the following section school principals from varying backgrounds, discussed about the constraints and challenges they faced from various aspects such as student enrolment rate, staff issues, and funding.

(a) Students Enrolment Rate

The majority of school principals pointed out that their student enrolment rate is the biggest challenge that faced:
“The student enrolment rate is an important index which is associated with the quality of a school because a high enrolment rate tells of your leadership ability. Quality leadership is highly recognized by parents, society and our superior leaders. They only care about students’ scores… scores are more important than leadership abilities.” (I-13)

This idea was also supported by several other school principals, who emphasized the importance of quality education, student recruitment and the student enrolment rate, which determined the overall recognition of principal leadership:

“The government advocates quality-education, but once the students’ enrolment is out, the local education bureau will announce schools’ rankings according to the enrolment rate. Students’ enrolment is a very important factor that affects the school’s student recruitment.” (I-2)

“Currently, the main challenge that school principals are facing is the conflict of exam-oriented education and quality-oriented education… At present, the achievement of high school entrance examinations and college entrance examinations are still how people judge the education quality. It acts as the key index to judge whether people are satisfied with the education system or not.” (I-14)

“Actually, schools are having cut-throat competition. There is heavy emphasis placed on children’s exam scores. Each school wishes to attract qualified students, and so, as a school principal, you have to let people trust your abilities to run a school effectively. Basically, in the final year of high school, all extracurricular activities are cancelled in order to allow students to fully concentrate on their national exam.” (I-5)

Society has very high expectations from school principals. The sustainability and development of schools are reflected in the school’s standard operating procedures, with particular emphasis on education quality. This results in stiff competition among schools. Hence, regardless of how the nation advocates quality-oriented education, the student
enrolment rate is an important index used to evaluate the leadership performance of school principals. As a result, school principals are always on the lookout for high achieving students. Improving the enrolment rate is seemingly the top priority and a challenge for school principals. The following school principal spoke of his awareness regarding quality education:

“Actually, as school principals we are all pretty clear what the problem is. We also want to make changes and implement quality education to improve student learning and help reduce work stress for teachers.” (I-5)

However, another school principal argued about the lack of attention paid towards students’ holistic development:

“Education is too rigid. There’s an over emphasis on academic education without paying enough attention to students’ balanced development.” (I-8)

(b) Exam-Oriented Education

Students, teachers and school principals are very anxious about the exam-oriented education, as the whole society is highly concerned about student exam scores. Besides, school principals are also seeking different ways of improving the enrolment rate of students. Below is the testimony from a school principal who shows concern for his school’s low performance:

“Compared to other schools in Shangqiu, our school is relatively weak. In recent years the exam scores and quality of student resources has been low… our school is difficult to manage in terms of administration, management and teaching.” (I-12)

During the principal interviews, they were questioned about what they wished to gain professionally by participating in the trainings. Quite a number of school principals
provided similar responses about wanting to learn how to lead teachers and students towards the betterment of their schools. At present, the enrolment rate seems to be the only standard used to form judgment about schools and school principals. However, one of the biggest challenges for school principals is how to deal with exam-oriented education emphasis and quality-oriented educational reforms. Moreover, in rural areas school principals are challenged by poor school conditions and the quality of teachers. The following are some of the comments expressed by school principals regarding the challenges they face in leading rural schools:

“For schools in rural areas, without qualified teachers, and without proper infrastructures, how do you insist on quality education? It is beyond my ability. School principals’ achievement only relies on boosting students’ scores. The enrolment in rural areas is very low, and it is difficult for schools to recruit students who score high marks. Most of the high performing students go to urban cities to further their studies. As a result, the poorer performing students are the ones left behind in rural areas. It’s a vicious circle, and school principals can’t do much.” (I-4)

Another school principal added:

“The problem I is we are not happy and satisfied with the Chinese education system, especially the educational policies and curriculum reform which have been implemented in China. Students and teachers’ are continually burdened, and we have still not solved these issues.” (I-2)

Although curriculum and education reforms have been implemented throughout the nation, the education system is still very much exam-oriented. School principals are being pressured into prioritizing societal demands for achieving results. The following school principals shared their views on exam-oriented education:
“Exam-oriented education has been rooted in our society for thousands of years. It is not easy to make changes within a short period of time.” (I-13)

“Quality-oriented education is like a health care product, while exam-oriented education is the medicine. In this situation nothing can be changed a reformation of the entire education system.” (I-14)

School principals are generally concerned about exam-oriented education and quality-oriented education, because exam-oriented education has been deeply rooted in this nation. With exam-oriented education, there is heightened competition between schools. School principals are more inclined towards driving quality education, rather than having to focus on high academic scores viewed as a criterion to assess the achievement of school principals.

(c) School-based Management

The majority of school principals are struggling with the concept of adapting school-based management. As one school principal pointed out that:

“As a school principal, if you do not adopt new educational concepts, you cannot lead teachers and implement education reforms. It is a big challenge for school principals’ to develop their leadership capacity.” (I-2)

The development of school-based management is an important factor that tests the professional ability of school principals. However, the contradiction between schools’ capacities and the requirement of the new curriculum reform has resulted in difficulties faced by principals during the real implementation. Below are some statements that reflect the views of several school principals’ regarding curriculum reform:
“The new curriculum reform has both requirements on software and hardware facilities. Our school does not have the money to buy relevant equipment, and we also lack teachers who are experts in this field. New curriculum reform also requires school principals to have connection with curriculum experts, but I can rarely connect with curriculum experts. Moreover, the limited funds we face, as well as teachers’ quality, pose challenges that can slow down the progress of curriculum reform.” (I-13)

Another school principal also pointed out the root cause that retards curriculum reform:

“The government just gives us orders and tells us to execute the curriculum reform initiatives, without giving us any specific guidance on how to go about the implementation... The system does not reform, so how are we expected to reform the curriculum?” (I-4)

School principals still expressed their desires to make changes towards better development of their schools. However, the fear of change does pose an obstacle for some school principals, as indicated by school principal I-3 below:

“Fear of change, sometimes really want to apply the advanced theory and education concepts into my practice, but also afraid of bad results. Sometimes, it is difficult to implement, teachers and parents do not support your ideas, they are also afraid of new decision and new changes that will influence their own interests or students’ interests. This is why it is very difficult to change the status quo of school principals’ leadership and restricts school principals’ professional development.” (I-3)

From the above expressions, curriculum reform is restricted by teacher faculty, teaching facilities, curriculum resources and school principals’ capacity. School principals’ are required to deal with these contradictions and eventually find ways of strategically promoting curriculum reform under the drive of school-based management.
5.3.4.2 Principals Responsibilities, Power and Benefits

(a) Safety and Security in Schools

During the interview, most of the school principals spoke of the education system and the how it is intertwined with their responsibilities, power and interest. School principals generally felt that safety issues are too big a responsibility for them. Usually when an unlikely event occurs, the school principal is the first person to act and take charge of the situation. Below are the comments made by school principal I-13 regarding security in schools:

“Security is one aspect of our work as a school principal. We have taken measure to establish a reliable security system, to prevent any accidents from taking place. As a precautionary measure, we adopt the necessary security protocols in the interest of ensuring the safety of students. Some parents make a fuss over various issues and sometimes take a lawsuit against the school. This is very bad for both the school and school principals’ reputation. This is why safety is always a priority.” (I-13)

Other school principals also shared similar views regarding the added responsibilities of principals in having to oversee security issues:

“If an accident occurs, the school principal is the person responsible for handling the situation.” (I-10)

Other school principals provided their views explain this as follow:

“If our school participates in any event organized by the education administrative department, we can be rest assured that students will attend. We always follow whatever the education administrative department instruct us to do, and we do not dare take any other action.” (I-2)

“It is not easy to be a school principal, because as a school principal I have to manage the school’s administrative operations, and be well-versed with political ideology, otherwise, you might be reprimanded.” (I-13)
According to the principal testimonies above, safety is the top priority of school principals. For a long time, school principals have been influenced by Confucian ideals of moderation. Some of them feel safe ‘as long as there is no accident that takes place, is enough. (I-4)’

(b) Lack of School Autonomy

The education system is centralized and schools are governed by the Chinese central government. In the actual situation, school principals do not have the autonomy to make school-related decisions without the approval of the relevant government departments. Below are the remarks made by several school principals who complained about the lack of school autonomy:

“It is said that the nation advocates principal autonomy in schools, but in actual situations, particularly for public schools, principals have to report everything to the education bureau and relevant departments. If they do not approve, we cannot do it.” (I-2)

“School principals are like a puppet. We do not really have the power to make important decisions concerning our school. The system is not decentralized, so we tend to be over cautious.” (I-3)

“A lot of things are controlled by the education departments but the accountability and responsibility of school outcomes are placed on the school principals’. I wish the government can make school-based management happens in our education system.” (I-2)

“School principals in rural areas do not have rights. They are mere policy executors and do not have the power to make decisions. For example, my school needs two more music teachers, but I do not have the authority to conduct a recruitment interview, or reject the mathematics teacher that the education bureau had sent instead.” (I-15)
Currently, the education departments are in control and school principals are required to manage their schools without being given the autonomy to do so. The findings in this study indicate that the education departments are over controlling and schools lack the vigor and vitality needed for an improved school climate. With limited power and subjected to local government authorities, school principals are continually under huge pressure. In China, the government still functions as the governing authority known for their centralized decision-making powers. On the other hand, decentralization and shared decision-making has unfolded in various countries as an international educational trend. However, such is not the case in this nation, where the notion of decentralization and autonomy is perceived as a rhetorical façade, associated with political propaganda.

(c) Principals Remuneration

School principal’s remuneration is allocated according to their position and responsibilities. Moreover, their performance is further assessed through a system of ‘rewards and punishment’. Some of the school principals are discontented with their current wage level, as they claim that their salaries do not commensurate with their workload and effort. The following are some of their views regarding this issue:

“I am busy from morning till night, but, my pay is way below the effort I’ve put in.” (I-6)

“At present, school principals have big responsibilities and heavy workload, but our salary is no different from teachers. As a result, many school principals do not want to be a school principal.” (I-10)
There are educational policies that govern school principals’ responsibilities, rights and interests. Policies concerning principals and school heads have been implemented in this nation since 1985. However, in reality, they are not clearly defined.

5.3.4.3 School Fund

The government provides funding for schools. Nevertheless, the shortage of funds is a huge constraint for school principals who need to lead and manage their schools. It can also affect the growth and development of schools.

(a) Shortage of School Funds and Heavy Debt

Shortage of funds and heavy debts are the problems generally faced by school principals. Here are some comments from school principals regarding funding in their respective schools:

“My school condition is quite poor. To change it, we need a lot of money, but raising funds is difficult.” (I-13)

“In my school’s situation, a new campus has been set up and our financial debt is more than 50,000,000 Yuan.” (Chinese currency). (I-1)

Basically, schools need financial support to improve their school conditions, but due to the shortage of the government’s financial allocation of education funds, schools are unable to obtain funds for their school development needs. Generally, school principals are challenged by the problem of raising funds, as informed by one of them below:
“The funds needed for running a school are not small. If there’s not enough funds, you need to source for it from the government or education administrative departments.” (I-2)

(b) Government Financial Allocation

School principals are highly dependent on the government’s financial allocation, provisioned in both underdeveloped and developed areas. One school principal shared his experience:

“In my opinion, the biggest challenge schools face in Henan province, especially Shangqiu, is an economic-related problem concerning school debt. The school pays salary to hundreds of teachers, but the school has a debt of more than sixty million because of a private investment that they need to pay back.” (I-11)

Financial debt is one of the most difficult problems faced by most of the school principals. They have expressed that they require money to improve their school’s infrastructure, for supporting teaching activities as well as for school management purposes. However, due to the shortage of funds, it somehow affects the overall teaching quality.

5.3.4.4 Teacher Management

Teacher management is one of the constraints and challenges faced by school principals. It will be discussed in the following section, based on three aspects, the shortage, attitude and conflicts of teachers. Since teacher management is the core mission of schools, teaching quality is an important concern.
(a) **Shortage of Teachers**

Shortage of teachers is a critical issue faced by school principals. The following school principals have pointed out some of the challenges they face due to the shortage of teachers:

“The challenge we are facing is the lack of teachers especially since the implementation of the ‘two-children’ policy. There have been many teachers taking maternity leave. Some schools have nine or eight teachers, so when one or two take maternity leave or sick leave, what should I do? This is a very serious problem that school principals are facing currently, especially in rural areas.” (I-10)

Another school principal added:

“I think the obstacle that I am facing right now is currently an actual situation. Of course, it is difficult to handle! Firstly, there is a serious shortage of teachers. Moreover, our school’s condition is not good. The third point is my limited capacity... scarce capacity.” (I-11)

During school management, school principals need to solve all kinds of contradictions and conflicts that they are challenged by. Among these conflicts, teacher management is particularly prominent. Two of the following school principals expressed the challenges they face regarding teacher quality and teacher turnover:

“As far as I know, the government has not issued any laws or regulations that govern teachers’ appointments. Teachers cannot be promoted, demoted or dismissed based on their performance, which seriously affects the teaching quality. I think, regarding this matter, the government should devolve their power to school principals, and give more importance to school-based management.” (I-2)

“We lack funding as well as adequate personnel. Although, there is an appointment hiring system in place, but there is no employment bond enforced on the teachers. So if a teacher does not wish to work here, he can leave and work for another school.” (I-8)
(b) Dealing with Difficult Teachers

School principals are finding it difficult to manage their teachers. They complained that appointment policies should take into account the problems faced by principals, such as teacher management. There is no emphasis placed on high quality teaching. Teacher teams are very difficult to manage because of their different interests, as pointed out by one school principal:

“Although, a school is a small unit, it can still have a variety of problems we face, such as teacher evaluation. Whom do we select as excellent teachers? Some teachers offer gifts to make you feel obliged to select them. Some even threaten us... I feel very stressed by these issues.” (I-6)

Managing teachers is a difficult task for some of the school principals. Some principals are concerned about the evaluation system that is assessed by high-ranking government officials and their teachers. The following school principal remarks about the appraisal process:

“The evaluation system of school principals is conducted by superior education administrative officers, and teachers. Some of the school principals are afraid to criticize or point out the faults of teachers, because they are afraid that the teachers may give them a low appraisal.” (I-2)

The findings indicate that school principals are facing the challenge of building teacher teams. Building teacher teams is one of the concerns for most school principals in Henan. Under the new curriculum reform, schools have high requirements for building teachers’
capacity, although the number of quality teachers is limited. However, the structure of teacher team is somehow unreasonable, as pointed out by one school principal:

“We have a case where the geography class is taught by an art teacher” (I-13).

The low wages is also another reason why some of the teachers’ work enthusiasm is not high, and their job satisfaction is also not good. Some of the teachers are looking for other ways to make money after their school hours. This was pointed out by one principal:

“The majority of teachers have second jobs outside, which makes them not fully focused on their own teaching job. It seems that teaching is their spare job. Everybody is busy trying to make extra money.” (I-4)

It is common practice that some teachers have side businesses as an alternative to their lack of professional self-identity. This can be strenuous for the teachers and teacher attrition is another issue that bothers school principals:

“Schools in rural areas, like ours, with poor conditions, find it hard to retain our teachers. Teachers who have connections try to find a way to transfer to county schools. I want to retain my teachers by giving them good remuneration, but this school has no money. Sometimes I want to hold activities to give teachers some subsidy, but everything has to be reported. (I-9)

According to the following school principals, they feel that teachers are more interested in higher salaries:

“Actually, nowadays teachers are not interested if you talk to them about their professional development. They are only interested if you talk to them about how to
improve their salary, anything to do with their welfare, or how to solve the problems they care most about." (I-1)

If other schools can offer higher salary or better working conditions, teachers will usually transfer out to these schools." (I-6)

Teachers, who are more capable, are not willing to stay in poor performing schools, especially when they have a better offer. From the above information provided by the school principals, we can see that salary is an important factor that affects the working enthusiasm of teachers. It is therefore a challenging task for school principals to retain their teachers, especially when they are offered better salary packages.

5.3.4.5 Principals Busy Schedule

When asked about the constraints and challenges faced by school principals, the majority of them strongly opposed the rigid targets enforced by the superior departments (government authorities) which gave them a lot of pressure. Various meetings and inspections that followed, were very time consuming, that principals did not have time for teaching management. The following school principals share their experiences and concerns regarding their busy schedule and how it impacts them:

“Education bureau gives school principals a series of tasks, which they have to complete. If you don’t finish it, they will criticize you, and reveal your name during the meeting.” (I-13)

“There are too many meetings to attend... all kinds of meetings that are never-ending.” (I-2)

“80% of the time, school principals are involved in their school daily management; 10 to 15 percent of the time, we deal with inspections. School principals’ work schedule is booked up since the beginning of the semester, and we also need to conduct a series of safety procedures. Sometimes even these tasks cannot be finished. Moreover, we need
the time to suddenly organize some ad hoc school activities that bound to emerge. As a result, school principals are juggling with too many different tasks. I suffered from neurasthenia due to work exhaustion. The present situation of primary and secondary school management can be described as appalling.” (I-15)

Schools have to deal with all kinds of assessments, evaluations and tests. As a result, school principals are too busy and are experiencing severe fatigue. Moreover, numerous administrative orders seem to interfere with other aspects of school management. Frequent interferences can make school principals run out of energy to focus on teaching management. These are comments from school principals regarding teaching management:

“After all, the school is a place for teaching, and the school principal as the top leader of a school, should have time for teaching management. However, school principals are always busy. They do not have time to concentrate on teaching management. For instance, you need to evaluate teachers’ performance after observing their lessons. School principals’ have the knowledge base and teaching ability to handle this. As a school principal without this kind of ability, teachers will not be convinced by your leadership.” (I-2)

“School principals are very busy, to the point that it does not make sense” (I-13).

Heavily workload takes a toll on school principals. It can even cause stress and cause health problem, as remarked by this school principal:

“too much pressure...I have been mentally exhausted... Now I’m having neurasthenia and insomnia problems.” (I-6)
School principals complain that they hardly have private time to themselves. They need to attend meetings, trainings and have to cope with inspection duties. The school principal below gave voice to his situation:

“When we can relax, we are not so tired! School principals are also human beings, we do get annoyed just like ordinary people. We also have families to take care of, but school principals hardly have private time.” (I-13)

From the above expression, it is understandable that school principals also want to have time for themselves and for their relaxation. They are so tired and overly exhausted having to deal with all kinds of school affairs. As a consequence of their hectic work schedule, school principals are too busy to think about their professional development.

5.3.4.6 Principals Innovative Capacity

School principals pointed out that under the current Chinese education system; they lack innovative consciousness and the drive for innovation. Some of the school principals are innovative but because they are subjected to the education system, they are unable to carry out their ideas and this can restrict their innovative abilities. Innovation is one of the important abilities recognized by many school principals, as necessary for school improvement and effectiveness. Moreover, they also generally believe that Chinese school principals lack innovation. However, they are concerned about developing their innovative abilities. As one school principal remarked:

“I think different schools are facing different challenges, but as a whole, the issue of school principals’ management and their innovate abilities are a concern. School principals with innovative abilities are really rare. For instance, there are 16 primary
and secondary schools in our district, but only two or three of them have demonstrated their innovative abilities." (I-10)

On similar lines, another Principal added:

“In my personal view, China education is like dancing, but bound by chains. It lacks innovation. We are subjected to this system. It’s like paternalism education, where I am your father, and you must listen to me.” (I-2)

For a long time, school systems ignore the component of innovation, and this result in the ambiguous orientation of school principal’s profession. The lack of innovative capacity or the courage needed to display innovation may be associated to their tenuous professional consciousness. The following is a strong remark by one of the school principals regarding the issue of innovation in Chinese education:

“Compared to western countries, our nation has not established an innovative educational concept .... I haven’t found any innovation in education, I have gone to many famous schools in this nation. But none of them escape from the Confucian educational ideology... so, I couldn’t agree more, China’s education is dead. (I-1)

The above information shows that Confucianism still has profound influence on the Chinese education system. Here is the perspective of creativity shared by a training organizer:

“We have been emphasizing that students should be creative, but actually, even our school principals are less creative. You can observe this from the training activities. I guess this is also one of the constraints we are facing.” (T-1)
Another school principal added:

“I think school principals should run their school with innovation and creativity, rather than manage their school mechanically.” (I-4)

The general nature of schools principals being conservative and scholastic is associated with their lack of innovation. One school principal described his experience as follows:

“After being a school principal, routine work makes me too busy to deal with school administrative work. I gradually become mechanical, and now I am not doing what I wanted to do... I am doing what I have to do, I have no time to be creative. At the beginning, I was full of enthusiasm and ambition, but now I have become conventional. I won’t think about innovation, even though you want me to be innovative. Also there are so many rules and regulations that restrict you.” (I-6)

It is likely that the lack of innovation is a constraint on the leadership capacity of school principal. The lack of innovation found in the leadership practices of school principals was also highlighted by many of the school principals. At the same time, the school principals have also expressed their hope that trainings could be designed in a manner that can stimulate their innovative abilities. As one school principal commented below:

“Management is too rigid. I always feel bound within the framework, and it is very hard to be innovative. Presently, school principals are urgently being trained to prepare them for education reform and school development.” (I-4)

Another school principal further explained:

“In my opinion, the school principal trainings need to be bolder and explorative. I think school principals’ leadership practices should be based on the motto, “learn-act-innovate”, and trainings just give us such a chance, to study, observe the development of external things, and reflect on how to change their own schools. This is innovation... to be able to apply my own educational philosophy and progressively improving my competency through learning.” (I-5)
With the new curriculum reform, innovation has been given renewed attention by school principals. In an era of innovation, school principals should attempt to demonstrate their innovative abilities in their leadership, as this can lead to innovative school outcomes. This may be viewed as a great potential for principals to engage more in their professional development.

5.4 Summary of the Chapter

As a summary, this chapter presented the data analysis and qualitative findings of this study. The findings were based on the testimonies of the total sample size fifty-four school principals and six training providers who shared their experiences on their leadership preparation, the principal training programmes that they underwent and the challenges they faced in pursuing their professional development.

Research question 1 concerns on the impact of the governmental policies on the preparation and leadership development of the secondary school in Henan Province. The Ministry of Education has unceasing effort in shaping the principals’ quality especially before they are in position to serve in the school (MOE, 1989, State Council, 2012). Leadership development training has started its construction and execution since the issuance of MOE (1989) with the outline of the training curriculum and allocation of the financial education funding for the principal training. However, the findings show weak connections between the guideline and the training execution, especially in the secondary school principal preparation (Dong, 2010; Feng, 2013) and funding of the training (Liang & Zhang, 2010; Chen, 2012). There are manuals that set a starting point and steps for
implementation but there is no review process to ensure the continuous improvement of the preparation and development as demanded by the government.

Research question 2 intends to identify the ways that the principals are prepared for their leadership roles. Interviewing the purposively chosen principals has revealed two major methods to enable their leadership ability to be prepared: formal and informal learning. Formal learning is through the training curriculum modules which comprise of school visits, continuous update on educational developments, training urge, and leadership building. Whereas the informal learning are the indirect way that prepare their leadership development, which are through learning from others, communication, experience and self-development.

The findings for research question three has revealed a wide insight of the constraints that the school principal faced in their preparation and professional development. Seven major constraints are concluded from the interview with the school principals and training providers: (1) impractical training content, (2) monotone and theoretical focused training method, (3) absence of strict training evaluation, (4) running out of high quality and competent trainers, (5) fail to allocate evenly distributed training fund across the nation, (6) inflexible training time for the busy participants and (7) weak incentive mechanism.

Six aspects of challenges in the school principals’ leadership practice are identified to answer the research question four: (1) demands of the education and new curriculum reform are overwhelming their ability, (2) leaders that lack of autonomy to exercise they
right to give order, (3) heavy financial debt and non-systematic financial allocation from the government, (4) teacher management in the school, (5) busy schedule with added task to attend improvement training, and lastly (6) lacking of innovative ability and drive to be in the educational reform initiative and leadership improvement.

The data collected from the questionnaires and interviews has been analysed to fulfil the research questions. The next chapter will follow with a discussion of these findings to relate the finding to be in line with the research objectives of this study.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

The preparedness of school principals and their professional development are recognized as the influential factors that shape principals’ leadership ability needed to vitalize the education system in China. This chapter discusses how the study is able to meet the research objectives through the interpretation of the findings based on the four main concerns, namely (1) training policies and their implications on the preparation and professional development of school principals, (2) training methods used in preparing and developing school principals leadership abilities, (3) constraints and challenges to the
professional development preparation programmes, and (4) constraints and challenges of school leadership practices. The findings are then summarized to propose several practical recommendations for future research on the central idea of this study. The following subsections seek to interpret the findings based on the research objectives of this study.

6.2 Research Objective 1: The Impact of Training Policies on School Principals’ Preparation and Professional Development in secondary schools of Henan Province, China.

The first objective of this study was to examine the impact of training policies on the preparation and professional development of secondary school principals in Henan, China. This section discusses the analyses of some of the structural policies and its impact on education reforms and principals’ professionalism. The reform policy, ‘The CPC’s Decisions on the Education System Reform (CPC, 1985)’ has spurred interest among policymakers in China, and ever since 1991, the Chinese government has promulgated a series of regulations on primary and secondary school principal qualification trainings and standards. This serves as a legislative instrument to ensure that educational policies are on the right track for effective education reform (Zhou & Zhu, 2007). The policy ‘Requirements and Position Requirements of Headmasters of Primary and Secondary Schools in China’ was issued to regulate the school principals’ selection, appointment, assessment and trainings (SEC, 1991). In reviewing the impact of legislative policies on school principals’ preparation and professional development, an analysis was conducted on 11 national and provincial policy documents. The following subsection report on the outcomes of these legislative approaches from the perspectives of school principals’ selection system, qualification system, training system, evaluation system and their incentive system.
6.2.1 School Principals’ Selection System

A well-regulated principal selection system is viewed as the key feature required to pledge and sustain the competence of principals (Yang, 2005). The analysis of the findings showed two prominent problems found in the school principal nomination and selection processes. Firstly, the procedure and methods used, are ambiguous and intangibly structured. The terms and conditions of the principal selection criteria is stipulated under the ‘Requirements and Position Requirements of Headmasters of Primary and Secondary Schools in China (SEC, 1991)’. According to Chen (2010), the overall quality of school principals in this set of regulations, is not given enough emphasis, as propagated by the concept of ‘su zhi jiao yu’, or “quality education” that is the educational ideals of the reform initiatives in China (Dello-Iacovo, 2009).

Secondly, there were apparent contradictions found in the principal selection system. A stringent selection and entry conditions are crucial to ensure that the chosen candidate can fit well into the position (Liu, 2010). In the ‘Training Regulations for Primary and Secondary School Principals’ (MOE, 1999), the qualifications and the minimum eligibility requirements conform to a stricter system. This was further reinforced by the ‘Decision of State Council on the Reform and Development of Basic Education (State Council, 2001)’ with the aim of revising the principals’ appointment and selection system. Unfortunately, the ‘Outline of China’s National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)’ which addresses the nation’s needs to reduce the criteria for school principal selection does not feature the required policy orientation of selecting a principal (CPCC, 2010). This raises a question directed to the
Ministry of Education regarding the lowering of the entry criteria and the guidance needed for the desired changes.

According to the Notice, *(Further Strengthening the Education Cadre Training in the Henan Province)*, the school principal employment system does not appear to have any fundamental changes made to it, despite having promoted quality education through quality principalship and teaching *(Department of Henan, 2010)*. Furthermore, the so-called tenure system is only a formality, even though the terms of contract may have expired. There is no well-defined evaluation criterion to assess the leadership competence of a school principal. Usually a simple evaluation is conducted as a formality for the purpose of job renewal for school principals. Previously, school principals were elected in a democratic way through recommendation from schools, followed by the appointment granted by the Central Government. The contract will be further renewed every five years, except in cases where the denial of tenure constitutes a breach of contract. However, in recent years, such practices have stopped. As stated by Chu & Cravens *(2012)*, taking the school as the locus of professionalism, the value of leadership is manifested in the school’s vision and mission and in fostering teacher professional communities that can lead to effective school improvement.

**6.2.2 School Principals’ Qualification System**

The school principal qualification requirement is the admittance criterion for a principal candidate to enrol in this profession. These eligibility criteria are aligned with these two policy documents of Article five:
• ‘Notice of the Education Department of Henan Province on Further Strengthening the Education Cadre Training in the Province’.

• ‘Opinions of the State Council on Strengthening the Construction of Teachers’ Ranks’.

These two documents require school leaders to go through a series of systematic educational trainings to develop professional consciousness strengthen their leadership competencies, and at the same time to improve leadership skills in schools (Department of Henan, 2010; State Council, 2012).

There is no leadership course that works duly on sharpening principals’ leadership skills, except for principal trainings available. Despite the government’s efforts in promoting and developing the education system reformation, the ‘Training Regulations for Primary and Secondary School Principals (MOE, 1999)’ has not yet been revised until now. The qualifications and the minimum eligibility requirements still remain as the endorsed version since the year 1999. Moreover, the regulations mentioned, has highlighted a situation in which the policy has very general requirements for school principals’ qualifications, as the document does not entail the relevant requirements of professional school-based management experiences from the primary and secondary school principals’. This can result in leadership incompetence which is likely to hinder the professional development of principals.

According to the findings, the respondents’ demographic profile indicated that all principals had teaching experiences. Liu and Li (2012) claimed that most school principals were selected from qualified, experienced teachers. Feng (2003a) further added that this method of selection is a norm and that it still remained as the main and prevalent
way of appointing school heads for all local secondary schools. However, this is also regulated by the law that school principals must process teacher qualifications. In the meantime, there is still no specific standard and rule for selecting school leaders from both national and local levels.

The procedure of issuing qualification certificates for school principals is carried out as a formality. According to Chen and Xia (2015), without a strict qualification admittance system, non-stringent policies can diminish the importance of the qualification system, established specifically for endorsing the qualifications of school headmasters. However, it is known that the internal control of issuing qualification certificates is strongly enforced. Only school principals who are already appointed by the government, are issued qualification certificates. Yang (2005) declared that the qualification certificate system is contextualized as part of school principals’ professional development.

Fulfilling system requirements and training needs, provides a basis for quality assurance and the evaluation of school principals’ quality, for promoting societal reputation and prestige. Those who participate in school principal trainings will eventually become school principals. However, for those who have the ‘qualification training’, this does not guarantee the quality of school principals. The fundamental reason for this phenomenon is because the primary and secondary school principal qualification certificate system has not been legalized and unified. The findings concerning the qualification system also implied that the qualification system is not a sound and suitable system that can effectively regulate aspects of the principal trainings that can benefit the school leaders.
Furthermore, the endorsed qualification certificate does not serve as a compulsory document in the application for principal candidacy. This is also an indication whereby little or less importance is placed on this qualification system. Therefore, it is crucial to re-establish a stricter school principal qualification system, which should include the occupational qualification authentication standard. This is the pre-requisite of professionalism training in principalship, which forms part of the candidacy requirement (Liu, 2010). Most importantly, this effort would regulate the principal qualification system and in future may be recognized as a legal endorsement.

6.2.3 School Principals’ Compensation System

There needs to be a reasonable principal’s compensation system established in Henan. Various studies have since reported of the absence of a structured compensation system for school principals (Chen & Lv, 2010; Hu, 2006; Yu, 2012). In recent years, the government had issued a series of policies to increase the wage standards of school principals. In comparison to other public servants, school principals have a lower wage range, which is a pole apart, considering the obligations and burdens that school principals are subjected to. The ‘Opinions on Strengthening the Construction of Headmasters of Primary and Secondary Schools (SEC, 1992)’ and the ‘Opinions of the State Council on the Implementation of the Outline of China's Educational Reform and Development (State Council, 1994)’ are government policy endorsements that recognize the multiple-roles and demands placed on school leaders. It ranges from administrative to financial planning, overseeing school management and having to drive the action plans authorized by the Ministry of Education.
Presently, principals are demotivated and feel demoralized by their unfair wage packages (Hu, 2006). Their excessive workload is not in proportion to their wages and they find that it does not compensate well. Furthermore, Yu (2012) added that principal’s remuneration package does not serve as an incentive to encourage principals to pursue opportunities for learning and their professional development. With the complexities of their job and position, Lv (2004) reveals that some principals feel that they are not appreciated, in terms of not being compensated for their stressful job responsibilities. Chu & Yang (2002) also confers to similar reasons behind principals fading enthusiasm in their workplace. So do the research findings of Lv (2004) and Wu (2009), that elaborate on the testimonies of school principals being displeased with the existing compensation system, as their wages are not fairly compensated according to their highly stressed level of duties.

School principals in Henan are increasingly being challenged to handle different circumstances that arise in their schools and are required to multi-task, juggle with different responsibilities on hand while ensuring that their school management duties are met. Hence, a set of policies should be formulated as a supportive guide, and used as a basis for improving the overall quality of the principals’ compensation system. The diversity of training policies should be extended across both national and local levels. Mapping the terrain of polices that support both local and national levels, Fullan (2001) and Sumintono (2006), argue that the lack of relevant and hypothetical supporting policies would delineate the problems faced by school principals. Instead, compensation policies should recognize ways of providing a structured and fair compensation system for school principals; one that reflects the demands of their position, and is consistent with market rates of remuneration.
The Chinese government had introduced the ‘Principal Ranking System’ and ‘Annual Salary System’ with the intention of formulating a fair incentive mechanism for school principals. However, the findings in Hu (2006) revealed that these two systems have not been widely practiced in Henan province. There also has not been any evidence to suggest that these two systems have had a positive effect on the principals’ job satisfaction. The allocated monetary appreciation provisioned for principals, does not only reflect the government’s gratitude for their service and contributions, but principals need to ensure that their ultimate aim is to progress according to the national education directives and towards their school set goals.

Apart from that, Wu (2009) draws attention to the principal’s compensation scheme and hints that the government and related bodies are not aware of this cause-and-effect relationship. It was revealed that there were discrepancies found in principal’s monthly payroll that did not coincide with their management duties. This led to some confusion in principals professional roles. As for the leadership performance evaluation, there was neither a clear performance evaluation index nor appraisal objectives to indicate the minimum requirements for evaluation. Instead, there are only general items used in the evaluation, to assess principals’ achievements.

6.2.4 School Principals’ Evaluation System

School principals’ evaluation system should be based on a unified and explicit set of criteria and an index to facilitate the leadership performance evaluation system. The evaluation system in these recent decades is no longer compatible to be compared with the general evaluation dimensions of “morality (德), ability (能), diligence (勤),
achievement (绩), used to assess principals’ job performance (Jia, 2005; SEC, 1991; Zhao & Wang, 2007). Additionally, the evaluation emphasizes more on cumulative rather than a formative evaluation of operational measures (Hu & Wang, 2009; Zhang, 2012). This method of assessment is regarded as impractical, unformulated and superficial. Up till now, China has not established any scientific evaluation standards for principalship evaluation, apart from the document, ‘Opinions on Strengthening the Construction of the Headmasters of Primary and Secondary Schools (SEC, 1992)’. As a result, the training evaluation system faces obstacles that hinder the progress of advancing and developing professionalism among the school principals.

The performance evaluation system should be based on a formative assessment, especially when applied to professional development growth and assessing the performance index of school principals, within a stipulated period of evaluation. As such, training evaluations will play a more significant role in revealing opportunities for improvement in areas like task management and manpower organization. According to Uren & Tovey (2001), the evaluation system has to be well rounded and tailored according to the working nature of the subject being appraised. This would help overcome the weaknesses apparent in a general summative evaluation (Uren & Tovey, 2001).

The ‘Opinions of the State Council on Strengthening the Construction of Teachers' Ranks’ was gazetted in 2012. It highlighted suggestions to improve the school principals and teaching team’s professional development, the training qualifications and training facilities. These “Opinions” also suggest that, the trainings should help enhance the leadership skills of school principals so that they comply with the education policies and
standards enforced by the Ministry of Education, for the purpose of meeting educational reforms (State Council, 2012).

6.2.5 School Principals Training System

This study revealed that the training policies governing the principals training system, have not made a gainful impact, in the interest of school principals’ professional needs. The ‘Training Regulations for Primary and Secondary School Principals (MOE, 1999)’ was found to be lacking in overall quality concerning school principals’ professional development. However, the ‘National Eleventh Five-Year Plan for Cadre Training of the Educational System’, introduced in 2007, provided guidance for all training systems (MOE, 2007). The diversity of China’s multiracial country with different regions, histories and cultures, should be taken into consideration, when devising policies. As a result, single policy implementation, may not be appropriate for the whole nation. Instead, policymaking should take into consideration both national and local levels.

According to Chu (2003) and Zhou (2015), every school leader needs to advance and develop their specialization through the trainings and institutional teaching. However, the findings of this study found that the policies governing school principals’ training system, do not outline precise and definite standards regardless of national or provincial levels. The documents or regulations are not mandated due to the absence of obligatory institutions and authority regulations or policies to control and standardize the school principal training in China. Nevertheless, solving these problems requires policy document guidance and sound legal protection. In the case of Henan Province, although, the government has implemented local policies to support school principals’ professional
development, the impact of policies on improving principalship development is rather low. To a certain extent, the policies fail to support school principals in terms of advancing their professional development.

According to Yang (2005), Sun and Qi (2014) and Zhang (2015), there are many deficiencies in the professional development training system for the school headmasters. Some of the prominent issues are the lack of a formal structure, inadequate supporting policies and the lack of legal protection in conducting trainings. Thus, it is obvious that, the downside of the principal training system is its hindrance to principalship development. Therefore, in order to ensure school principals’ professional development, there should be appropriate training policies established at both national and local levels, in line with the national agenda of education development.

(a) Training Institutes

The ‘Opinion on Strengthening the Training for Principals of Primary and Secondary Schools’ (MOE, 1989) and ‘Training Regulation for Primary and Secondary School Principals’ (MOE, 1999), served as a guide for principalship trainings. However, the standards of assessment and accreditation are still under construction (Chu & Cravens, 2012; Zhang, 2012). Looking at the effect of the training scheme and the resultant principalship professional development, it shows that the scheme does not include comprehensive job requirements and descriptions.
Although, the objective of the ‘Outline of China’s National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)’, was to initiate “high quality” training abilities, however in reality, it has failed to do so (MOE, 2007). The government and educational administrative departments have no clear standard operating procedures for teacher training preparation programmes. It was discovered that there is a lack of consistency with the mechanisms adopted and institutional assurance given for conducting management trainings and evaluations at both national and local levels (Xia, 2011b). At these training institutes, training teachers are responsible for the training methodology and training content (Liu, 2011). The Education Administrative Department only carries out some routine checks but this is not considered as a professional training evaluation. Most of the training programmes conducted by training institutes emphasize on summative assessment rather than formative assessment (Yuan, 2008; Zhao & Wang, 2007; Wu et al., 2015). Moreover, there is no particular concern over the trainer’s competency and neither is there any indicator for trainers to conduct performance assessments. This calls for a thorough and systematic planning of principalship trainings that can enhance principalship among school leaders of primary and secondary schools in Henan.

Enhancing the quality and professional competencies of training teachers, are the critical factors that can improve quality of trainings. Article 13 of the ‘Training Regulations for Primary and Secondary School Principals’ (MOE, 1999) states that there are full-time and part-time training teachers. Training institutes should be equipped with qualified training teachers, specialists and outsourced scholars, who can fulfill the requirements of delivering quality trainings. Leaders from education administrative departments and excellent school principals from primary and secondary schools may be appointed as part-time training teachers. Furthermore, the ‘Notice of the Education
Department of Henan Province on Further Strengthening the Education Cadre Training in the Province’ (Department of Henan, 2010) stipulates that all of Henan province complies to the trainer’s professional standards formulated by the Ministry of Education. Likewise, the nation also needs to expand their team of trainers and give more importance to hiring education management cadres, renowned specialists and scholars who have the expertise needed and are familiar with the education law. Unfortunately, in reality, there are no clear job specifications for training teachers. It is also reported that there is an inadequate number of training teachers to provide for the professional development needs of school principals.

(b) Training Funding

The ‘Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China’ stipulates that the compulsory education fund is the responsibility of the government departments (MOE, 2006). Nevertheless, the limited training budget is another obstacle that poses a challenge for most areas in the Henan Province, especially, training institutes at the county level, who are faced with limited funds and poor conditions. The empirical findings of Han et al., (2014) indicated that only 21.1% of the 171 principal respondents perceived that the training funds were sufficient, 32.2% respondents selected ‘barely enough’, 36.3% respondents deemed training funds were not enough, while 10.4% respondents felt that the training funds were ‘not enough at all’. Chang’s (2005) also indicated that the lack of funding is the leading cause of school principals’ unwillingness to participate in trainings. In recent years, there has been a debate over the increasing training demand of school principals and the shortage of training funds.
Several studies (Shen, 2009; Wu, 2009) indicated that without clearly drawn-up policies, it is very difficult to justify the investment of school principals’ training fund. The national policy had pointed out that specific training expenditures are planned by regional education administrative departments. Han, Guo and Liu (2014) reported that the regional economic differences caused large differences in the training funds, which sometimes resulted in chaos. Moreover, the policies regarding school principals’ evaluation, only highlighted clauses regarding the evaluation subjects and it does not clearly indicate who the third-party is, and about the training evaluation index, in which case, the training effect cannot be comprehensively understood.

For a long time, school principal training institutes at the national level were limited with funds and poor conditions. Under the current system of education finance, the training fund for school principals actually depends on the local economic development. However, this is not the only reason. “Relationship” is another important factor that affects the investment of school principal training funds. The amount of training funds depends on how close is your relationship is with the local government and education administrative department.

In summary, the testimonies provided by the school principals and training organizers showed that the shortage of training funds has become a big issue in school principal trainings. The amount of training funds received is not specified, except through verbal communication from the education administrative departments. The availability of training funds also determines the class size and the allocation of training participants.
Uneven distribution of funding will greatly affect the implementation of the training and was unable to conduct as regulated due to insufficient monetary resource.

(c) Training Evaluation

China has not established systematic training evaluation standards for school principal trainings (Hu & Wang, 2009; Xia, 2011b; Zhang, 2012). The training evaluation is not based on the training objectives. In fact, Xiao (2011b) and Tian et. al. (2012) reveal that the training evaluations are based on the school principals’ subjective feelings and their personal impressions of their individual training experience. To identify the effectiveness of the trainings, evaluation report forms, completed training plans and training summaries are used to draw conclusions (Tian et al., 2012; Xiao, 2011b). According to Wei and Jiang (2011), training evaluations mostly are superficial, localized and simplistic.

Since the training evaluation process is not of scientific quality, the outcome of the training results may not be as credible (Chen & Lv, 2012). This is due to the lack of explicit evaluation criteria and standards for assessing the efficacy of the trainings. The effectiveness of the training evaluation also depends on the ability of the trainers to deliver the course outline and be able to enhance the participants training experience. Generally, the principal participants feel that the training evaluations conducted by the education administrative department and training institute, are not reasonable, added no evaluation standards exist to monitor and assess the performance of training teachers.

Since China has been facing a shortage of excellent professionals and trainers, as stated in Chu (2009) and Song (2014), more emphasis should be placed on trainings and the
evaluation system at both local and national levels. In the framework of principalship training, Wang (2014) disclosed that there is no training review initiative taken and neither is there a long-term tracking system to monitor the training performance and evaluations thereafter. As a result, the training evaluation appears to be rather formalized and superficial and this poses a challenge in promoting school principals’ professional development.

In 2010, the ‘Notice of the Education Department of Henan Province on Further Strengthening the Education Cadre Training in the Province’ had addressed this issue, by providing more detailed notes on conducting training evaluation, such as: engaging experts for evaluations, conducting ‘student-anonymous’ evaluations and having third-party evaluations. This would strengthen the formative evaluation and performance appraisal of education cadres. Evaluation results are important for identifying areas of improvement concerning training tasks and funds (Department of Henan, 2010). Moreover, the national policy, ‘Opinions of the State Council on Strengthening the Construction of Teachers’ Ranks’ has highlighted the of a stricter training evaluation, while Article 56 of the ‘Cadres Education Training Regulation’ in 2015, stresses on the objectives to improve the cadre training evaluation system and strengthen its programmes and curriculum. This information shows that training evaluations have been gradually recognized by the government and efforts are being taken to create more awareness in the importance of training evaluation.
6.3 Research Objective 2: Preparation for Principal Leadership

Several studies have indicated that authorized training providers have been provisioned to equip principal participants with the knowledge and skills required for their school improvement needs (Chen, 2010; Wilson & Xue, 2013; Yan & Ehrich, 2009). In addition, Feng (2003a) and Zheng et al. (2012) reported about the principal trainings in China and how it has benefitted the thousands of school principals who participated in the wide range of training programmes offered for principals professional guidance and support.

According to Li (2008), the impact of any formal preparation programme is measured by its effect. Similarly, Wang (2013) conferred that the effectiveness of principalship trainings depends on whether principals learning needs and preparation requirements have been fully met. From a total of 54 principals who participated in this study, 49 of them (91%) had participated in trainings at either a provincial training centre or a local university. However, in this study, the school principals commented that the formal training programmes, focused mainly on the professional concepts and on theoretical concepts.

6.3.1 Formal Training

The majority of the school principals in this study, pointed out that the formal training they underwent, has equipped them with theoretical knowledge. Recent studies have also indicated that trainings provide theoretical knowledge and serve as guidance for school principals’ leadership practices (Chen, 2015; Sun & Qi, 2014; Zhuang, 2014). Other studies have highlighted the positive effects of Shadow Training that is highly appreciated by school principals’ in China (Chao, 2016; He, 2011; Liu & Zhang, 2012; Tu, 2014;
Zhang, 2013). Shadow Training to be a very useful and gainful for their leadership learning experience. However, some of the school principals indicated that through trainings, they are able to master some basic theories of educational management, and also receive updates on their existing educational concepts and perceptions.

Likewise, several studies (Chen, 2011; Qian, 2007; Rao, 2015) have indicated that trainings can actually improve the ability of thinking in an all-round way, and that it can help school principals improve their strategic thinking and management abilities. The majority of school principals emphasize that principalship through training has opened their eyes on the required knowledge and skills needed to fulfill their job responsibilities.

Training is a learning process that enables participants to master certain skills. In this research, school principals expressed that trainings equipped them with the professional knowledge and skills required to develop effective leadership practices. A number of studies conducted (Bush & Chew, 1999; Cai, 2010; Chen & Liu, 2012; Jia, 2012; Ma, 2015) show evidence that training enables school principals to keep pace with the changing world. Yet there are other studies that report about trainings having a positive effect on enhancing school principals’ professional development (Chen & Ji, 2009; Chen & Liu, 2012; Fan, 2009; Huang, Liang & Lin, 2010). The present principals may be busy with their daily school management routines and have no time to focus on their professional development needs. However, it is important for principal trainings to be continually offered for principals throughout Henan and for the training programmes to be reviewed periodically for improvement and quality purposes.
6.3.2 Informal Training

The training participants of this study also commented at length about their informal learning processes and practices, which include learning from more experienced principals, engaging in communicative sharing sessions with other principals and self-learning through reading. It was also discovered that ten of the principal participants, which make up 27% of the sample, stated that they continue to actively look to other principals as a guide. Another facet that appears in this social-informal learning context is the emergence of ‘principal leadership communities’ who share expertise for the professional development of school leaders.

Experienced principals’, who share about their success and failures, can be a learning lesson for others. The evidential data on page 144 has shown that principals in Henan province are ambitious to create a shift in their job dynamics and are seeking opportunities to actively learn more from other experts in the field. There are also various empirical studies, which show that Chinese principals are actively seeking additional ways to extend their leadership expertise (Han, 2008; Harris & Jones, 2015; Jones et al., 2015; Shang, 2007; Tang et al., 2014; Wang & Yang, 2011; Wilson & Xue, 2013). This kind of self-development strategies offer an ‘informal training’ platform for school principals to better understand their school context and help solve their school problems by learning from other principals. Such ‘informal trainings’ cannot be gained from formal training programmes as they lack specific focus on a particular context (Zhang & Brundrett, 2010).

In this study, it was noted that very few principals talked about the direct influence of formal training upon their practices as a school leader. The findings in the subsection
support this statement and is also consistent with the conclusions arising from the 7 System Leadership Study which shows that from the perspective of the principals, formal training does not necessarily or automatically impact upon their practice (Harris & Jones, 2015; Jones et al., 2015). Similarly, Wang et al. (2011) also reported that 90% of knowledge and skills that principals gained was through informal learning and only 10% are gained through formal learning.

It is evident that many of the school principals have a strong appeal for informal learning. According to Han (2008), informal learning can enable people to draw stronger emotional support from one another. Furthermore, building human relationships and forging strong bonds with others is typical of a Confucian approach to leadership (Walker & Qian, 2015). Furthermore, Sun (2009) claimed that school principals’ personal working experiences can have an added advantage on their professional development. In this study, the respondents’ demographic information indicates that the school principals who were involved in this study had very rich teaching and administrative experiences, which shows their credibility to take up the position as school principal. On the contrary, Chen and Ji (2009) argues that it is impossible for school principals to develop their leadership competence and professional needs based on their past work experiences and conventional leadership practices used to lead their schools.

The comment by the I-10 on page 145 is the qualitative evidence extracted from the principal interviews that suggested that the self-directed strategy of the principals gave them the opportunity to learn from other principals and this helped them refine their own approaches and strategies to boost their leadership skills. Indisputably, training provides a platform and opportunity to trainees to learn from each other’s experiences in an interactive and informal way within an experiential learning environment. Another salient
finding from this study is that many of the principals relied on self-learning, mostly by reading books, to prepare for their leadership role. According to the views of R-22 and R-24 on page 145, reading books on educational management, pedagogy and psychology was an essential aspect of their leadership preparation. Jia (2012) pointed out that reading is the most effective method of learning and that reading is an efficient way of acquiring professional theoretical knowledge needed for developing self-leadership competencies. Zhou (2008) also pointed out that reading is an important channel to improve school principals’ theoretical attainment and promote school principals’ professional development.

In summary, there were many positive comments about the formal and informal channels of training that principals’ received, although the comments about formal training were far fewer than those about the informal training. Formal trainings helped principals cope with their job as a school leader and raised awareness of their need for continuous professional development. In this study, it can be seen that the practical knowledge acquired by school principals was also obtained through ‘informal trainings’ gained from other experienced principals, through reading, as well as from their accumulated past experiences. Further comments from some of the principals in this study implied that learning to be an effective principal, was about personal self-development, and that formal and informal trainings are essentially important for their career and professional development.
6.4 Research Objective 3: Constraints and Challenges in Principals Preparation and Professional Development Programmes

The principal has always been the role model for the school community. The essentials of effective principal leadership are to provide school leaders with quality professional learning experiences. However, the quality of school leadership may be heightened, by enabling principals to select programmes based on their professional development needs. School principals’ professional development programmes are designed to help the principals reinforce their knowledge of effective leadership practices that can provide instructional coherence and support. However, as the time and social demands change, the current development training is insufficient to satisfy the participants’ desire in self-development (Han & Dong, 2014; Wei & Jiang; 2011). The findings that correspond to the research objective 3 will be discussed in six aspects: (1) training content, (2) training context and practicability, (3) training methodology, (4) training evaluation, (5) training programme quality assurance and funding, and (6) training programme and participants.

6.4.1 Training Content

Most of the training programmes in China are knowledge-oriented (Feng, 2003a; Han 2014; Wang, 2013; Wang et al., 2011). According to Gu (2011) the training content of primary and secondary school principal trainings, should reflect the integrated processes of learning and practice, which is result-oriented. School management and leadership is complex and challenging, and as a result, there is an increased demand for highly capable school leaders. The professional demands of school leaders’ are to improve their leadership practices. However, the literature shows that the training content of principal training programmes appear to be detached from actual leadership practices (Han & Dong, 2014; Wang, 2011). The findings of this present study have established that this is a
common phenomenon found to exist in the training content: unable to satisfy principal leadership needs (repeating or impractical training content (comment by I-1, I-2, I-3, I-4, page 150), training resource difference (comment by I-3, I-5, I-9, I-11, R-7, page 152), and lack of practical sessions (R-23, page 154). These principals’ testimonies imply that the current training content does not meet the expectations of the principal participants.

The training content should be relevant and focused on meeting the actual needs of school principals. Hu and Walker (2012) pointed out that even if school principals’ benefit from attending trainings, there will be no impact on their leadership competencies, because the training content is not relevant to their school leadership needs. Moreover, the immediate effect of participating in trainings will fade off. Thus, training providers should seriously consider revising the training content so that it would be more beneficial to school principals and worth devoting their time for these training sessions.

6.4.2 Training Context and Practicability

The school principals of this study also highlighted the issue that some of the innovative theories that they had learnt from the trainings, were unfitting with their school context and local background (opinion of I-9, R-7, page 152; comment of I-3, I-5, page 153). Moreover, Qian (2007) claimed that the theories taught during the training have always been a bottleneck in the effort of improving their professional development. Training context is constructed based on the ‘National Eleventh Five-Year Plan for Cadre Training of the Educational System (MOE, 2007)’, which serves as the basic structure of the training curriculum. However, Hallinger (2006) acknowledged that there is gap between the training content and the reality that school principals are confronted with in
their daily routines. Zhang (2008) and Wilson and Xue (2013) emphasized the importance of contextualized training as a way of developing principals’ leadership skills and proficiency in leading schools more effectively. Gao, (2016) proposes a simple fact that the up-to-date Western leadership theories, such as instructional or distributed leadership, do not resonate at all with traditional Chinese values or leadership practices. The implication is that the field of educational leadership does not necessarily reflect, or indeed describe, the leadership practices in provinces and educational settings outside the West (Feng, 2012).

In their work, Qian and Walker, (2014) point to a challenge on the added pressure faced by Chinese principals in trying to navigate their relationships with various stakeholders alongside the need to respond to ‘upward accountability’ (Tang et al., 2014). Respondents I-2 on page 151 specified that the training curriculum and content are overlapping. It is supported by a study by Militello and Berger’s (2010) that indicated the inconsistency and repetitive mode of training topics. In addition, training period and duration that are conflicting with their work load and time has triggered their dissatisfaction. As Song (2014) mentioned, the national training plan is conflict with provincial training plan whereas provincial training plan clash with city level training or county level training with the principalship training program.

6.4.3 Training Methodology

The principal participants underwent a series of conventional training methods, consisting of lecturing, reporting, field visiting and course presentation. Although the training methods used seem diverse, but in fact, the training effectiveness showed little to
no impact (Liu, 2010; Ma, Zhang & Mu, 2009; Zhou 2015). The training methods used were mainly lecture-based, with minimum communication and interaction between trainers and trainees (Comments by I-8, I10, page 154). Many school principals pointed out that the training methods still prioritize classroom teaching methods and that there is a lack of communication between teachers and trainees (response by I-7, page 158). According to the observations conducted by the researcher at the training sites, it was reported that the participants were seemingly passive with hardly any interaction between the trainer and the principal trainees. Refer to the Observation Report in Appendix H.

Studies such as Dong (2014) and Lu (2014) have pointed out that classroom lecture delivery still plays a dominant role in developing the quality of teaching responsibilities required of school principals. Nevertheless, the findings from Chang (2005) reported on the preferred training methods and out of 182 school principals, “case study” constitutes a 98.9% affinity and 54.4% of the principals preferred “discussions and analyses of the cases”. Less than half of school principals chosen “expert report” and only 21.05% of the school principals went with “method of lecture”. This shows that lecturing the training curriculum receive the least affinity from the school principals.

In other studies, there are claims that the design of training methods does not take into consideration the school context and principals’ background. As a result, training methods seem to deviate from principal’s actual leadership needs (Han & Dong, 2014; Militello & Berger’s, 2010; Wei & Cai, 2012; Wei & Jiang, 2011). As for the present research findings, school principals R-23 on page 167 indicated their preference for training methods in which they can better relate to and apply in their respective leadership practices.
Various studies have reported that training methods used in Chinese training institutes conform to a formal hierarchical structure, whereby the methods adopted are intended to improve school principals’ leadership competencies (Han, Guo & Liu, 2014; Wang, 2014). However, the findings in the present study indicate that both principals and training providers revealed that the participants of the school principal trainings comprised of both principals and vice-school principals (Feedback by I-4, I-10, T-2, page 158). This indicates that the notion of ‘hierarchy’ was not taken into consideration.

This study examined the training methods used during principal trainings and have raised the suggestion that school principal trainings in China should encompass more scientific and diversified training methods, as suggested in Wu (2009) and Han and Dong (2014). However, considering that lecture-based training methods have evidently shown a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching, trainer and trainees are inevitably subjected to the consequence of poor interaction and lack of communication that was observed at the training venues (see Observation Report at Appendix H). In addition, each training method has its functional limitations and is incompatible with other methods (Zhou, 2015). Furthermore, Tian et al. (2012) has highlighted that even the training institutes are looking for ways to improve their training methods. On the other hand, Zhao (2005) been reported of some training institutes that are not assuming responsibility and accountability for the training outcomes and this has resulted in ineffective training programmes and poor outcomes. This issue has further caused many school principals to lose interest in participating in principal trainings, although trainings were initially established for the purpose of developing principals’ professional development.
6.4.4 Training Evaluation

Training evaluations are conducted to determine the impact and effectiveness of trainings. Evaluations are meant to assist the training institutes identify participants’ training needs and any other weaknesses of the training programmes that need improving. At the training venue, where the researcher was present, it was reported that towards the end of the training programme, participants completed a questionnaire survey and were given a brief overview by the trainer, regarding what will be covered throughout the training. A number of studies have indicated that China has not established proper, scientific training evaluation standards and a specific evaluation index system for school principal trainings (Liu, 2014; Xia, 2011b; Zhang, 2012). This was also found in the qualitative evidence of the training provider T-2 on page 161 testimony regarding the evaluation index system.

Several other research studies have also pointed out that training evaluations were not based on the training objectives but rather on the school principals’ subjective feelings and their personal impressions of their overall training experience (Tian et al., 2012; Xiao, 2008). Other studies viewed training evaluations as a mere formality that is generally inclined towards a summative evaluation (Liu, 2014; Wu et al., 2015, Yuan, 2008; Zhao & Wang, 2007). In the present study, the researcher observed that evaluation reports, training plans and training summaries were used to draw conclusions about their participants learning experience and trainer effectiveness. However, some of the training participants of this study revealed that the training evaluations conducted, only assessed the knowledge and skills gained by school principals, without paying any regard for
trainees’ work environment, their expectations and professional needs, or their school routine schedule.

Ideally, training evaluations should have specific and detailed evaluation indicators. According to Liu (2010) and Xiao (2011), the effectiveness of a training evaluation should be benchmarked against the principals’ professional development needs. However, there is evidence to suggest that training evaluation targets were sometimes found to be misaligned (Xiao, 2011b; Yuan, 2008). Therefore, it is important to ensure that participants are evaluated based on the objectives of the trainings. The other area of concern is the lack of qualified training teachers, recognized by both training providers and school principal participants. In this study, the principal participants shared their concerns about training teachers not having principalship experience (I-14, page 164; I-1, page 165; I-7, I-11, I-15, page 166). They felt that there may be a disconnection between the teaching content and school principals’ actual leadership practices. This concern may be associated to the research findings revealed in Fan (2009), where some of the training teachers demonstrated a lack of knowledge and skills required for training purposes, as well as being not familiar with education rules. According to Bai (2006), the lack of training expertise may create dissatisfaction among the participants and the quality of trainings may be compromised.

6.4.5 Training Program Quality Assurance and Funding

In China, training institutes are the major training providers of professional preparation and continuous development programmes for school principals. Their programmes are aimed at providing a pathway for school principals to develop their leadership capacities. As a result, a framework of quality standards and assurance should serve as a key point of
reference and conceptual guidance, potentially for increasing the effectiveness of professional preparation and development for school principals.

In this study, training providers' have expressed concerns about the inadequate number of training teachers that have increased the workload on the existing batch of training teachers and putting off some of the teaching activities that could not be implemented (T-1, T-2, T-3, page 167). Such issues can affect the professional learning development of school principals and not satisfy their training needs. There is also the concern that trainers from underdeveloped areas of Henan province may not know and understand the core essentials of principal leadership practices at the county level. As a result, the training delivery may not meet the expectations of principal participants, who are there to learn ways of improving their leadership practices. The insufficient number of training teachers, commonly challenged by training institutes, is a phenomena highlighted in various studies (Chu, 2009; He, 2008; Song, 2014). This implies that there is a large possibility that the quality of training standards for principals’ professional preparation and development programmes be compromised.

He (2008) also traces the main reasons associated with this phenomenon, such as the deficiency of full-time training teachers, high turnover rate among part-time training teachers’, and most importantly, the lack of continuing education opportunities and support for school principal training programmes. Such are the constraints and challenges faced by principals that can affect their profession-wide standards, meant to strengthen principals’ commitment for gaining greater professional capacity in their leadership practices.
The training fund set-up to drive the initiatives of quality standard assurance is another area of challenge, as the findings show that school principals are under the burden to bear their respective training expenses. This has resulted in some of the school principals feel reluctant to participate in principal trainings (Comment by I-2 and I-2, page 169). Various studies have highlighted this issue among the challenges faced by training institutes, who are tasked with the responsibility of driving the principals’ professional development initiative, in line with quality standards compliance (Chang, 2005; Dong, 2010; Han, Guo & Liu, 2014). There has been evidence in this research to suggest that a scientific and stringent training funding system has yet to be established in Henan province, due to training fund constraints, which depends largely on the local economic development (Comment by T-1, page 169). As a result, the principals’ training funds investment in different regions of Henan province is evenly distributed.

Following the evidence of this study, the administrative controls and budget constraint are among the major reasons that result in the disorderly management of the training fund (Comment by T-2, page 170; Response by I-2, T-2, page 171). In addition, the training organizers have given voice to the bureaucratic procedures involved in obtaining training funds, to the extent where training organizers may even consider the possibility of discontinuing the school principals’ training programmes. However, the testimony of T-2 on page 169 proposes a solution concerning the provision of training funds that the guarantee of funds will really helpful to the school principal training, especially in underdeveloped areas.
It is clear that the provision of funding is crucial for the successful implementation of principals training programmes. The findings of this study will reveal the constraints and challenges faced by both school principals and training institutes, for further action to be taken by the relevant authorities who are interested in sustaining principals’ preparation and development programmes in Henan province, China.

6.4.6 Training Programme and Participants

The purpose of conducting principal training programmes is to provide preparatory support for new principals as well as to support continuing professional learning for existing practicing principals. These programmes are designed with the aim of preparing principals for their leadership roles and to encourage them to continue their professional development. In this research, it was found that the principal participants were more interested in enrolling in the trainings because of the training certificate that they will receive upon completion of the programme (Comment by I-10 and I-16, page 176). The qualification certificate is a professional certification that increases the opportunity for the qualified candidates to be promoted in grade and wages. In this study, obtaining professional certification was considered valuable for principals’ professional development and career advancement. The findings also indicated that most of the participants paid little emphasis for the actual desire to learn and improve their leadership competence, as mentioned by the response T-2 on page 176. According to Chu and Yang (2002), the professional certification and the promising promotion for certified principals, was found to be an effective way of nurturing interest among these principals to enrol in principal training programmes.
Principalship is an intensely demanding job and school principals are known to be incredibly busy with a myriad of things to accomplish in their daily routines. Sadly, the importance of principal trainings is not highly valued by a number of principals in this study. These principals have reported about being laden with heavy workload, including management and teaching tasks, that there is relatively little to no time for them to focus on their professional growth (Remark by I-2, I-8, I-14 on page 172). Thus, it is really a challenge for training providers to stimulate principals’ interest, and reinforce their commitment to principal trainings. This comments by respondents of I-10 and I-12 in page 175 are echoed in various studies that highlight about the principals’ busy routine work, and the constraints they face in trying to focus their attention on the trainings, while they have more pressing issues to deal with at work (Liang, 2005; Zhang, 2012; Zhu, 2009).

Other empirical studies (Chang, 2005; Sun & Cheng & Deng, 2015) also indicated that time issue had become an important factor that affect school principals’ initiative to participate in training. Moreover, intensive learning is the central practice of school principal training, due to school principals are laden with heavy management and teaching tasks, inevitably, training has conflict with their own work. As the data of this study reveals that school principals are carrying many roles in their work, where they are not just leaders, but also educators and managers, despite giving them time to release from work, the added training program also caused the busy schedules to be a major contradiction between their work and their professional development.

However, training sometimes is an inflexible task delivered from the government, and in this situation, it yields another bad phenomenon where vice-principals are replacing the
school principals while they were sent for training. In addition, unreasonable training time arrangements are one of the factors that discourage the school principals to participate in training. Some of the school principals expressed that even they are being in the training program, but their focus and concerns still be with the school-related matters and dilemmas, especially trainings are conducted during the school mid-terms. There is no supporting finding found in line with this statement yet.

On another note, Yu (2012) has highlighted that the government does not place great importance to school principal trainings. Program participants have shown a low motivation and sometimes demotivated to be enrolled in the course, said by the training providers. School principals also complained that the government does not value the training and has created another reason that disinterests them to participate in the program (comment I-10 & I-11 on page 176). However, the Chinese government has introduced the ‘Principal Ranking System’ and ‘Annual Salary System’ in an effort to form a fair incentive mechanism that can draw more principal participation (Hu, 2006). Conversely, the findings of this study reveal that these two principal incentives have not been widely leveraged upon, in the Henan province.

6.5 Research Objective 4: Constraints and Challenges in Principal Leadership Practices

The quest for a quality-oriented education has placed significant demands on school principals in China. Another major educational reform initiative (Professional Development for One Million Principals) in 1990 represented the government’s effort to introduce training policies and programmes to benchmark the advancement of principal
development in China. Even though schools are in pursuit of a quality-oriented education, the current education practice still remains very much exam-oriented, whereby school principals are challenged by the increasing expectations for quality education with improvements in learning processes and outcomes. As a result, the challenge is on how to support and develop principals’ leadership practices that emphasizes principals’ responsibilities for improving instructional quality in response to the new emphasis on quality-oriented education.

6.5.1 Resistance to Innovative Reforms

Promoting and practicing a quality-oriented education has become a consensus and a dilemma to all school principals. In the context of school reforms and the implementation of change, school principals of this study pointed out that the Chinese principals generally lack innovative abilities needed to drive educational system reforms (Opinions by I-2, I13, I4, page 184; Comment by I-3, page 185). The lack of innovation could stem from their reluctance to try out innovative approaches. Various studies have showed evidence that Chinese principals are more willing to stick to their conventional habits and traditional practices and are rather hostile towards accepting innovation (Jiang & Li, 2011; Xu, 2008; Yang, 2000; Zhang, 2009). Studies have added supporting proof that majority of the schools are yet manage to transform the conventional way of delivering knowledge and the custom in the educational stage (Chen, 2009; Ye, 2011; Wang & Wang, 2015).

Other studies indicate that teachers, students and parents are not confident in implementing new changes mainly due to their concerns about whether the changes are viable and whether these could have an adverse effect on the core operations of school
systems (Jiang & Li, 2011; Xu, 2008; Yang, 2000). Thus, the education reform has become a center of gravity for the school principals to exercise their leadership skills. The finding has pointed to the major constraints that they are facing now is in exercising their principalship to implement the desired education orientation. Another important factor that suppresses educational innovation is the hesitation of some principals to present their innovative ideas, as they are afraid to be discredited or judged by their suggestions. These hesitations and uncertainties tend to stifle the execution of planned innovative changes.

6.5.2 Principal Accountabilities and Autonomy

School principals are responsible for the overall operation of their schools. In an era of increased accountabilities placed on school leaders, they are increasingly being held accountable to establish school-wide vision of academic success. While principals are facing accountability demands from the government and stakeholders for school-wide improvement, they are beleaguered with having to handle a plethora of administrative and management issues on a daily basis, to the point it can become overwhelming. Coping with added accountabilities as a school leader, increased paperwork was found to increase higher levels of stress, leaving principals feeling mentally and physically exhausted (Opinions by I-2, I-5, I-8, I-11, I-14, I-15, page 173). It may be the case where the majority of school principals do not know how to efficiently manage their time. This could be one of the factors that affect the efficiency of their leadership practices.

The findings also revealed that the pressure and heavy workload had caused some of the school principals to develop health problems, such as fatigue, mental strain, neurasthenia and insomnia (Opinion by I-6, page 195). Some of them also complained
about not having time personal time for themselves and their families. As the accountability movement gained momentum in the Henan province, the emphasis of their leadership roles started to be associated with the duties and responsibilities mandated by state policies. In this study, the majority of school principals were uncertain about their functional rights, with regards to their leadership practices and school development.

In this study, a training organizer revealed that the number of school principal trainings held in Henan province were only about one out of dozens. It was also reported that since two years back, only one training institute in Henan held two training classes per year. According to Lu (2003), Li (2011) and Wang (2014), there isn’t a ‘principal in-charge’ system that has been put in place within the Chinese education system, to regulate principal leadership practices. In this study, principals felt a lack of authority in exercising their managerial powers among their teachers (Responded by I-2, I-3, I-15, page 187). The reason for this could be associated with the absence of authority that empowers school principals to have the right to recruit and dismiss staff.

Furthermore, the ‘People’s Republic of China Compulsory Education Law Article 28’ stipulates that principals have the autonomy to appoint teachers and other staff, as well as have a say in the implementation of rewards and punishment. However, according to Xiong (2010), principals’ autonomy cannot be truly exercised and that it is limited to the internal management of school affairs. Principals are not authorized to determine any of the schools running expenditure like teachers’ salaries, infrastructure renovation costs and purchase of equipment, as these are controlled costs that require approval from higher authorities in the educational administrative departments. Likewise, in this study, there is
evidence to suggest the bureaucracy involved when school principals have to report everything to the education bureau in order to obtain their consent and approval before executing any school-based projects.

6.5.3 Curriculum Reforms, Exam-oriented education and Quality-oriented Education

Various studies highlighted that the majority of school principals in China are currently struggling with the curriculum reform initiative, piloted in 2001 (Chu, 2009; Harris et al., 2012; Walker & Qian, 2015; Yin & Lee, 2011; Yin et al., 2014). The new curriculum requires the school principal to be an instructional leader and to focus more on the teaching and learning processes, rather than their managerial responsibilities (Chu & Cravens, 2012). However, Tang et al., (2014) argued that if a school leader only focuses on administrative roles, he or she will be lacking of instructional leadership abilities which in turn slows down the progress of promoting and delivering the new curriculum reform.

The principals face the challenge of knowing how to assimilate the new reforms into curriculum processes and structures that can redefine school success and leadership effectiveness (Response by R-23 on page 155. To face the challenges in implementing curriculum reform, Qian (2017) suggests that school principals should enact student-centric, instructional leadership practices that can contribute towards schools proficiency assessments, while adhering to nationally imposed curriculum reforms. This may explain why school principals “prefer traditional teaching management practices than the external control-oriented and less attention to the interior instructional leadership behavior (Chen, 2009)”.

Another challenge that school principals are facing is the conflict between exam-oriented education and quality-oriented education, as mentioned by I-2 and I-3 on page 180. With the basic 12-year education span in China, high school and college entrance examinations are still the mainstay and the main benchmark for school performance (Hu & West, 2015). In China, education is highly valued and children are encouraged to attain top scores in their examinations. The other bearing for high scores has also to do with the career prospects of school principals, who are rewarded and promoted in the likely event of their school’s academic excellence. According to Hu and West (2015), principals who attain excellent or good in their assessments, are rewarded with extra bonuses and praised publicly in recognition of the school’s reputation. On the other hand, principals with low assessment scores would be subjected to bonus cuts and sometimes economic and administrative sanctions.

Principals were also rewarded based on measures of student enrolment. The students’ enrolment rate is considered as the school performance indicator which is used to determine principals’ performance (Responded by I-13, page 180). As a result of this, schools were constantly in competition to outperform each other, in the attempt to excel above the rest.

Hence, regardless of how the nation advocates quality-oriented education, the student enrolment rate appears to be the most important index to evaluate the leadership performance of school principals. As a result, school principals are constantly trying to draw high quality students that can make a significant contribution to their school
academic rankings. Thus, this study finds that principals are required to innovatively improve their leadership practices to find ways of attracting high achieving students and raising the quality of their present student intake, in order to meet the challenges of student enrolment rate (responded by I-5 and I-8, page 180).

6.5.4  Funding

The shortage of funds and resources appears to be a big constraint and challenge faced by most of the school principals. Some of the schools are also heavy in debt due to loans taken to establish new campuses. Poor condition in the school seeks neither help from the government nor fund raising from the public (Comment by I-13, page 189). Studies like Lu (2002) and Liang and Zhang (2010) highlight that the school principals are faced with the challenge of securing adequate funds needed for up-keeping and maintaining their school operations. However, in the present study, the finding also demonstrated that school principals throughout the Henan province are highly dependent on government financial provisions (Comment by I-13, page 189). Moreover, it is a case where most of the Henan province school principals are in a passive position and do not have the political connection with government officials to be able to secure funds more easily.

6.5.5  School Principals and Teachers

In China’s long educational history, teachers are the fundamental educators highly respected by society. With teaching being viewed as a highly respectable profession, 10th September has been designated ‘Teachers’ Day’ in China, as a day when people show their appreciation and respect to teachers for their valuable contributions to society. In terms of achieving excellent school outcomes and preparing the nation for international
competition, China has been recognized for having undergone reform efforts to improve on its curriculum and teacher education needed for realizing their goals for globalization. However, there have been reports of teachers facing major challenges regarding their roles and expectations in exercising their influence together with principal leadership practices for promoting school effectiveness.

Challenges and constraints that teachers are being faced with, vary from teacher management issues to teacher attrition and the findings of this study show that these challenges can affect school outcomes, as principals continue to battle with teacher management issues (remark by I-6 on page 191), serious shortage of teachers (remark by I-10 on page 190), poor school conditions (remark by I-10 on page 190), teacher migration from low performing rural schools to high-performing urban schools and the increase in medical and maternity leave which coincides with the government’s two-child policy (comment by I-10 on page 190). These are among the current constraints and challenges faced by the teachers in Henan province that have had an impact on school management and leadership practices.

Teacher exhaustion is another issue of concern revealed in this study. According to the findings, some teachers are signed up for part-time jobs to get additional remuneration (comment I-4 on page 191). By overworking and having multiple responsibilities, teachers tend to be distracted from their routine teaching jobs and this can seriously compromise on the standard and quality of their teaching. Any negative impact on their teaching profession can cause teachers to eventually feel less motivated and enthusiastic about their
teaching job. This can further cause teachers to be disinterested in backing up their school principal in actualizing their school goals.

The importance of maintaining a professional interpersonal relationship between principals’ and teachers is echoed in Price (2012). There is also evidence to suggest that the shortage of teachers can have a serious effect on the discourse of education. In the present study, principals have also pointed out that they are facing the challenge of developing and mobilizing teacher teams under the drive of new curriculum reform (comment by I-13 on 190). Under the call of the government, the new curriculum reform has placed high demands on teachers who are expected to be the executors of the new curriculum implementation. However, the finding of this study has indicated that the majority of teachers are deficient in knowledge and are unable to accomplish the requirements of developing a school-based curriculum (comment by I-9 on page 191; comment by I-1 on page 192).

There is also a prevailing situation documented in various studies that compare the teaching quality of teachers from urban and rural areas. It was made known that those who live in the city and county demonstrate higher and better competence in teaching, compared to the teachers living in rural areas (An, 2013; Ma, 2015; Wang, 2007; Zhang, 2005). Similarly, there were the testimonies from the school principals in this study, who also shared common views about the quality of teaching being a concern in the more under-developed areas of Henan province compared to the county (I-2, page 189).
6.6 **Summary of Findings**

The core of this research study concerns the school principals’ preparation and professional development trainings in the Henan province of China, and the findings have reinforced the role of the principal, as being uniquely positioned to provide a clear vision for teaching and learning and the means to realize their school goals. Principalship training, in China, has been introduced as a strategy to improve the leadership practices of school principals and to encourage their interest and participation in professional development trainings. Thus, the concern of school principals’ initial preparation and professional development trainings have been the highlight of this study, in ensuring that school principals are provided with professional trainings that can equip them with sound leadership knowledge regarding effective leadership practices that can guide these school leaders accomplish their set goals.

The findings from this study have also identified the constraints and challenges faced by training providers in attempting to provide more effective training programmes that can suit the objectives and preferences of the school principal training participants. The current shortage of training funds and the non-rigorous post training evaluation procedures were found to stifle the aims and objectives of implementing preparatory and professional development training programmes for school principals. These were the areas that need resolving for improved training effectiveness.

The qualitative findings also showed evidence of formal and informal trainings that provide theoretical guidance for improving school principals practical know-hows and their knowledge in adopting professional practices for school effectiveness. It also has
been highlighted that an innovative mindset needs to be cultivated among the school principals of Henan province, to facilitate their creative problem handling of school matters. The professional development training programmes are held for school principals to learn ways of leading teachers through the new curriculum reform and cater for the needs of students by providing a conducive environment for attaining school excellence.

The strength and weakness of these training programmes have been highlighted with the hope that the findings are able to provide targeted and instructional cues for school principals to act on. They also highlight the positive influence that preparation and professional development programmes have on school principals’ leadership practices. These are useful for further recommendations on future studies concerning the preparation and professional development of school principals’ leadership in Henan province, China. The concluding chapter and its recommendations are discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This final chapter presents the recommendations for future research, the limitations of the study and concludes with the contribution this research study has made to the body of knowledge. The recommendations put forth are directed towards policy implications on school principals’ professional development, some overall suggestions concerning formal
and informal learning and some constructive remedies in support of principal leadership practices and their professional development.

7.2 Brief Overview of Discussion

Following from the Chapter 6, the chief four research objectives have been discussed based on the data collected from document analysis, interview, questionnaire, and observation. Research objective 1 concerns on the impact of the policies issued by the government in initiating and constructing the preparation and development of principal leadership programme. It was found that the policies generally outline the guideline but not pragmatically guide the execution and no evaluation made specifically to allow assessment of training providers and the participants. The document analysis has outlined 5 key areas of impacts: (1) vague principal selection system, (2) loosely regulated qualification system, (3) unfair compensation system, (4) incomplete evaluation system, and (5) not well established training system.

Second research objective that identify the way the principals are prepared for their leadership roles. Among the aspects that can be drawn from the response can be concluded into two major ways of acquiring the leadership ability: (1) formal and (2) informal learning process. Formal learning is inclusive of training classes, urge of roles changing, and school visits, whereas informal learning is through learning from others, communication, accumulation of experience and self-motivation. It is found that informal learning contributes more to the leadership acquiring ways among the respondents. This should be an evidence to include more interactive session in the training programme to enable learning process to be active and brightly conducted.
The third research objective has revealed six major constraints from the leadership preparation and development programme: (1) training content unable to satisfy the participants’ demands and needs, (2) impractical training context and too focus in theoretical approach, (3) monotone knowledge delivery method without much interaction in the class, (4) poorly established evaluation system for training programme and participants, (5) absence of quality assurance on training providers and uneven distribution of funding and compensation, and (6) heavy work loaded participants that can be demotivate easily.

The last research objectives can meet its requirement with 5 challenges in the leadership practise of the school principals. Firstly, busy schedule at school has demotivate the leaders in enriching themselves to be innovative and upgrading themselves to be competent under education reform. Secondly, poorly delegated authority in certain decision making has disinterest them to do more for the community as they have no autonomy in initiating any programme for the sake of education reform. The new curriculum requires the school principal to urge the focus changing from an instructional leader to focus more on the teaching and learning processes has leave a heavier burden for them. Lastly, teacher colleagues can be a stepping stone in the school management when the school leaders have to deal with difficult teacher and teacher migration that is common in the rural areas.

The recommendations in the subtopics are suggested based on the findings and discussion based on the key issues of each research objectives. It is with the hope that the
recommendations made from the study can be a constructive idea for further research and for the policymakers to be acknowledged of the constraints that actually exist throughout the programme implementation.

7.3 Recommendations

Since the policy planning has its confidentiality and are under the government authority, hence, the thesis will only suggest some overall suggestions in this respect. Secondly, the recommendations for school principals’ formal learning and informal learning will be elaborated to strengthen their learning and the knowledge acquiring. Thirdly, the challenges and constraints of school principals’ preparation and professional development will be given suggestions and constructive remedies. Last of all, the recommendations for the challenges and constraints of school principals’ leadership practice will be presented, with the hope that the efforts given are in support of the education reform and create a better study ground for the children and a better workplace for the teachers.

7.3.1 School Principals’ Professional Development and Training Policy

This research had shown that there is no clear policy framework governing school principals’ preparation and professional development training programmes. This study recommends that a professional development and training policy should be introduced to offer explicit guidelines and eligibility criteria regarding the school principals’ selection process. Such a policy should also cover other qualifying criteria related to principals’ preparation and professional development training programmes, such as qualification system, training system, compensation system, evaluation system and incentive system. Presently, the set of standards and rules for school principal’s selection, recruitment and training are not well defined due to its ambiguous and unclear regulations. Regarding the
selection of school principals, more stringent procedures and methods need to be established at both national and local levels. The school principals’ selection should not just focus on principals’ teaching achievements and their professional rankings, but more importantly about their professional needs in relation to acquiring leadership concepts and competencies. It is also recommended that the central government should reinforce the planning process concerning the school principals’ selection system, by urging timely updates on the job requirements of school principals under the new education development affinity. Moreover, the education administrative departments should standardize the principal selection procedure, according to the current stipulated laws and regulations while considering the nation’s drive for education reform. Reward and punishment system should be applied if necessary to ensure strict execution of principal’s preparation process, from selection, pre-service training, on-the-job evaluation, and the continuous development of leadership and management ability. Reward of recognition award, performance bonus and promotion can be applied to motivate the desire of self-improvement and the interest to be a better leader to achieve school excellence and hitting education reform target.

### 7.3.2 Principals Qualification Trainings

In Henan province, pre-service trainings are made compulsory for pre-service principal candidates to attend. However, this research study revealed that the participants who registered at the Qualification Training programmes were actually in-service principals. The principal qualification system needs to be strictly reviewed in its implementation of a proper and relevant post-holding certificate system. Audit for the training quality is essential to closely monitor the training curriculum, teaching materials, trainers’ qualifications and the participants’ feedback can be a value adding factor. Moreover, school principals should be urged to attend trainings continuously especially when the training certificate has its own period of validity. Continuous professional
development should be a priority especially with school principals’ in service, who should strive for up scaling themselves with higher qualifications. More importantly, the education administrative departments should be responsible for formulating the set of criteria that defines principals’ requirements, their performance index and appraisal procedures that could standardize the principal qualification system.

7.3.3 Principals Remuneration Incentive

The current compensation system offered to school principals who participate in principalship trainings, are not favourable to the majority of school principals who participated in this research study. The principal compensation system, with regards to their remuneration package and other performance incentives, should ideally reflect their professionalism as school leaders, rather than equating them to the level of teachers. Under no cost should the average salary of principals be lower than that of teachers, considering the hierarchy of their professions. Appropriate and reasonable incentive rewarded to the high performing school leaders will surely generate fruitful results when the multi-tasking leaders receive recognition and appreciation for what they are doing. Also, consideration is needed the principals’ remuneration package which should be protected by the legislative ‘Teachers Law’. This is psychologically motivating as they have work hard and at their best to achieve what the stakeholders are demanding.

Furthermore, the government should consider increasing their investment on principalship development for all school leaders throughout the nation, and making the Qualification Training programmes compulsory for all school leaders, in which the participation needed strict monitoring to ensure what is offered is not taking for granted. When these recommendations can be made into real run, the school leaders will have no doubt to perform better than what they should because they are doing it better for the
society, the students and at the same time for themselves as they are given what they are deserved for their hard work.

7.3.4 **Trainer Selection**

The selection of qualified trainers for school principals’ trainings needs to be based on stringent criteria and carefully assessed. The study has pinpointed on the need of a trainer that know what is needed to satisfy the hunger of knowledge of the participants and they are more experienced in terms of principalship and leadership to be able to cope with the school leaders’ enquiry and request. The government authorities involved in the trainer selection process need to formulate an appropriate set of criteria based on education level, related experience and qualifications that can be used to cross verify the selection of potential trainers for principal training programmes. The candidacy requirements should consider candidates who have a strong conceptual understanding of the job and can demonstrate competency in delivering the training content in a conducive learning environment. The target audience of these trainings should be given due consideration since the majority of the participants occupy high positions in the school hierarchy. Moreover, trainers should be able to exhibit the ability to establish rapport with the participants and show respect for principals’ status. The findings of this study have clearly revealed the expectations of principal participants’ who wish to be recognized for their reputed status as school leaders and to be dealt with respect, especially by the trainers. As and when the situation warrants, the ideal trainer should be able to respond non-defensively and not be judgmental. Most importantly, the chosen trainers will have to show commitment to their role as trainer and are willing to support the training providers’ initiatives in fulfilling the objectives of principal professional training programmes.
7.3.5 Training Evaluation

Following the roll-out of principal training programmes at training institutes at Henan province, this study proposes a training evaluation to be established, as it would be useful to identify if the overall training programmes meet the expectations of the principal participants. The suggestion for a formative evaluation would essentially measure the principal participants learning experience, and perceived practicability for replicating leadership practices. Based on specific standards and criteria, establishing an effective evaluation mechanism or a periodical audit on the training curriculum, teaching methodology, participants’ performance assessment and the peer evaluation among the trainers would place greater emphasis on good practices and quality assurance and help evaluate the effectiveness of the principal training programmes. Training evaluations would suitably identify effective strategies that can enable improved training design and delivery and would be supportive for the building of greater leadership capacities of the training participants and satisfactory from the participants as well.

7.3.6 Formal and Informal Learning

The evidence from this study illustrates that some of the formal and informal trainings have been helpful and instrumental in providing continuous professional learning that coincide with the leadership needs of principals. This study recommends that principals’ be provided the means to gain access to a resource centre or an officially subscribed online database of magazines and journals on educational leadership, as well as books related to their leadership careers. In this manner, principals’ would keep abreast with the educational trends and developments in the field of educational leadership. This study also suggests that the Education Departments should stay committed to the advancement of learning by implementing learning initiatives such as setting up a “Learning Week”, a
“Learning Exchange House” or a “Work and Learn Fellowship”, that would provide principals a network of learning resources and a platform for information exchange. The other proposition is to explore the possibility of setting up China’s most popular social media application, ‘WeChat’, to enable a privately hosted communication channel for principals’ to share career development-related information and their leadership experiences to enhance their professional consciousness.

7.3.7 Training Institutes

This study proposes that the training institutes in Henan province, as the authorized training providers of principal preparatory and professional development programmes, should consider the lucrative investment in setting up a resource centre, library and subscribe to online journal academic databases, equipped with an archive of academic scholarly information. This would be a breakthrough for training institutions as they would be recognized as the exclusive owners of officially subscribed academic databases, introduced for trainers as well as principal participants, whom will gain password-enabled access to a reservoir of pertinent information that can be highly useful for fulfilling their training needs as well as for enhancing their knowledge in their areas of expertise. Moreover, with the increase in demand for principal preparatory and continuous professional development trainings, the government should establish more training institutes in Henan province. Training institutes could take advantage of the increase in demand and tailor training programmes with a better quality and according to the principal’s needs. By enlarging the number of training institutes will constitute to a competitive environment where training institutes will need to give importance to provide quality enhanced training programmes specially catered for school principals’ needs. Besides, the government can initiate research on the training design that will deliver an
international standard skill advancement programme. The existing programmes that are implementing in other countries can be a guidance to upgrade the present training. Wide spreading the institutes especially for the underdeveloped areas will ensure unified control and execution of training program to solve the dilemma in training centre and resource deficiency which will demotivate the participation from the rural areas.

7.3.8 Training Schedule

This research had indicated that many of the school principals were not willing to participate in the trainings offered for their continuous professional development, mainly because of their work commitments, and the difficulties they face in having to make alternative arrangements for their teaching and school management affairs to be handled in their absence. It is recommended that short-term, intensive training programmes should be scheduled during the weekends, instead of during the middle of the semester. Preferably, the training schedule should be arranged with due consideration given to the availability of school principals. If trainings were scheduled at suitable times during the year, more principals would be encouraged to participate in them and this would increase the participation rate and meet the objectives of the training providers. Apart from that, time and task management should be one of the modules to enable school principals to handle their overloaded task effectively and at the same time a session with the government authorities and policy makers is a better way to allow bottom-up communication that mutual understanding can be established and ways to reach the common goals can be made acknowledged when the authorities get to know what is happening beyond their knowledge and real situation observation.
7.3.9 Training Fund and Incentive Mechanism

An exclusive principal training fund should be established, separately from the education fund allocated specifically for school principals’ professional development in Henan province. This would ensure the proper use of funds to be apportioned for principals preparatory programmes as well as programmes for the professional development of school principals in Henan province. As for the incentive mechanism, a more attractive and reasonable incentive mechanism needs to be established, in order to extend that reach and inspire school principals’ to participate in principal trainings. An attractive incentive mechanism could draw the interest of school principals’ especially when the incentives are linked to principal’s appointment, evaluation, promotion and welfare package. An appropriate incentive mechanism can enhance the attractiveness of principal trainings and stimulate principals’ interest for wanting to build their self-development capacity. In addition, the active engagement in principal trainings should be a determining criterion in recognizing school principals’ promotion. It would also increase the awareness among school principals in realizing the importance of these trainings. Incentives for the training institutes will in return enable the institutes to be competitive in providing a better programmes and the best institutes will be given recognition and promote nationally on their performance.

7.3.10 Principal Autonomy

This study proposes that principals be granted more autonomy in managing their schools. This exercise of autonomy suggests a greater decision-making authority for school principals, particularly in key areas concerning school budget, staffing and teacher selection as well as curriculum planning. With school principals in Henan province assuming more responsibility for school outcomes and students’ results, some degree of
autonomy and greater involvement of principals in decisions about school resources, curriculum and instructions may create the opportunity for schools to innovate and excel. Leaders without authority are like a power generator without fuel to operate. Thus, allocating specific field of right for the school leaders is essential to let the leader be a leader. However, the designated rights should be well monitored as well to avoid abuse of the power that they own in some decision making protocol.

7.3.11 Teacher Recruitment and Retention

There is a need for highly skilled teachers in the Henan province of China. The scarcity of teachers and teacher retention is more acute in the rural areas of Henan province. The government should implement teacher quality and retention programmes that are designed to recruit, train and retain high quality teachers who can have an impact on the future generation of student learners in Henan province, China. Increasing the teacher workforce and curbing teacher turnover also require strong principal leadership. For principals to be capable of addressing issues like teacher shortage and retaining competent teachers, effective preparation and professional development programmes for principals could provide near-term solutions to address these pressing problems. However, short-term fixes may not be effective for retaining a high quality, sustainable teaching workforce. This study thus recommends that policies be aligned to support systemic change, build the teaching profession and improve the retention of new teachers in Henan province, China. Ultimately, by addressing the issues of teacher recruitment and retention, it would empower learning for all students and promote gains in student learning.
7.4 Suggestions for Future Research

This research had successfully addressed the research questions of this study. These research questions fall in line with the research objectives that underpin this study. However, there are areas of this study that may be further explored, for purposes of future research. Research on policy regulations, their implications and applications for the preparation and professional development of school principals’ leadership trainings, may be an area that is worth exploring. Currently, school principal training regulations are largely dependent on two broad national policies that cover principals’ qualification and their leadership evaluation. This study therefore suggests the implementation of new policies and regulations that should take into consideration the local context of Henan Province before standardizing the regulations for principal trainings in this province.

Henan Province is just one of the thirty-four provinces in China. Similar studies should be undertaken in other provinces as this can offer comparative insights of principal training programmes offered across a number of other provinces. The other suggestion is to further extend the area of research to cover a nationwide study of principal preparation and professional development training programmes across Mainland China, as research of the entire nation would identify meaningful perspectives and in-depth exploration to this research. A nationwide study could also lead to a cross cultural multinational research project that compares school principals’ training programmes in nations across the region. Future research could also explore the possibility of conducting a longitudinal study which may offer further insight into tracing the development and the progress made with principals training programmes catered for their professional development.
7.5 Implications of the Study

The findings of this study will have the attention of policymakers who are strongly connected to the Chinese government and the relevant education administrative departments. To drive systemic change, policymakers will need to take into consideration the importance of policy construction, and define strong standards that can secure the interests of school principals’ preparation and professional development in the Henan province. The findings of this study are also beneficial to the larger community of research scholars, in-service principal practitioners and training institutes, who share common interests in the area of school principals’ preparation and professional development. Ultimately, the joint efforts of all parties would contribute towards the sustainable development of school principals’ professional growth and leadership practices in Henan province, China.

7.6 Limitations of the Study

In the course of this study, there were several limitations of the study that need to be declared. The primary source of data for this study was gathered from a purposeful sample of school principals and training providers. It is therefore assumed that the comments and opinions shared by the respondents are truthful, unbiased and valid. This study had adopted a qualitative approach to investigate school principals’ preparation and professional development training programmes in Henan province, China. Despite the credibility of the findings obtained through interviews, surveys and field visit observations, a mixed methodological approach by integrating a quantitative methodology could have resulted in further methodological triangulation that may have further reinforced the validity of the findings. In addition, reflecting upon the integral part the researcher played as the prime investigator of this study, all attempts were considered
carefully wherever applicable to minimize and if possible eliminate researcher bias that would obscure the credibility of the overall findings. As a result, this qualitative research study does not seek to generalize the findings but serves as a guide for other researchers who are interested in further exploring the course of this study.

Other inevitable shortcomings that arose during the course of this study that had led to the extended duration of this research study include constraints like having to accommodate to the busy schedules of school principals, and the difficulty in obtaining willing respondents to participate in this study. Moreover, there were instances where some participants were not willing to divulge information for fear of any repercussions on their jobs. As a result, the researcher had to take additional time in order to source for other participants who were willing to be interviewed for the purpose of this research study. Besides, during the data collection process, interviews were frequently interrupted by the sudden announcement of visits to be made by the education administrative departments, which disrupted the attention of the principals being interviewed. Such incidences tended to disrupt the interview sessions, and the interviews had to be rescheduled.

7.7 Conclusion

In its entirety, the purpose of this study was to apprehend the phenomenon of the preparation and professional development of secondary school principals’ leadership in Henan province, China. The primary objective of this study was to investigate the current issues, obstacles, challenges and paradoxes that secondary school principals’ in Henan province face, concerning their leadership preparation and professional development
goals. It is evident that the results of this study potentially offer new and effective ways of supporting an environment where school principals can grow and develop professionally and would be able to better facilitate instructional matters to enhance the quality of teaching and student performance in their school environment. Ultimately, the findings of this study has provided empirical evidence that supports its intended goals to encourage the implementation of policies that can govern school principals’ preparation and professional development, the ways they are prepared for their leadership roles, the challenges and constraints they face concerning their leadership practices and to support school principals in their ongoing professional growth.
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Becoming a principal in Indonesia: possibility, pitfalls and potential
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Key Challenges of Principals Trainings and their Professional Development in Henan Province, China: A Qualitative Inquiry
Cabaran-cabaran utama dalam latihan kepengerusan dan pembangunan profesional di Wilayah Henan, China: Satu siasatan kualitatif

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Abstract
This study sets out to investigate the key challenges of school principals’ training and professional development in Henan Province, China. It allows for a deeper understanding of principals’ views regarding their roles and leadership practices in an era of educational reform. This article aims to assess the professional development needs of Chinese school principals and to elicit their perspectives through a qualitative research inquiry. Data was collected through open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews from thirty-seven secondary school principals and six training providers. Observations of training programmes were also triangulated to support the research findings. For the purpose of qualitative data analysis, all transcribed data was coded and analysed using Atlas.ti to interpret the findings.

Keywords: principal training, professional development, school leadership, Chinese education, qualitative research.
APPENDIX A

Letter of Invitation for Survey Questionnaire

1. Survey Questionnaire to Principals and Training Providers

University of Malaya
Institute of Educational Leadership

Dear Sir or Madam,
I am a PhD student at University of Malaya, Malaysia. I am conducting a research entitled “Preparation and Professional Development of Secondary School Principals’ Leadership in Henan Province, China.” The purpose of this research is to fulfil the degree requirements. As an expert in this field you are in an important position to give valuable information from your understanding and perspective, therefore, I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

You are invited to participate in the survey. You need to fill the survey questionnaire. The questionnaire is to gain some background information regarding your leadership preparation and professional development, it will also serve for further case studies in a few selected schools in which your school may be one of them.

There is no financial payment for your participation. However, your participation is appreciated. For further information about this study please refer to the factsheet that the researcher provides below.

Thank you very much for your consideration and collaboration

Yours sincerely,

Jiang Na
INFORMATION SHEET – FIELDWORK

1. Survey Questionnaire participants

University of Malaya
Institute of Educational Leadership

Research Topic: Preparation and Professional Development of Secondary School Principals’ Leadership in Henan Province, China

Researcher’s name: Jiang Na
Supervisor’s name: Dr. Bambang Suminton

I am Jiang Na, a Ph.D. student of University of Malaya, Malaysia. I am conducting a research entitled “Preparation and Professional Development of Secondary School Principals’ Leadership in Henan Province, China.”

The purpose of this study is to examine the preparation and professional development of secondary school principals’ leadership in the People’s Republic of China. The first step of this research is to gain some general information regarding your leadership preparation and professional development through a questionnaire survey.

Participation is confidential. The entire interview will be recorded and kept confidential. All the information that you provide only for the purpose of the study, your identity will not be revealed during the data analysis and presentation of findings. You also can withdraw at any time when you do not feel comfortable during the interview. All the data will be destroyed after completing this study.

You may not directly benefit from the study, but your participation may contribute to the knowledge base of preparation and professional development of secondary school principals in Chinese educational context.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please fill the “consent form” provided by the researcher. For any further inquiry regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Bambang Sumintono on 0060167793619 or by e-mail (bambang@um.edu.my).

Thank you,

Jiang Na
RESEARCH CONSENT FORM – Survey Questionnaire

I, …………………………….., agree to take part in the research entitled Preparation and Professional Development of Secondary School Principals’ Leadership in Henan Province, China, which is conducted by the researcher Ms. Jiang Na at………………………………………………………for the period of within two hours.

I have been told the risks or discomforts and the anticipate benefits of this research. I know that my role is treated as research subject, I also know that the interview will be recorded during the session, and I have right to withdraw at any time, for any reason.

I understand that the survey questionnaire only for the purpose of the research, the findings based on the survey questionnaire will help to improve the quality of the preparation and professional development of secondary principals’ leadership under Chinese educational context.

Subject Signature: …………………….. Date:…………………………

For the researcher:

I clarify that I have told the subjects all the benefits and risks, I also answered all of their questions regarding this research. To my point of view, the research subjects understand all my explanation.

Researcher Signature:…………………… Date:…………………………
APPENDIX B

Letter of Invitation for Semi-Structured Interview

2 – Semi-structured interview participants

University of Malaya
Institute of Educational Leadership

Dear Sir or Madam:
I am a PhD student at University of Malaya, Malaysia. I am conducting a research entitled “Preparation and Professional Development of Secondary School Principals’ Leadership in Henan province, China.” The purpose of this research is to fulfil the degree requirements. As an expert in this field you are in an important position to give valuable information from your understanding and perspective, therefore, I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

You are invited to participate in the semi-structured interview. The interview will be conducted during November 2015 under my arrangement. The interview is to capture your views regarding secondary school principals’ leadership preparation and professional development in China.

There is no financial payment for your participation. However, your participation is appreciated. For further information about this study please refer to the factsheet that the researcher provides below.

Thank you very much for your consideration and collaboration
Yours sincerely,

Jiang Na
INFORMATION SHEET – FIELDWORK

2. Semi-Structured Interview Participant

University of Malaya
Institute of Educational Leadership

Research Topic: Preparation and Professional Development of Secondary School Principals’ Leadership in Henan Province, China

Researcher’s name: Jiang Na
Supervisor’s name: Dr. Bambang Sumintono

I am Jiang Na, a Ph.D. student at University of Malaya, Malaysia. I am conducting a research named “Preparation and Professional Development of Secondary School Principals’ Leadership in Henan Province, China.”

The purpose of this study is to examine the preparation and professional development of secondary school principals’ leadership in the People’s Republic of China. After all the questionnaires had collected from respondents, interview will be conducted by researcher. The entire interview will be recorded and kept confidential. All the information that you provide only for the purpose of the study, your identity will not be revealed during the data analysis and presentation of findings. You also can withdraw at any time when you do not feel comfortable during the interview. All the data will be destroyed after completing this study.

You may not directly benefit from the study, but your participation may contribute to the knowledge base of preparation and professional development of secondary school principals in Chinese educational context. If you are willing to participate in this study, please fill the “consent form” provided by the researcher. For any further inquiry regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Bambang Sumintono on 0060167793619 or by e-mail ((bambang@um.edu.my).

Thank you,

Jiang Na
RESEARCH CONSENT FORM– Semi-structured Interviews

I, ……………………………, agree to take part in the research entitled Preparation and Professional Development of Secondary School Principals’ Leadership in Henan Province, China, which is conducted by the researcher Ms. Jiang Na at……………………………………………………..for the period of within two hours.

I have been told the risks or discomforts and the anticipate benefits of this research. I know that my role is treated as research subject, I also know that the interview will be recorded during the session, and I have right to withdraw at any time, for any reason.

I understand that the interview only for the purpose of the research, the findings based on the interview will help to improve the quality of the preparation and professional development of secondary principals’ leadership under Chinese educational context.

Subject Signature: ……………………. Date:…………………………

For the researcher:

I clarify that I have told the subjects all the benefits and risks, I also answered all of their questions regarding this research. To my point of view, the research subjects understand all my explanation.

Researcher Signature:…………………… Date:…………………………...
邀请函

1. 校长调查问卷和培训机构调查问卷

马来亚大学
教育领导力机构

亲爱的女士、先生:
我是一名就读于马来西亚马来亚大学的博士生。我现在在实施一个名为《中国河南省中学校长领导力准备和专业发展》的研究。本次研究目的是为了完成学位要求。您作为一个这方面的专家具有十分重要的位置从您的理解力和角度去提供珍贵的信息,因此,我希望邀请您参与到本次的学习中来。

您被邀请到此次的问卷调查中来。您需要填写调查问卷。调查问卷是为了获取有关您领导力准备和发展的一些背景信息,调查问卷将用于本次所选择的几个学校的案列学习中来,您的学校或许会成为其中一个案列。

您的参与是无偿的。无论怎样,非常感谢您的参与。如需获取关于本次调查的更多的信息请查阅研究人员以下所提供的说明。

非常感谢您的关心与合作

谨启
江娜
信息表---实地调查

1. 调查问卷参与者
马来亚大学
教育领导力机构

论文标题：中国中学校长领导力准备和专业发展
研究者姓名：江娜
导师姓名：Dr. Bambang Sumintono

我叫江娜，我是一名来自马来西亚马来亚大学的博士生。我现在在实施一个名为《中国河南省中学校长领导力准备和专业发展》的研究。

本次学习的研究目的是为了调查中华人民共和国的中学校长领导力的准备和发展。研究的第一步是通过调查问卷获取一些关于您领导力准备和专业发展的一些基本信息。

您的参与是保密的。整个访谈将会被录音和保密。您所提供的所有信息只会用于研究目的，您的身份在资料分析和结论呈现的过程中将不会显示。如果您在访谈过程中感觉不舒服您可以在任何时候终止访谈。完成此次学习后所有的资料将会被销毁。

如果您愿意参与到此次学习中来，请填写研究者所提供的同意书。关于本次学习的更多信息，请随时通过电话 0060167793619 或者信箱 bambang@um.edu.my 联系 Bambang Sumintono 博士。

谢谢

谨启
江娜
研究同意书—调查问卷

本人……………………………………同意参加《中国河南省中学校长领导力准备和专业发展》的研究中来，本次调查在江娜小姐的指导下在……………………………………进行，为期两个小时之内。

我被告知参与到本次研究中可能会面临的风险或者不适和预期收益。我了解我的角色是一个研究物体，我也明白访谈将会被录音，我有权利在任何时候，出于任何理由终止调查。

我明白调查问卷仅仅用于研究目的，基于调查问卷的调查结果将会帮助提高在中国教育背景下中学校长领导力准备和专业发展的质量。

研究对象签名：……………………………… 日期：………………………………

研究人员：

我在此声明我已告知研究对象所有的好处和风险，我也回答了关于本次学习的所有问题。从我的观点来看，研究对象明白我的解释。

研究者签名：……………………………… 日期：………………………………
邀请函

2. 参与者的半结构化访谈

马来亚大学
教育领导力研究机构

亲爱的女士、先生:
我是一名就读于马来西亚马来亚大学的博士生。我现在在实施一个名为《中国河南省中学校长领导力准备和专业发展》的研究。本次研究目的是为了完成学位要求。您作为一个这方面的专家具有十分重要的位置从您的理解力和角度去提供珍贵的信息,因此,我希望邀请您参与到本次的学习中来。

您被邀请参加此次的半结构化访谈。访谈将会在我的安排下于 2015 年 12 月进行。访谈是为了捕捉您关于中国中学校长领导力准备和专业发展的观点。

您的参与是无偿的。无论怎样,非常感谢您的参与。如需获取关于本次调查的更多的信息请查阅研究人员以下所提供的说明。

非常感谢您的关心与合作

谨启
江娜
APPENDIX C

Pilot Study Interview Protocol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How were you prepared for your current leadership role? What was the main form of preparation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. In your view, was this preparation effective? Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Are you currently involved in any leadership development programme? How does this influence your leadership practices?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What are you hoping to gain from this programme professionally?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How will you assess its impact on your leadership practice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What are the major constraints and challenges you currently face concerning your leadership practices?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. In your opinion, what are the major challenging issues of principal training programmes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. To what extent do the governmental training policies impact the preparation and professional development of secondary school principals’ leadership in Henan province, China?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

Principal Questionnaire

INSTRUCTIONS: Please save this questionnaire on to your desktop prior to completing it. Please mark (✓) in the appropriate box and provide the required information where needed.

1. Gender  Male ( )  Female ( )

2. Age
   Under 30 years old ( )
   30---39 years old ( )
   49---49 years old ( )
   50 years and older ( )

3. What is your highest degree completed?
   Diploma ( )
   Bachelor Degree ( )
   Master Degree ( )
   Doctor Degree ( )
   Others (please specify) ( )……………………………………

4. Years of experiences as a Teacher
   Under 5 years ( )
   6---10 years ( )
   11---15 years ( )
   16---20 years ( )
   20 years above ( )
5. Years of experience as a PRINCIPAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>( )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5 years</td>
<td>(   )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6---10 years</td>
<td>(   )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11---15 years</td>
<td>(   )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16---20 years</td>
<td>(   )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 years above</td>
<td>(   )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Number of years of experience as a PRINCIPAL in THIS SCHOOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>( )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 1 year</td>
<td>(   )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 5 years</td>
<td>(   )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10 years</td>
<td>(   )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 15 years</td>
<td>(   )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 20 years</td>
<td>(   )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 20 years</td>
<td>(   )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Have you completed any course(s) that prepared you specifically for your current leadership role?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>( )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>(   )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>(   )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If yes, please specify:

- National Accreditation (   )
- Postgraduate Qualifications (   )
- Continuously Professional Development (   )
- Others (please specify) (   ) .....

---

1 If you are a new principal please add exact number of months/years in post
8. Which of your answers to Question 7 has influenced your leadership practice the most? Please state why.

……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
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9. Has anything else significantly influenced your leadership practice as a Principal? Please explain.

……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
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……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………

10. Do you think principal preparation and professional development programs could satisfy the needs of your leadership practice?

……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
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……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………

11. What drives you to participate in the professional development programs

……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
12. What is your expectation for school principal professional development programmes?
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
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........................................................................................................................................

13. If you have any information to add, please write down here.
........................................................................................................................................
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附录 D：校长调查问卷

说明：请在相应的空格内打(√)，必要的话请提供所需要的信息。

1. 性别： 男性（ ） 女性（ ）

2. 年龄
   30 岁以下（ ）
   30 岁到 39 岁（ ）
   40 岁到 49 岁（ ）
   50 岁以上（ ）

3. 获得到的最高学位
   大专（ ）
   本科（ ）
   硕士（ ）
   博士（ ）
   其他(请说明)（ ）…………………………

4. 作为老师的工作年限
   5 年以下（ ）
   6 --- 10 年（ ）
   11---15 年（ ）
   16---20 年（ ）
   20 年以上（ ）

5. 作为校长的工作年限
   5 年以下（ ）
   6 --- 10 年（ ）
   11---15 年（ ）
   16---20 年（ ）
   20 年以上（ ）
6. 在目前的学校做校长的年限
   1年以下（  ）
   1---5年（  ）
   6---10年（  ）
   11---15年（  ）
   16---20年（  ）
   20年以上（  ）

7. 有没有参加过为目前职责做准备的某些具体的课程？
   有（  ）   没有（  ）
   如果有，请说明：
     国家委派（  ）
     研究生学历（  ）
     继续专业发展（  ）
     其他(请说明)（  ）

8. 在问题10中，哪一个答案最影响你的领导力实践？请说明原因

   ………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………
9. 有没有其他的重要因素影响到你作为校长的领导力实践？请解释

…………………………………………………………………………………………
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…………………………………………………………………………………………

(如果你是新校长请在最后标注确切的工作年月时间)

10. 您认为校长准备和专业发展项目是否能够满足您领导力实践的需求？

…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
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…………………………………………………………………………………………

11. 是什么驱使您参与校长的专业发展项目？

…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
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…………………………………………………………………………………………

12. 您对校长专业发展项目的期待是什么？

…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
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13. 如果您有任何信息需要添加，请写在下方。

…………………………………………………………………………………………
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…………………………………………………………………………………………
APPENDIX E

Training Provider Questionnaire

1. Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )

2. Age
   Under 30 years old ( )
   30-39 years old ( )
   40-49 years old ( )
   50 years and older ( )

3. What is your highest degree completed?
   Diploma ( )
   Bachelor Degree ( )
   Master Degree ( )
   Doctor Degree ( )
   Others (please specify) ( )

4. Your roles in this training institute
   Teacher ( )
   Manager ( )
   Teacher and administrator ( )
   Others (Please Specify) ( )

5. Years of experiences as a trainer or training organizer
   Under 5 years ( )
   6-10 years ( )
   11-15 years ( )
   16-20 years ( )
   Above 20 years ( )
6. The level of your training institute
   Training institution at the provincial level ( )
   Institution at municipal level ( )
   Training institution at district level ( )
   Private training institution ( )
   The special training institution (colleges and universities, research institutes and other professional training institutions) ( )

7. What did you do before serving in this institute?
   School leader of primary and secondary schools ( )
   Teacher in Colleges and Universities ( )
   Staff of educational administrative department ( )
   Other ( )

8. The training funding sources for school principal is
   Central government spending ( )
   Local government spending ( )
   The school principals’ school spending ( )
   The principal spending ( )
   Share equally ( )
   Others ( )

9. Does your training institute establish its own school principals’ professional development plan?
   Yes ( )
   No ( )
   I do not know ( )
10. Does your training institute rigorously implement the post-holding certificate system?
Yes (  )
No (  )
I do not know (  )

11. How do you rate the overall effect of school principals’ preparation and professional development programs?
Poor (  )
Fair (  )
Good (  )
Very Good (  )
Excellent (  )

Please explain …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

12. What are the challenges for this training institute?
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
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13. How does your institute evaluate school principals’ training outcomes?
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
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14. What is your advice for secondary school principal training?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………
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……………………………………………………………………………………………………

15. Are you trained to training?

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……………………………………………………………………………………………………
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……………………………………………………………………………………………………

16. If you have any information to add, please write down here.

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……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
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附录 E：培训者调查问卷

说明：请在相应的空格内打(√)，必要的话请提供所需要的信息。

1. 性别：
   男性 （ ） 女性 （ ）

2. 年龄
   30 岁以下 （ ）
   30 岁到 39 岁 （ ）
   40 岁到 49 岁 （ ）
   50 岁以上 （ ）

3. 获得到的最高学位
   大专 （ ）
   本科 （ ）
   硕士 （ ）
   博士 （ ）
   其他(请说明) （ ）…………………………

4. 您在培训机构的职责
   老师 （ ）
   管理者 （ ）
   老师兼行政人员 （ ）
   其他 （ ）……………………………………

5. 您作为培训者或者培训组织者的工作年限
   5 年以下 （ ）
   6-10 年 （ ）
   11-15 年 （ ）
   16-20 年 （ ）
   20 年以上 （ ）
6. 您所属的培训机构的层次
   省级培训机构 ( )
   市级培训机构 ( )
   地区级培训机构 ( )
   特殊培训机构(大学,研究机构,或者其他专业培训机构) ( )

7. 您在这个培训机构工作以前是做什么的？
   中小学领导 ( )
   大学教师 ( )
   教育行政部门员工 ( )
   其他 ( )

8. 校长培训的经费来源是
   中央政府支出 ( )
   当地政府支出 ( )
   校长所在学校支出 ( )
   校长支出 ( )
   各方平摊 ( )
   其他 ( )

9. 您所在的培训中心是否建立本地校长专业发展计划？
   是 ( )
   否 ( )
   我不清楚 ( )

10. 您所在的培训中心是否严格地执行校长持证上岗制度？
    是 ( )
    否 ( )
    我不清楚 ( )
11. 您是如何评价中学校长准备和专业发展的整体效果的？

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>评价等级</th>
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<tr>
<td>不好</td>
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<td>好</td>
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<tr>
<td>很好</td>
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<tr>
<td>极为优秀</td>
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</table>

请解释原因：

…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………

12. 您的培训机构目前所面临的问题是什么？

…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………

13. 你们的培训机构是怎样评估校长培训成果的？

…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
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…………………………………………………………………………………………

14. 您对中学校长培训有怎样的建议？

…………………………………………………………………………………………
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…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
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15. 您在给校长做培训之前，自己有被培训过吗？

……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………

16. 如果您有任何额外的信息需要添加，请写在下列横线下。

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APPENDIX F

Interview Protocol for School Principals

1. How were you prepared for your current leadership role? What was the main form of preparation?

2. In your view, was this preparation effective? Why or why not?

3. Are you currently involved in any leadership development programme? How does this influence your leadership practice?

4. What are you hoping to gain from this programme professionally?

5. How will you assess its impact on your leadership practices?

6. What are the major constraints and challenges of the training that you are facing currently?

7. What are the major constraints and challenges you are facing currently for your leadership practice?

8. How do you think you can be better prepared to face these challenges within the Chinese Educational system?

9. To what extent do the governmental training policies impact on the preparation and professional development of secondary school principals’ leadership in China?
THE CHINESE VERSION OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS PROTOCOL

附录 F：校长访谈题纲

1. 您是怎样为你当前的领导力做准备的？比如，领导力准备的主要形式是什么？

2. 在您的观点里，准备有效吗？为什么有或者为什么没有？

3. 您目前有没有参加任何领导力发展项目？它是怎样影响您的领导力实践的？

4. 您希望从专业发展项目里获得什么？

5. 您是怎样评估它对您领导力的影响的？

6. 您参加培训所面临的主要障碍和挑战是什么？

7. 在您领导力实践过程中，您目前面临主要的障碍和挑战是什么？

8. 您认为您该怎样去准备来面对这些挑战在中国教育系统中？

9. 从那种程度上培训政策影响中学校长领导力的准备和专业发展？
APPENDIX G

Interview Protocol for Training Provider

1. In your opinion, how does the government prepare their school principals for their present principal leadership role?

2. In your opinion, how do the current preparation and professional development programmes influence secondary school principals’ leadership practices?

3. What are the major constraints and challenges currently faced by secondary school principals during their preparation and professional development programmes?

4. In your view, to what extent do the governmental training policies impact the preparation and professional development of secondary school principals’ leadership in China?

5. How do you think school principals could be better prepared to face these challenges within the Chinese educational system?

6. Is there any problem in the existing school principal trainings? Please explain.

7. Do you think the school principal trainings can satisfy the demands of school principals regarding their leadership development needs?
附录 G：培训机构人员访谈提纲

1. 在您的观点里，政府是怎样帮助校长为目前的角色做准备的？

2. 在您的观点里，准备和专业的发展项目是怎样影响中学校长领导力的实践的？

3. 目前中学校长所面临的主要阻碍和挑战是什么在他们准备和专业发展项目的过程中？

4. 在您的观点里，培训政策在那种程度上影响中学校长领导力的准备和专业发展的（培训）？

5. 在中国教育系统里，您认为校长应该怎样更好地被装备从而去面对挑战？

6. 中学校长培训有没有存在任何问题？请解释。

7. 您认为校长培训能够满足校长领导力发展的需求吗？
APPENDIX H

Training Class Observation Report

Course: ..........................  Data: ..................  Time ............
Lecture: ..........................  Observer: .................  Learners .............

Photographs: Observation of Principal Training Programmes:

The participants were found to be passive and non-interactive with the trainers.

This is a principal training class in a training institute at Houjia County.

This is a field visit after principal training finished.
Continuation of APPENDIX H

Activities Observed during Principal Training Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date / Time</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 08:40 am</td>
<td>The researcher went to a Normal University in Shangqiu to observe training sessions of school principals. The researcher went to the Department of Continuous Education to meet the Dean of the department, to obtain special permission and consent to carry out observations at the campus grounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:50 am</td>
<td>The researcher went to the training class after being introduced to the trainer by an administrative staff. I was told that the class will begin at 9:05 am and arranged to be seated at the back of the classroom till the training class began.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:05 - 09:50 am</td>
<td>The training began with the trainer lecturing about the national policies and the missions of school principals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:10 - 11:50 am</td>
<td>School principals were based in a multimedia classroom to learn how to create Micro-lessons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00 - 16:50 pm</td>
<td>The trainer lectured on the topic “Psychological growth of students”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:50 pm</td>
<td>When the class was over, a few school principals were seen talking to each other, then the principals proceeded to leave the classroom one by one.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX I

### The List of Policies Used in this Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Policy</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enacting Authority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Opinion on Strengthening the Training for the Principals of Primary and Secondary Schools.</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>MOE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Opinions of the State Education Commission on Post Training for Headmasters of Primary and Secondary Schools</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>SEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Opinions on Strengthening the Construction of the Headmasters of Primary and Secondary Schools</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>CPC &amp;SEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Opinions of the State Education Commission on the Primary and Secondary School Principals Training during the Ninth Five-year Plan Period</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>SEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Decision of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on Deepening Educational Reform and Promoting Quality Education in an All - round Way</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>CPC &amp;The State Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Training Regulations for Primary and Secondary School Principals</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>MOE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Continuation of Appendix I: The List of Policies Used in this Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Policy</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enacting Authority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. Professional Standards for School Principals of Compulsory Education</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>MOE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Further Strengthening the Training of Primary and Secondary School Principals</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>MOE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Opinions of the State Council on Strengthening the Construction of Teachers' Ranks</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>State Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Decision of the Central Committee of the CPC on Several Major Issues Concerning the Building of a Harmonious Socialist Society</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>CPC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX J

### Classroom Observation Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation No.</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Degree of achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Classroom Atmosphere</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Does the class exhibit a comfortable atmosphere for learners to participate naturally throughout the class?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Do learners show a high level of comfort and ease while in the training?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Is the class planned in a way that it allows for an appropriate development of specific task?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Does the sitting arrangement of the class favor effective communication among the participants?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Training Method</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Is there any distribution of handouts or teaching materials?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Do activities and classroom dynamics promote communication?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Is the training only slide presentation?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Is appropriate tools and facilities provided for the purpose of learning?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. Training Evaluation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Does questionnaire distributed for training evaluation?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Do the trainer assess the participants’ engagement and performance?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Are the participants given opportunity to assess their own progress of learning?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Is there any peer evaluation among the participants?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D. Participants’ Role</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Do they pay attention to the knowledge sharing session?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Do the participants communicate with the trainers throughout the class?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Do they appear interest in the topics being discussed?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Do the participants show a positive attitude while carrying out tasks?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Do they show commitment towards the training?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/5/2016</td>
<td>07:25</td>
<td>I was waiting in front of the main gate of the school from 7:17 a.m., to 7:25 a.m. when the principal showed up. We greeted one another. On the way to his office, he explained to me about some basic information about the school. Students and teachers passed by us and said hello to the Principal, who greeted them with a smile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>07:29</td>
<td>When we arrived at the Principal's office, he invited me to have a seat, while he made his way to his computer and turned it on. In the meantime, we began to talk about my study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>07:35</td>
<td>A vice-school principal came and asked him something about how to reimburse the repair fees and they continued to talk about the mathematics competition that the students were going to participate in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>07:50</td>
<td>The Principal then began classroom inspection by visiting various classes and asking teachers about their class and the students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>08:07</td>
<td>When we returned back to his office, the Principal shared some information with me regarding the school management and curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>09:43</td>
<td>During break time, several school staff consulted the Principal about teaching and research activities for the week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10:21</td>
<td>There was a phone call from the local education bureau requesting for the principal to attend a meeting that afternoon at 1:00 pm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11:35</td>
<td>I was taken to the student cafeteria for lunch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13:00</td>
<td>The principal attended the meeting at the local education bureau.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14:40</td>
<td>I met the Principal again in front of the main gate of the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14:45</td>
<td>We arrived at his office, he tidied up his desk and looked at some documents he had brought from the meeting, and started to make a phone call to someone and asked him to inform all the teachers that they are going to have a meeting after the class and also be prepared for the inspection of this afternoon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15:32</td>
<td>Inspection group came to school and the principal greeting them, then taken them to observe the classes and explained the situation of the schools to the inspection group, as well as answered their questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:50</td>
<td>The inspection group left the school, the principal back to his office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>again and signed some documents that a staff had brought to him.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:45</td>
<td>The principal went to the seminar room of the school and were having</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>meeting with all the teachers about the students’ finals and schools’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>safety work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:20</td>
<td>The meeting was finished and the principal went to students’ cafeteria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>again for dinner.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19:30</td>
<td>The principal started to inspect the classes of evening section</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:42</td>
<td>The principal back to his office and were sitting in front of the computer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to access information on-line.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21:55</td>
<td>The principal started to arrange his desk and pack up his stuffs to leave</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22:05</td>
<td>The principal left the school and finished his one-day work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX K

Certified Translation

I, .................. hereby that the translation of original Chinese document provided to me which entitled: Preparation and Professional Development of Secondary School Principals’ Leadership in Henan Province, China was congruent with the original meaning. The researcher had translated Chinese (Mandarin) into English completely and accurately.

Signature:

Date:
APPENDIX L

Codes and broad themes according to Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Research Question 2: How do secondary school principals prepare for their present principal leadership role? | Formal Learning                         | 1. Pre-service Training  
2. In-service Training                                                   |
|                                                                                   | Informal Learning                       | 1. Learn from other school principals  
2. Communication  
3. Past Work Experiences  
4. Reading books  
5. Self-motivation                                                               |
| Research Question 3: What are the constraints and challenges faced by secondary school principals of Henan province, China in their preparation and professional development programmes? | The Training Content                    | 1. Leadership Practices  
2. Training Content                                                            |
|                                                                                   | Training Method                         | 1. Theory  
2. Two-way communication  
3. Trainings                                                                    |
|                                                                                   | Training evaluation                     | 1. Monitoring and follow-up  
2. Training Evaluation                                                           |
|                                                                                   | Quality of training institute           | 1. Quality Training  
2. Credibility of trainers  
3. Professional Expertise                                                        |
|                                                                                   | Training Fund                           | 1. Funds  
2. Money  
3. Government Support                                                            |
|                                                                                   | Training time                           | 1. Busy routine  
2. Teaching                                                                     |
|                                                                                   | Training incentives                     | 1. Incentives  
2. Promotion  
3. Rewards                                                                     |
| Research Question 4: What are the constraints and challenges faced by secondary school principals of Henan province, China regarding their leadership practices? | Education reform and curriculum reform | 1. Students enrollment rate  
2. Exam-oriented education  
3. School-based Management                                                       |
|                                                                                   | Principals responsibilities, power and benefits | 1. Safety and security in schools  
2. School Autonomy  
3. Principals Remuneration                                                       |
|                                                                                   | School Fund                             | 1. School Funds  
2. Debt  
3. Government Fund                                                               |
|                                                                                   | Teacher management                      | 1. Teachers  
2. Teaching                                                                     |
|                                                                                   | Principals busy schedule                | 1. Busy  
2. Time                                                                         |
|                                                                                   | Principal innovative capacity           | 3. Creativity  
4. Innovation                                                                   |
APPENDIX M

The Compilation of Local and National Policies concerning Trainings for School Principal and Education Cadres in China

国家教委关于颁发《全国中小学校长任职条件和岗位要求(试行)》的通知

发布部门：教育部

发布文号：

分类导航：所属类别：部委行业规章

发布日期：1991-06-25

关键字：

【题目】国家教委关于颁发《全国中小学校长任职条件和岗位要求(试行)》的通知
【颁布单位】国家教委通知
经研究，决定将《全国中小学校长任职条件和岗位要求(试行)》(以下简称《条件》)颁发试行。《条件》是根据我国教育事业发展对中小学校长队伍素质提出的要求，兼顾校长队伍现状而制定；是选拔、任用、考核、培训中小学校长的基本依据。下达《条件》是加强中小学校长队伍建设的一个重要步骤。各地应采取有力措施，组织岗位培训和日常的政治业务学习及工作锻炼，使中小学校长努力达到《条件》的基本要求；同时逐步做到按《条件》选拔、任用新的校长。要充分利用《条件》，大力推进当前的岗位培训工作及校长队伍管理与建设的规范化、制度化、科学化。由于不同地区的情况差别很大，各地试行《条件》掌握具体标准时，可有一定的灵活性。对目前不具规定的学历和相应教师职务的中小学校长，应视不同情况，区别对待。对其中办学经验较丰富、成绩较好的校长，要加以肯定，使他们安心工作。对已经达到规定任职条件与要求的校长，也应以多种有效形式，继续提高他们的政治、业务素质。实施《条件》是一项新的重策性很强的工作。各级教育行政部门要高度重视，加强领导，先行试点，取得经验，有计划、有步骤地逐步推开。全国中小学校长任职条件和岗位要求(试行)一、校长任职的基本条件(一)拥护中国共产党的领导，热爱社会主义祖国，努力学习马克思主义。热爱社会主义的教育事业，认真贯彻执行党和国家的教育方针、政策、法规。

【一】关心爱护学生，刻苦钻研教育、教学业务。热爱本职工作。有一定的组织管理能力。团结同志，联系群众。严于律己，顾全大局。言行堪为师生的表率。 (二)乡镇完全
小学以上的小学校长应有不低于中师毕业的文化程度，初级中学校长应有不低于大专毕业的文化程度。完全中学、高中中学校长应有不低于大学本科毕业的文化程度。中小学校长应分别具有中学一级、小学高级以上的教师职务，应有从事相当年限教育教学工作的经历，并获得“岗位培训合格证书”。（三）身体健康，能胜任工作。二、校长的主要职责：（一）全面贯彻执行党和国家的教育方针、政策、法规，自觉抵制各种违反教育方针、政策、法规的倾向。坚持社会主义办学方向，努力培养德、智、体全面发展、建设社会主义事业的接班人。按教育规律办学，不断提高教育质量。（二）认真执行党的知识分子政策和干部政策，团结、依靠教职员工。组织教师学习政治与钻研业务，使之不断提高政治思想、职业道德、文化水平及教育教学能力。注意培养班主任、中青年教师和业务骨干，努力建设又红又专的教师队伍。依靠党组织，积极做好教师和职工的思想政治工作。自觉接受党组织的监督。充分发扬民主，重视教职工代表大会在学校管理中的重要作用，注意发挥广大教师和职工工作的主动性、积极性和创造性。（三）全面主持学校工作。1. 领导和组织德育工作。把德育放在首位，坚持教书育人、管理育人、业务育人和环境育人工作方针，制定德育工作计划，建设德育工作骨干队伍，采取切实措施，坚持不懈地加强对学生的思想、政治、品德教育。2. 领导和组织教学工作。坚持学校工作以教学为主，按照国家规定的教学计划、教学大纲，开齐各门课程，不偏科。遵守教学规律，组织教学，建立和完善教学管理制度，搞好教学常规管理。深入教学第一线，指导教师正确进行教学活动，努力提高教学质量。3. 领导和组织体育、卫生、美育、劳动教育工作及课外教育活动。确保学校体育、卫生、美育、劳动教育工作及课外教育活动生动活泼、有成效地开展。努力开展勤工俭学活动，建设好学生劳动教育及劳动技术教育基地。4. 领导和组织总务工作。贯彻勤俭办学原则，坚持总务工作为教书育人和教职工业务的方向。严格管理校产和财务，搞好校园建设。关心学生和教职工的生活，保护他们的健康。逐步改善办学条件和群众福利。5. 配合党组织，支持和指导群众组织开展工作。充分发挥工会、共青团、少先队等群众组织在办学育人各项活动中的积极作用。（四）发挥学校教育的主导作用，努力促进学校教育、家庭教育、社会教育的协调一致，相互配合，形成良好的育人环境。三、校长的岗位要求：（一）基本政治素养。1. 坚持四项基本原则与改革开放，坚持正确的政治方向。2. 具有一定的马克思主义理论修养，能努力运用马克思主义的立场、观点和方法指导学校工作。3. 热爱社会主义教育事业，热爱学校，热爱学生，尊重、团结、依靠教职工。4. 实事求是，勤奋学习，作
风民主，联系群众，顾全大局，公正廉洁，艰苦奋斗，严于律己。5．对待工作认真负责，一丝不苟；6．具有勇于进取及改革创新精神。

(二)岗位知识要求
1．政治理论、国情知识：具有马克思主义基本理论和建设有中国特色的社会主义基本理论知识。具有中国近现代史和国情基本知识。2．教育政策法规知识：在实践中领会、掌握党和国家的教育方针、政策的基本精神与中小学教育法规的基本内容。初步掌握与教育有关法规的基本知识。3．学校管理知识：联系实际掌握学校管理的基本规律和方法，以及与学校管理相关的专业知识、技术和手段。4．教育学科知识：学习马克思主义关于教育的论述，了解社会主义教育的基本特点和规律，具有教育学科基本知识。熟悉主要课程教学大纲及有关学科的教材教法。具有中国教育史常识，了解中小学教育发展与改革的动态。5．其他相关知识：掌握与中小学教育有关的自然科学、社会科学基础知识，了解本地的历史、自然环境、经济与社会发展的基本情况以及民族与宗教政策等。

(三)岗位能力要求
1．能根据党和国家的有关方针、政策、法规，制定学校发展规划和工作计划。2．善于教职工和学生的思想政治工作及开展品德教育。能从实际出发，采取有效措施，促进学生全面发展。3．具有听课、评课及指导教学、教研、课外活动等工作的能力。具有指导教师提高业务水平和改进教学的能力。4．善于发挥群众团体的作用。能协调好学校内外各方面的关系，发挥社会、家长对搞好学校工作的积极作用。5．能以育人为中心，研究学校教育的新情况、新问题，并从实际出发，开展教育教学实验活动，总结经验，不断提高教育教学质量。6．有一定文字能力，能起草学校工作报告、计划、总结等。会讲普通话。具有较好的口头表达能力。

(完)
中小学校长培训规定

中华人民共和国教育部令第 8 号

1999 年 12 月 30 日

第一章 总则

第一条 为了提高中小学校长队伍的整体素质，全面推进素质教育，促进基础教育的改革和发展，根据《中华人民共和国教育法》和国家有关规定，制定本规定。

第二条 本规定适用于国家和社会力量举办的全日制普通中小学校长培训工作。

第三条 各级人民政府教育行政部门根据教育事业发展的需要，按照校长任职要求，有计划地对校长进行培训。

第四条 中小学校长培训要坚持为全面实施素质教育服务的宗旨，坚持因地制宜，分类指导和理论联系实际，学用一致，按需施教，讲求实效的原则。

第五条 参加培训是中小学校长的权利和义务，新任校长必须取得“任职资格培训合格证书”，持证上岗。在职校长每五年必须接受国家规定时数的提高培训，并取得“提高培训合格证书”，作为继续任职的必备条件。

第二章 内容与形式

第六条 中小学校长培训要以提高校长组织实施素质教育的能力和水平为重点。其内容主要包括政治理论、思想品德修养、教育政策法规、现代教育理论和实践、学校管理理论和实践、现代教育技术、现代科技和人文社会科学知识等方面。培训具体内容要视不同对象的实际需求有所侧重。

第七条 中小学校长培训以在职或短期离岗的非学历培训为主，主要包括：
任职资格培训：按照中小学校长岗位规范要求，对新任校长或拟任校长进行以掌握履行岗位职责必备的知识和技能为主要内容的培训。培训时间累计不少于300学时。

在职校长提高培训：面向在职校长进行的以学习新知识、掌握新技能、提高管理能力、研究和交流办学经验为主要内容的培训。培训时间每五年累计不少于240学时。

骨干校长高级研修：对富有办学经验并且具有一定理论修养和研究能力的校长进行的，旨在培养学校教育、教学和管理专家的培训。

第八条 中小学校长培训实施学时制，也可采用集中专题、分段教学、累计学分的办法。

第九条 各级人民政府教育行政部门和有关培训机构，要充分利用国家提供的现代远程教育资源，并积极创造条件，运用现代教育技术手段开展中小学校长培训工作。

第三章 组织和管理

第十条 国务院教育行政部门宏观管理全国中小学校长培训工作。主要职责是：制定保障、规范中小学校长培训工作的有关规章、政策；制定并组织实施培训工作总体规划；制定培训教学基本文件，组织推荐、审定培训教材；建立培训质量评估体系；指导各省、自治区、直辖市中小学校长培训工作。

第十一条 省、自治区、直辖市政府教育行政部门主管本地区中小学校长培训工作；制定本地区中小学校长培训规划和配套政策；全面负责本地区中小学校长培训的实施、检查和评估工作。

第十二条 省、自治区、直辖市政府教育行政部门对申请承担中小学校长培训任务的机构要进行资格认定。普通师范院校、教师进修院校、有条件的综合大学，经国务院教育行政部门或省、自治区、直辖市人民政府教育行政部门批准，可以承担中小学校长培训任务。
第十三条　中小学校长培训施教机构的教师实行专兼结合。培训机构应当配备素质较高、适应培训工作需要的专职教师队伍，并聘请一定数量的校外专家学者、教育行政部门领导和优秀中小学校长作为兼职教师。

第十四条　对参加培训并经考核合格的中小学校长，发给相应的培训证书。省、自治区、直辖市人民政府教育行政部门要加强对证书的管理。

第十五条　经教育行政部门批准参加培训的中小学校长，培训期间享受国家规定的工资福利待遇。培训费、差旅费按财务制度规定执行。

第十六条　中小学校长培训经费以政府财政拨款为主，多渠道筹措，地方教育费附加应有一定比例用于培训中小学校长工作。省、自治区、直辖市人民政府教育行政部门要制定中小学校长培训人均基本费用标准。

第十七条　各级人民政府教育行政部门应当把中小学校长参加培训的情况纳入教育督导的重要内容。对培训工作成绩突出的单位和个人，予以表彰和奖励。

第四章　培训责任

第十八条　各级人民政府教育行政部门和学校要保障中小学校长接受培训的权利。中小学校长对有关组织或者个人侵犯其接受培训权利的，有权按有关程序向主管教育行政机关提出申诉。

第十九条　违反本规定，无正当理由拒不按计划参加培训的中小学校长，学校主管行政机关应督促其改正，并视情节给予批评教育、行政处分，直至撤销其职务。

第二十条　担任中小学校长者，应取得《任职资格培训合格证书》，或应在任职之日起六个月内，由校长任免机关（或聘任机构）安排，接受任职资格培训，并取得《任职资格培训合格证书》。在职中小学校长没有按计划接受或者没有达到国家规定时数的提高培训，或者考核不合格者，中小学校长任免机关（或聘任
机构，应令其在一年内补正，期满仍未能取得《提高培训合格证书》者，不能继续担任校长职务。

第二十一条 经评估达不到培训要求的培训机构，主管教育行政机关要令其限期改正，逾期不改者，应责令其停止中小学校长培训工作。

第二十二条 对未经批准自行设立、举办中小学校长培训机构或中小学校长培训班的，主管教育行政机关应根据有关法律法规的规定，给予相应的行政处罚。

第五章 附则

第二十三条 幼儿园园长、特殊教育学校校长培训参照本规定执行。中等职业学校及其他各类成人初、中等教育学校校长培训另行安排。

第二十四条 各省、自治区、直辖市教育行政部门可以依据本规定制定具体的实施办法。
河南省教育厅
关于进一步加强教育干部培训工作的意见

各省辖市、省直管县(市)教育局,河南大学、河南师范大学、信阳师范学院、河南教育学院、郑州幼儿师范专科学校:
为贯彻落实党的十八大、十八届三中全会精神,落实《教育部关于进一步加强中小学校长培训工作的意见》(教师[2013]11号),进一步实施《河南省教育干部培训“十二五”规划》,造就一支高素质专业化教育干部(含教育行政干部、普通中小学校长、幼儿园园长、特殊教育学校校长,下同)队伍,现就进一步加强我省教育干部培训工作提出如下意见:

一、明确总体要求,提高教育干部培训工作水平
按照教育规划纲要和《河南省教育干部培训“十二五”规划》的要求,坚持干部培训为我省经济社会建设和教育改革发展服务、为干部队伍建设服务的方向,遵循教育培训规律和干部成长规律,紧紧围绕我省教育改革与发展的工作大局和立德树人根本任务,以促进干部专业发展为主线,以提升培训质量为核心,以实施重点项目为抓手,以创新培训体制机制和模式为动力,进一步提高干部培训工作专业化水平,努力培养造就一支政治坚定、品德高尚、业务精湛、作风优良、人民满意的高素质专业化教育干部队伍,为推进我省基础教育事业改革发展、实现中国教育梦提供坚强保障。

二、统筹兼顾各类培训,抓好重点项目
各级教育行政机关要牢固树立全员培训的理念,引导教育行政干部、中小学校长、幼儿园园长树立终身学习理念,提升教育领导力和创新能力。要有计划地面向全体教育行政干部开展专业能力提升培训,有计划地面向全体中小学校长开展任职资格培训、提高培训、高级研修和专题培训,切实抓好幼儿园园长任职资格培训和专题研修培训。
要重点抓好教育行政机关主要领导干部培训，增强干部执政意识，提高地方教育科学发展的综合能力与素质。省级重点组织实施省辖市、县(市、区)教育局长高级研修培训、科级干部培训；省辖市教育行政部门指导本级培训基地做好本市及所属县(市、区)教育行政部门科级以下人员及乡(镇)教育干部的培训工作。

要按照倡导教育家办学的要求，加强名优校长和园长的培训，为优秀校长、园长成长发展创造条件。省教育厅重点组织实施河南省中小学名校长培育工程，2013年至2016年分期遴选、培养200名省级中小学名校长(园长)。各地也要积极开展相应的培育培养计划，加大名优校长培训力度。建立市级名校长队伍。

要重点加大对农村地区、集中连片特殊困难地区中小学校长、幼儿园园长培训的支持力度，加大薄弱学校校级培训力度，促进城乡之间、区域之间校长(园长)队伍建设的均衡协调发展。做好“校长国培计划”—边远贫困地区农村校长助力工程和卓越校长领航工程、特殊学校校级能力提升工程、培训者能力提升工程的学员推荐和组织实施工作。继续组织实施教育部—中国移动中小学校长远程培训、影子培训项目，农村中小学校长和幼儿园园长素质提升计划，中青年骨干校长实践能力培训计划，校长信息化领导力远程培训项目等。各地要根据本地区“十二五”教育干部培训的总体规划，结合新的形势发展，有重点地推动实施若干重大培训项目。

三、科学设置培训内容，满足需求教育干部专业化发展需求
各地要全面推行需求调研，针对不同层次、类别、岗位教育行政干部、校长(园长)的实际需求，遵循干部成长规律，结合国家和我省教育干部培训教学指导性计划，围绕干部专业素质和能力的提升，建立以培训需求为导向的培训内容优化机制。

要根据校长专业标准，围绕规划学校发展、营造育人文化、领导课程教学、引领教师成长、优化内部管理和调适外部环境等方面的专业素质要求，丰富优化培训内容。将校长(园长)专业标准、职业道德教育、信息化领导力列入校长(园长)培训必修模块。任职资格培训重点提升校长依法治校能力。提高培训重点提升校长实施素质教育能力。高级研修重点提升校长战略思维能力、教育创新能力，和引领学校可持续发展能力。

四、创新培训方式，发挥教育干部学习主体作用
各地要更新培训理念，坚持以学员为主体、以问题解决为导向、以能力提升为
目标,采取专家讲授、案例教学、学校诊断、同伴互助、影子培训和行动研究等多种方式,强化学员互动参与,增强培训吸引力、针对性和实效性。

要探索建设校长(园长)网络研修社区,积极开展区域内、区域间校长(园长)网上协同研修,推动校际间、城乡间校长(园长)网上结对帮扶,形成学习发展共同体,实现校长培训常态化。鼓励各地设立优秀校长(园长)网上工作室,发挥辐射带动作用。

五、完善培训制度,实现教育干部培训规范化

各地要严格执行新任校长(园长)持证上岗制度,新任校长(园长)任职后半年内必须参加不少于300学时的任职资格培训。取得《任职资格培训合格证书》,持证上岗。

实行5年一周期不少于360学时的在任校长(园长)全员培训制度。把校长参加培训和培训考核情况作为考核、使用、晋级的必备条件和重要依据。中小学校长、园长培训新一轮周期从2013年起到2017年止。各地在培训办学中,要坚持以分类、分岗、分阶段采取多种方式开展培训,不得压缩规定学时数。

规范校长(园长)培训证书制度,完善培训合格证书审核发放办法。完善教育干部组织调训制度,建立以组织调训为主、自主选学为辅的干部参训机制。建立培训学分管理制度和继续教育登记制度,推动教育干部非学历培训与学历教育课程衔接、学分互认。由省教育干部培训中心研究制定培训学分管理具体办法,并具体负责全省教育干部培训合格证书审核、培训学时的登记与考核,逐步实行信息化管理。

六、创新培训机制,激发培训工作活力

各地要严格按照《河南省教育干部培训“十二五”规划》的要求,完善省、省辖市、县(市、区)分级管理、分级培训、开放灵活的培训体制。要积极探索建立教育干部网络自主选学机制,建设菜单式、信息化的选学服务平台,为教育干部提供多样化、个性化的选学机会。改革课程资源开发机制,采取政府购买、招投标等多种方式,吸引优质培训机构参与课程资源建设,重视开发典型案例、微课程和网络课程。实行培训项目招投标机制,择优遴选具备资质的专职培训机构、高等学校、中小学承担培训任务。依托优秀中小学校成立一批省、市实践培训基地学校,加大实践跟岗培训、海外研修和跨区域合作培训,探索联合培训、优势互补、资源共享的运行机制。
七、加强队伍建设 提升培训者专业能力

各地要按照教育部制订的培训者专业标准，适应教育干部培训专业化发展的要求，依据专兼结合的原则，拓展培训者队伍来源渠道，重视选聘熟悉教育规律、理论水平较高、实践经验丰富的教育管理干部、知名专家学者、优秀一线校园长担任兼职培训者。专职培训者要通过专业培训、进修深造、挂职锻炼、课题研究、学术交流等多种途径提高自身能力和水平，每年完成不少于 1 个月的培训学习和实践锻炼。

省教育厅配合“校长国培计划”--培训者能力提升工程，组织实施好本省培训者能力提升计划。每两年组织开展一次以培训者、校长(园长)为主要对象的教育干部培训科研成果评选活动，利用省中小学校长协会平台，举办学术交流、干训精品课程评选等活动。做好国家级培训专家库人选的推荐工作，建立省级培训专家库，推动优秀培训者资源共享。

八、强化监管评估，保证培训质量

各地要根据教育部制订的校长培训课程标准和培训质量标准，建设培训信息管理和监测平台，建立和完善培训质量保障体系。要采取专家实地评估、学员匿名评估和第三方评估等方式，加强教育干部培训的过程评价和绩效评估，并将评估结果作为调整培训任务和经费的重要依据。各级教育行政机关要将教育干部培训工作作为督导的重要内容，定期公布检查结果。

九、加大经费投入，提高经费使用效益

各地要切实加大教育干部培训经费的投入，建立正常增长机制，将教育干部培训经费列入年度政府财政预算，保证教育干部培训工作需要。鼓励多渠道筹措培训经费。要完善经费管理办法，加强经费监管，确保专款专用，提高经费使用效益。培训食宿安排要厉行节约，不得安排与培训无关的参观考察活动，并坚决杜绝一切乱收费行为。

河南省教育厅
2014年5月7日

Continuation of Appendix N

Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Further Strengthening the Training of Primary and Secondary School Principals
教育部关于进一步加强中小学校长
培训工作的意见

教师[2013]11 号

各省、自治区、直辖市教育厅(教委),新疆生产建设兵团教育局,国家教育行政学院、教育部中学校长培训中心、教育部小学校长培训中心、教育部幼儿园园长培训中心（筹）：

为贯彻党的十八大精神,落实《国务院关于加强教师队伍建设的意见》(国发〔2012〕41 号),造就一支高素质专业化中小学校长(含幼儿园园长,特殊教育学校校长,下同)队伍,现就进一步加强中小学校长培训工作提出如下意见:

一、明确总体要求,提高校长培训工作水平。按照教育规划纲要的要求,围绕立德树人根本任务,以促进校长专业发展为主线,以提升培训质量为核心,以创新培训机制为动力,进一步提高校长培训工作专业化水平,努力造就一支品德高尚、业务精湛、治校有方、人民满意的中小学校长队伍,为推动基础教育改革发展、实现中国教育梦提供坚强保障。

二、加强统筹规划,开展校长全员培训。各地要有计划地面向全体中小学校长开展任职资格培训、提高培训、高级研修和专题培训。重点加强农村地区、集中连片特殊困难地区、民族地区校长培训,加大薄弱学校校长培训力度。重视普惠性民办幼儿园园长培训。按照倡导教育家办学的要求,组织实施中小学名校长和幼儿园名园长培养计划,为优秀校长、园长成长发展创造条件。教育部组织实施卓越校长领航工程、农村校长助理工程和培训者能力提升工程,继续实施相关合作项目。

三、精选培训内容,满足校长专业发展需求。各地要全面推行需求调研,针对不同层次、类别、岗位校长的需求,围绕校长在规划学校发展、营造育人文化、领导课程教学、引领教师成长、优化内部管理和调适外部环境等方面的专业素质要求,丰富优化培训内容。将职业道德教育作为校长培训必修内容。任职资格培训重
点提升校长依法治校能力。提高培训重点提升校长实施素质教育能力。高级研修重点提升校长战略思维能力、教育创新能力和引领学校可持续发展能力。

四、改进培训方式，发挥校长学习主体作用。各地要更新培训理念，坚持以学员为主体、以问题解决为导向、以能力提升为目标，采取专家讲授、案例教学、学校诊断、同伴互助、影子培训、行动研究等多种方式，强化学员互动参与，增强培训吸引力、感染力和实效性。探索建设校长网络研修社区，积极开展区域内、区域间校长网上协同研修，推动校际间、城乡间校长网上结对帮扶，形成校长学习发展共同体，实现校长培训常态化。鼓励各地设立优秀校长网上工作室，发挥辐射带动作用。

五、完善培训制度，实现校长培训规范化。各地要严格执行新任校长持证上岗制度，新任校长或拟任校长必须参加不少于 300 学时的任职资格培训。实行 5 年一周期不少于 360 学时的在任校长全员培训制度。规范校长培训证书制度。完善校长组织调训制度。建立培训学分管理制度，探索建立培训学分银行，推动校长非学历培训与学历教育课程衔接，学分互认。建立培训与使用相结合制度，把完成培训学分（学时）和培训考核情况作为校长考核、任用、晋级的必备条件和重要依据。

六、创新培训机制，激发校长培训工作活力。各地要积极探索校长自主选学机制，建设菜单式、信息化的选学服务平台，为校长提供多样化、个性化的选择机会。改革课程资源开发机制，采取政府购买、招投标等多种方式，吸引优质培训机构参与课程资源建设，重视开发典型案例、微课程和网络课程。实行培训项目招投标机制，择优遴选具备资质的专职培训机构、高等学校、中小学承担培训任务。鼓励培训机构依托优秀中小学建立培训实践基地，加强与境内外优质培训机构、高等学校的合作，探索联合培训、优势互补、资源共享的运行机制。

七、加强队伍建设，提升培训者专业能力。教育部制订培训者专业标准。各地要采取多种措施为专职培训者专业发展创造条件，保证其每年参训时间不少于 1 个月。拓展培训者队伍来源渠道，重视遴选熟悉教育规律、理论水平较高、实践经验丰富的教育管理干部、知名专家学者、优秀一线校长担任兼职培训者。建立国家、省两级培训专家库，推动优秀培训者资源共享。
八、强化监管评估，保证校长培训质量。教育部制订校长培训课程标准和培训质量标准，建设培训信息管理和监测平台，建立培训质量保障体系。各地要采取专家实地评估、学员网络匿名评估和第三方评估等方式，加强校长培训的过程评价和绩效评估，并将评估结果作为调整培训任务和经费的重要依据。国家和省级教育督导部门将校长培训工作作为督导的重要内容，定期公布检查结果。九、加大经费投入，提高经费使用效益。各地要切实加大对校长培训经费的投入，建立正常增长机制，保证校长培训所需经费。鼓励多渠道筹措校长培训经费。完善经费管理办法，加强经费监管，确保专款专用。

教育部

2013年8月29日
河南省教育厅关于进一步做好全省教育干部培训工作的通知

河南省教育厅
教人〔2010〕256 号

河南省教育厅关于进一步做好全省教育干部培训工作的通知

各省辖市教育局,各重点扩权县(市)教育局,河南大学、河南师范大学、信阳师范学院、河南教育学院、郑州幼儿师范学校:为认真贯彻落实党的十七届四中全会精神,建设高素质的教育干部队伍,加快推进教育事业的科学发展,根据《中共教育部党组关于教育系统深入开展大规模培训干部工作的实施意见》教(党〔2010〕3 号)和《河南省教育系统干部培训“十一五”规划》精神,结合我厅 2010 年工作要点,现就今后一个时期深入开展大规模培训干部工作,特别是做好今年的教育干部培训工作通知如下:

一、认真贯彻党的十七届四中全会精神,深入开展大规模培训干部的总体要求
1. 深入开展大规模培训干部工作,必须高举中国特色社会主义伟大旗帜,坚持以邓小平理论和“三个代表”重要思想为指导,深入贯彻落实科学发展观,坚持把学习贯彻党的十七大和十七届四中全会精神贯穿于教育干部培训始终,把德的培养放在更加突出的位置,着力提高教育干部领导推动科学发展、促进社会和谐的本领;坚持用党的路线方针政策和国家法律法规培训干部,着力提高科学执政、民主执政、依法执政的本领;坚持用解放思想、改革开放的生动实践和新鲜经验培训干部,着力提高推动事业发展的开拓创新本领;坚持用各类业务知识和科学文化知识培训干部,着力提高履行岗位职责的本领。当前要突出抓好国家和我省中长期教育改革发展规划纲要的学习培训。 2. 推进大规模培训干部工作,要坚持以人为本,遵循干部教育培训规律和人才成长规律,切实把促进干部的全面发展作为培训的出发点和落脚点;不断拓宽培训类型,更新培训内容,坚持干什么学什么、缺什么补什么的原则,实施全覆盖、多手段、高质量的培训;进一步加大专题培训力度,使培训与推进重大任务落实相结合,切实增强培训的针对性和实效性;积极推进干部培训改革,创新培训模式,改进培训方法,促进培训队伍专业化建设;切实加强学风建设,大力倡导理论联系实际,严肃培训纪律,厉行勤俭节约。 3. 加强对各级各类教育干部培训
的统筹规划和分类指导，统筹教育行政干部培训和中小学校长等各类人员的培训，统筹任职培训、提高培训、高级研修和专题培训等不同培训类型，统筹各级各类教育工作的培训需求，统筹不同区域的培训工作，坚持“面向全员、突出骨干、倾斜农村”的原则，以农村学校校长培训为重点，努力促进教育干部培训工作的科学发展。

二、紧密围绕教育事业改革发展的中心工作，明确 2010 年教育干部培训的目标任务
1. 认真组织实施全省教育干部培训年度工作计划。适应大规模培训干部的形势需要，围绕教育事业改革发展的中心任务，2010 年省本级计划举办各类教育干部培训 15 期，培训 2000 人。各省辖市、重点扩权县（市）计划举办教育干部培训班 240 期，培训 15000 人。各级教育行政干部培训，要切实提高干部的思想政治素质和开拓创新、驾驭全局、科学决策、维护稳定、应对突发事件等方面的能力。按要求选送省辖市（县、市、区）教育局长参加国家级教育干部培训，要努力做到党政教育部门县处级领导干部每年参加脱产培训的时间不少于 110 学时，5 年内达到 550 学时（3 个月），党政教育部门其他干部参加培训的学时每年不少于 100 学时。中小学校长（含幼儿园园长）培训，要紧紧围绕实施素质教育的中心任务，认真开展以任职资格、提高培训和高级研修为主要形式的全员培训，着力提高民主管理、依法治校的能力。要将农村中小学校长培训摆在突出位置，重视城市薄弱学校校长培训。坚持新任校长持证上岗制度，任职资格培训时间累计不少于 300 学时；在任中小学校长 5 年内累计参加脱产培训时间不得少于 240 学时。2. 实施“农村中小学校长素质提高工程”。组织 1000 名农村义务教育阶段校长参加教育部-中国移动中小学校长培训项目，重点提高农村中小学校长的办学治校能力和管理水平，促进义务教育均衡发展。各级教育行政部门要把农村义务教育阶段校长培训摆在突出位置，结合当地实际，采取有效措施，有针对性地开展好农村中小学校长培训。3. 围绕全省教育中心工作，重点做好各项专题培训。配合国家和我省中长期教育改革发展规划纲要的实施、中小学校人事制度和教育教学改革，搞好相应专题培训。省本级重点开展中长期教育改革发展规划纲要、中小学公共突发事件与校园安全、高中新课程改革以及南水北调移民学校校长等专题培训。各地要围绕教育中心工作，有针对性地开展好各类专题培训。4. 继续实施中青年骨干校长管理能力培训。面向全省农村中小学选拔 80 名骨干校长，参加省内实践基地学校跟岗学习；面向全省选拔 40 名有发展潜力的中青年骨干校长，到国内名校跟岗培训，以培养一批引领中小学教育改革创新的优秀校长和实施素质教育的带头人。有条件的地方要积极组织中小学校长
到经济发达地区代培代训、挂职学习，促进优秀校长快速成长。5．加强教育干部培训者能力培训计划。组织100名省、市、县教育干部培训管理人员和骨干教师参加国家和省级培训者能力培训，进一步促进培训队伍专业化建设。各地要通过多种途径，加大培训者的培养力度，不断提高培训者的思想政治业务素质与组织管理能力。6．启动省级优秀中小学校长高级研修计划。遴选40名有较大发展潜力的中小学优秀校长，作为教育家型校长后备人才，参加国内外高级研修，通过1-3年的重点培养，努力造就一定数量的教育家型校长。7．积极发挥省中小学校长培训协会及各地联络处的作用。以协会为依托继续开展校长论坛、课题研究、成果评选等活动，积极探索新鲜经验，充分发挥校长的主体作用，推动培训教学改革和科学研究不断深入。

三、采取有力措施，确保深入开展大规模培训干部工作取得实效
1．切实加强对教育干部培训工作的领导。各级教育行政部门和有关院校要紧密结合实际，研究制订深入开展大规模干部培训的具体实施办法和意见，科学设计培训计划，明确培训任务，统筹好本地区、本院校教育干部培训工作，努力实现培训规模和培训质量的统一。积极推广深入开展大规模培训干部工作中的新鲜经验和有益做法，确保大规模培训干部工作扎实有效推进。2．加强培训资源建设，推动培训方式创新。要建立健全教育干部培训的计划生成、自主选学、考核评估和资源整合机制。深入开展培训需求调研，抓好培训师资、培训课程和网络资源的开发管理。探索建立课程资源开发、评审、遴选机制，促进优质资源共建共享，进一步完善省级师资库建设。加大培训专兼职教师队伍建设力度，保证专职教师每年参加脱产培训的时间累计不少于1个月。积极引入互动式、案例式、研究式、体验式、模拟式等多种培训方法。提倡学习培训与工作研究结合，每期培训班应形成专题调研报告或其他工作研究成果。3．切实加大对教育干部培训工作的经费投入。按照《干部教育培训工作条例（试行）》要求，将教育干部培训经费列入各级政府年度财政预算，随着财政收入增长同步提高。要加强对培训经费的管理，切实把培训经费用足用好。4．加强对培训工作的考核与评估。各级教育行政部门要加强对教育干部培训的督察检查，狠抓工作落实，健全培训管理制度和质量评价体系，把培训效果作为考核教育行政部门、培训院校和中小学校长的重要依据。完善培训考核发证工作，搞好培训学时登记与管理。做好“十一五”全省各级教育干部培训工作的评估验收与总结工作。2010年国家和省级教育干部培训每期具体招生事项、名额分配，由省教育厅干
部培训中心和有关培训院校负责通知。各地要按照要求认真组织人员参加培训，切实保证生源到位，不断提高培训质量和效益。

二〇一〇年四月二日

抄报：教育部、河南省教育厅办公室 2010 年 4 月 2 日印发
国务院关于加强教师队伍建设的意见
国发〔2012〕41号

各省、自治区、直辖市人民政府，国务院各部委、各直属机构：

教师是教育事业发展的基础，是提高教育质量、办好人民满意教育的关键。党中央、国务院历来高度重视教师队伍建设。改革开放特别是党的十六大以来，各地区各有关部门采取一系列政策措施，大力推进教师队伍建设，取得显著成绩。同时也要看到，当前我国教师队伍整体素质有待提高，队伍结构不尽合理，教师管理体制机制有待完善，农村教师职业吸引力亟待提升。为深入实施科教兴国战略和人才强国战略，进一步加强教师队伍建设，现提出以下意见：

一、加强教师队伍建设的指导思想、总体目标和重点任务

（一）指导思想。高举中国特色社会主义伟大旗帜，以邓小平理论和“三个代表”重要思想为指导，深入贯彻科学发展观，全面贯彻党的教育方针，认真落实教育规划纲要和人才规划纲要，遵循教育规律和教师成长发展规律，把促进学生健康成长作为教师工作的出发点和落脚点，围绕促进教育公平、提高教育质量的要求，加强教师工作薄弱环节，创新教师管理体制机制，以提高师德素养和业务能力为核心，全面加强教师队伍建设，为教育事业改革发展提供有力支撑。

（二）总体目标。到2020年，形成一支师德高尚、业务精湛、结构合理、充满活力的高素质专业化教师队伍。专任教师数量满足各级各类教育发展需要；教师队伍整体素质大幅提高，普遍具有良好的职业道德素养、先进的教育理念、扎实的专业知识基础和较强的教育教学能力；教师队伍的年龄、学历、职务（职称）、学科结构以及学段、城乡分布结构与教育事业发展相协调；教师地位待遇不断提高，农村教师职业吸引力明显增强；教师管理制度科学规范，形成高有效率、更加开放的教师工作体制机制。

（三）重点任务。幼儿园教师队伍建设要以补足配齐为重点，切实加强幼儿园教师培养培训，严格实施幼儿园教师资格制度，依法落实幼儿园教师地位待遇；中小学教师队伍建设要以农村教师为重点，采取倾斜政策，切实增强农村教师职业吸引力，激励更多优秀人才到农村从教；职业学校教师队伍建设要以“双师型”教师为重点，完善“双师型”教师培养培训体系，健全技能型人才到职业学校从教制度；高等学校教师队伍建设要以中青年教师和创新团队为重点，优化中青年教师
成人发展、脱颖而出的制度环境，培育跨学科、跨领域的科研与教学相结合的创新团队；民族地区教师队伍建设要以提高政治素质和业务能力为重点，加强中小学和幼儿园双语教师培养培训，加快培养一批边疆民族地区紧缺教师人才；特殊教育教师队伍建设要以提升专业化水平为重点，提高特殊教育教师培养培训质量，健全特殊教育教师管理制度。

二、加强教师思想政治教育和师德建设

(四)全面提高教师思想政治素质。坚持和完善理论学习制度，创新理论学习的方式和载体，加强中国特色社会主义理论体系教育，不断提高教师的理论修养和思想政治素质。推动教师在社会实践活动中进一步了解国情、社情、民情。开辟思想政治教育新阵地，建立教师思想状况定期调查分析制度，坚持解决思想问题与解决实际困难相结合，增强思想政治工作的针对性和实效性。确保教师坚持正确政治方向，践行社会主义核心价值体系，遵守宪法和有关法律法规，坚持学术研究无禁区、课堂讲授有纪律，帮助和引领学生形成正确的世界观、人生观和价值观。

(五)构建师德建设长效机制。建立健全教育、宣传、考核、监督与奖惩相结合的师德建设工作机制。开展各种形式的师德教育，把教师职业理想、职业道德、学术规范以及心理健康教育融入职前培养、准入、职后培训和管理的全过程。加大优秀师德典型宣传力度，促进形成重德养德的良好风气。研究制定科学合理的师德考评方式，完善师德考评制度，将师德建设作为学校工作考核和办学质量评估的重要指标，把师德表现作为教师资格定期注册、业绩考核、职称评审、岗位聘用、评优奖励的首要内容，对教师实行师德表现一票否决制。完善学生、家长和社会参与的师德监督机制。完善高等学校科研学术规范，健全学术不端行为惩治查处机制。对有严重失德行为、影响恶劣者按有关规定予以严肃处理直至撤销教师资格。

三、大力提高教师专业化水平

(六)完善教师专业发展标准体系。根据各级各类教育的特点，出台幼儿园、小学、中学、职业学校、高等学校、特殊教育学校教师专业标准，作为教师培养、准入、培训、考核等工作的重要依据。制定幼儿园园长、普通中小学校长、中等职业学校校长专业标准和任职资格标准，提高校长(园长)专业化水平。制定师范
类专业认证标准，开展专业认证和评估，规范师范类专业办学，建立教师培养质量评估制度。

(七) 提高教师培养质量。完善师范生招生制度，科学制定招生计划，确保招生培养与教师岗位需求有效衔接，实行提前批次录取，选拔乐教适教的优秀学生攻读师范类专业。发挥教育部直属师范大学师范生免费教育的示范引领作用，鼓励支持地方结合实际实施师范生免费教育制度。探索建立招收职业学校毕业生和企业技术人员专门培养职业教育师资制度。扩大教育硕士、教育博士招生规模，培养高层次的中小学和职业学校教师。创新教师培养模式，建立高等学校与地方政府、中小学(幼儿园、职业学校)联合培养教师的新机制，发挥好行业企业在培养“双师型”教师中的作用。加强教师养成教育和教育教学能力训练，落实师范生教育实践不少于一学期制度。鼓励综合性大学毕业生从事教师职业。

(八) 建立教师学习培训制度。实行五年一周期不少于360学时的教师全员培训制度，推行教师培训学分制度。采取顶岗置换研修、校本研修、远程培训等多种模式，大力开展中小学、幼儿园教师特别是农村教师培训。完善以企业实践为重点的职业学校教师培训制度。推进高等学校中青年教师专业发展，建立高等学校中青年教师国内访学、挂职锻炼、社会实践制度。加大民族地区双语教师和音乐、体育、美术等师资短缺学科教师培训。加强校长培训，重视辅导员和班主任培训。推动信息技术与教师教育深度融合，建设教师网络研修社区和终身学习服务体系，促进教师自主学习，推动教学方式变革。继续实施“幼儿园和中小学教师国家级培训计划”、“职业院校教师素质提高计划”。

(九) 完善教师培养培训体系。构建以师范院校为主体、综合性大学参与、开放灵活的中小学教师教育体系。依托相关高等学校和大中型企业，共建职业学校“双师型”教师培养培训体系。推动高等学校设立教师发展中心。依托现有资源，加强中小学幼儿园教师、职业学校教师、特殊教育教师、民族地区双语教师培养培训基地建设。推动各地结合实际，规范建设县(区)域教师发展平台。

(十) 培养造就高端教育人才。实施中小学名师名校长培养工程。制定普通中小学、中等职业学校校长负责制实施细则，探索校长职级制。改进特级教师评选和管理工作，更好发挥特级教师的示范带动作用。坚持培养与引进兼顾，教学与科研并重，加强高等学校高层次创新型人才队伍建设。实施好“千人计划”、“长江学者奖励计划”和“创新团队发展计划”等人才项目，造就集聚一批具有国际影响的学科领军人才和高水平的教学科研创新团队。落实和扩大学校办学自主权，支持教
励教师和校长在实践中大胆探索，创新教育思想、教育模式和教育方法，形成教学特色和办学风格，造就一批教育家，倡导教育家办学。

四、建立健全教师管理制度

(十一)加强教师资源配置管理。逐步实行城乡统一的中小学教职工编制标准，对农村边远地区实行倾斜政策。研究制定高等学校教职工编制标准。完善学校编制管理办法，健全编制动态管理机制，严禁挤占、挪用、截留教师编制。国家出台幼儿园教师配备标准，各地结合实际合理核定公办幼儿园教职工编制。建立县(区)域内义务教育学校教师校长轮岗交流机制，促进教师资源合理配置。大力推进建城镇教师支持农村教育，鼓励支持退休的特级教师、高级教师到农村学校支教讲学。

(十二)严格教师资格和准入制度。修订《教师资格条例》，提高教师任职学历标准、品行和教育教学能力要求。全面实施教师资格考试和定期注册制度。完善符合职业教育特点的职业学校教师资格标准。健全新进教师公开招聘制度，探索符合不同学段、专业和岗位特点的教师招聘办法。继续实施并逐步完善农村义务教育阶段学校教师特设岗位计划，探索吸引高校毕业生到村小学、教学点任教的新机制。

(十三)加快推进教师职务(职称)制度改革。分类推进教师职务(职称)制度改革，完善符合各类教师职业特点的职务(职称)评审标准。建立统一的中小学教师职务(职称)系列，探索在职业学校设置正高级教师职务(职称)。研究完善符合村小学和教学点实际的职务(职称)评审标准，职务(职称)晋升向村小学和教学点专任教师倾斜。城镇中小学教师在评聘高级职务(职称)时，要有一定以上在农村学校或薄弱学校任教经历。支持符合条件的职业学校和高等学校兼职教师申报相应系列教师专业技术职务。

(十四)全面推行聘用制度和岗位管理制度。根据分类推进事业单位改革的总体部署，按照按需设岗、竞聘上岗、按岗聘用、合同管理的原则，完善以合同管理为基础的用人制度，实现教师职务(职称)评审与岗位聘用的有机结合，完善教师退出机制。鼓励普通高中聘请高等学校、科研院所和社会团体等机构的专业人才担任兼职教师。完善相关人事政策，鼓励职业学校和高等学校聘请企业管理人员、专业技术人员和高技能人才等担任专兼职教师。探索更加有利于促进协同创新、持续创新的高等学校人事管理办法。完善外籍教师管理办法，吸引更多世界
一流的专家学者来华从事教学、科研和管理工作，有计划地引进海外高端人才和学术团队。

(十五)健全教师考核评价制度。完善重师德、重能力、重业绩、重贡献的教师考核评价标准，探索实行学校、学生、教师和社会等多方参与的评价办法，引导教师潜心教书育人。严禁简单用升学率和考试成绩评价中小学教师。根据不同类型的教师的岗位职责和工作特点，完善高等学校教师分类管理和评价办法；建立健全大学教授为本科生上课制度，把承担本科学术任务作为教授考核评价的基本内容。加强教师管理，严禁公办、在职中小学教师从事有偿补课，规范高等学校教师兼职兼薪。

五、切实保障教师合法权益和待遇

(十六)完善教师参与治校治学机制。建立健全教职工代表大会制度，保障教职工参与学校决策的合法权利。完善中小学学校管理制度，发挥好党组织的领导核心和政治核心作用，健全校长负责制，实行校务会议等制度，完善教职工参与的科学民主决策机制。完善中国特色现代大学制度，坚持党委领导下的校长责任制，探索教授治学的有效途径，充分发挥教授在教学、学术研究以及学校管理中的作用。完善教师人事争议处理途径，依法维护教师权益。

(十七)强化教师工资保障机制。依法保证教师平均工资水平不低于或者高于国家公务员的平均工资水平，并逐步提高，保障教师工资按时足额发放。健全符合教师职业特点、体现岗位绩效的工资分配激励约束机制。进一步做好义务教育学校教师绩效工资实施工作，按照“管理以县为主、经费省级统筹、中央适当支持”的原则，确保绩效工资所需资金落实到位。对长期在农村基层和艰苦边远地区工作的教师，实行工资倾斜政策。推进非义务教育教师绩效工资实施工作。

(十八)健全教师社会保障制度。按照事业单位改革的总体部署，推进教师养老保险制度改革，按规定为教师缴纳社会保险费及住房公积金。中央在基建投资中安排资金，支持加快建设农村艰苦边远地区学校教师周转宿舍。鼓励地方政府将符合条件的农村教师住房纳入当地住房保障范围统筹予以解决。

(十九)完善教师表彰奖励制度。探索建立国家级教师荣誉制度。继续做好全国模范教师和全国教育系统先进工作者表彰工作，对在农村地区长期从教、贡献突出的教师加大表彰奖励力度。定期开展教学名师奖评选，重点奖励在教学一线作出突出贡献的优秀教师。研究完善国家级教学成果奖。鼓励各地按照国家有关规
定开展教师表彰奖励工作。

(二十)保障民办学校教师权益。建立健全民办学校教师管理相关制度，依法保障和落实民办学校教师在培训、职务(职称)评审、教龄和工龄计算、表彰奖励、社会活动等方面与公办学校教师享有同等权利。民办学校应依法聘用教师，明确双方权利义务，及时兑现教师工资待遇，按规定为教师足额缴纳社会保险费和住房公积金。鼓励民办学校为教师建立补充养老保险、医疗保险。

六、确保教师队伍建设政策措施落到实处

(二十一)加强组织领导。各级人民政府要切实加强对教师工作的组织领导，把教师队伍建设列入重要议事日程抓紧抓好。完善部门沟通协调机制，形成责权明确、分工协作、齐抓共管的工作格局，及时研究解决教师队伍建设中的突出矛盾和重大问题。教育行政部门要加强对教师队伍建设的统筹管理、规划和指导，制定相关政策和标准。机构编制、发展改革、财政、人力资源社会保障等有关部门要在各自职责范围内，积极推进教师队伍建设有关工作。鼓励和引导社会力量参与支持教师队伍建设。

(二十二)加强经费保障。各级人民政府要加大对教师队伍建设的投入力度，新增财政教育经费要把教师队伍建设作为投入重点之一，切实保障教师培养培训、工资待遇等方面的经费投入。教师培训经费要列入财政预算。幼儿园、中小学和中等职业学校按照年度公用经费预算总额的5%安排教师培训经费；高等学校按照不同层次和规模情况，统筹安排一定的教师培训经费。切实加强经费监管，确保专款专用，提高经费使用效益。

(二十三)加强考核督导。要把教师队伍建设情况作为各地区各有关部门政绩考核、各级各类学校办学水平评估的重要内容，作为评优评先、表彰奖励的重要依据。建立教师工作定期督导检查制度，把教师队伍建设情况作为教育督导的重要内容，并公告督导结果，推动各项政策措施落实到位。

国务院

2012年8月20日
国家教委印发《国家教育委员会关于“九五”期间全国中小学校长培训指导意见》的通知

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发布单位：国家教委

为了贯彻落实中共中央、国务院颁发的《中国教育改革和发展纲要》及其实施意见，指导“九五”期间全国中小学校长培训工作，现将《国家教育委员会关于“九五”期间全国中小学校长培训指导意见》印发你们，请根据本地实际情况，认真贯彻实施，并将有关情况及时报我委人事司。中小学校长岗位培训基础上的提高培训全国不搞统一模式、统一进度。各地要视实际情况，在调查研究，先行试点，做好必要准备的基础上再逐步推开。要不断总结经验，抓好典型，保证中小学校长培训工作的健康发展。

国家教育委员会关于“九五”期间全国中小学校长培训指导意见

“九五”期间，继续加强中小学校长培训工作，进一步提高中小学校长的政治、业务素质和管理能力，是一项事关基础教育改革和发展全局的基础性工作，对普及九年义务教育及全面提高中小学教育质量和管理水平具有重要的战略意义。根据《中华人民共和国教育法》、《中国教育改革和发展纲要》和中组部、国家教委《关于加强全国中小学校长队伍建设的意见（试行）》的有关精神，现就“九五”期间中小学校长培训工作提出如下意见：

一、指导思想和基本要求

中小学校长培训工作的指导思想是：

——理论联系实际、学用一致，注重实效，既学习理论，又研讨、解决现实问题。 ——系统培训和专项业务培训相结合，在开展岗位培训和提高培训时，应根据需要，及时补充一些专项业务内容。 ——认真总结培训经验，不断丰富培训内容，改进教学方法，努力提高教学质量，建立培训教学评估制度，保证培训质量和效益。二、主要任务和培训层次

“九五”期间，要在岗位培训的基础上，继续对中小学校长进行提高性培训。通过培训，进一步提高校长的理论素养、政策水平和管理能力，进一步转变教育思想，
更新教育观念，全面贯彻教育方针。要逐步形成一支适应基础教育改革和发展需要的政治强、作风正、业务精、善管理的中小学校长队伍，努力造就一批教育改革和科学管理的带头人。

培训的主要层次可包括：新上岗校长的岗位培训；已接受过岗位培训校长的提高培训；起示范作用学校校长的高级研修等。(一)岗位培训对新任校长要按照《全国中小学校长任职条件和岗位要求(试行)》进行岗位培训，提高其基本政治、业务素质和履行岗位职责的能力。岗位培训继续执行国家教委颁发的《全国中小学校长岗位培训指导性教学计划(试行草案)》。在保证完成总课时数的前提下，各地可根据实际情况，对教学计划作适当调整。以学习邓小平同志建设有中国特色社会主义理论、教育>策法规、学校管理理论和方法，以及当前学校改革和管理工作中急需研究解决的现实问题为主要内容组织教学。(二)提高培训对已经取得“岗位培训合格证书”的校长要进行提高培训，进一步端正教育思想，更新教育观念，补充新知识，掌握新技能、新方法。提高培训要参照国家教委制定的《全国中小学校长提高培训指导性教学计划》(附后)的要求进行。培训形式要因地制宜，灵活多样。(三)高级研修对起示范作用学校的校长可举办高级研修班，进一步提高理论、>策水平和领导能力，努力使他们成为基础教育改革、教育科研和科学管理的带头人。研修班要以课题研究为主。课题要根据形势和学校工作的需要来选定，研修过程要与总结教育实践经验和开展教改实验等相结合。各省级教育部门要制定高级研修班的教学计划和管理办法，并报我委备案。另外，各地可按照国家教委的有关规定，组织部分中青年校长在职学习教育管理专业，提高学历层次。三、主要>策与措施中小学校长培训工作实行国家宏观指导、地方负责，分级管理、分级培训的原则。各级教育行政部门要继续高度重视这项工作。要从本地区的实际出发，制定中小学校长培训的“九五”规划和年度计划。要采取切实措施，加强干训师资队伍建设及和各级培训机构的建设。要按照国家教委《关于加强全国中小学校长培训工作的意见》(89)教人字035号)的有关规定，切实保证培训所需经费，并充分发挥经费的使用效益。要坚持实行中小学校长持证上岗制度。凡新任职的中小学校长都必须接受岗位培训，并取得“岗位培训合格证书”；已接受过岗位培训的校长五年内必须接受累计不少于200学时的提高性培训，并取得相应的结业证书。各地要制定具体>策，妥善解决工学矛盾，充分激发中小学校长参加培训的积极性。要加强中小学校长培训办班、收费、发放证书工作的管理。中小学校长培训教材要在统一基本要求的前提下逐步实行多样化。为保证培训的质量，防止乱编乱用教材，岗位培训和提高培训的通用性教材，由国家教委组织编写或择优推荐，各地按需选用。各地可自编或协作编写补充教材。各地自编的教材书稿，未经省级教育部门审定，不准以教材名义出版，各培训机构也不得选用。中小学校长培训是国家“普九”评估的一项重要内容，各地要把其列为评估教育行政工作和考核领导>绩的重要标准之一，对取得显著成绩的单位和个人应给予表扬和奖励。各地在重视中小学校长培训工作的同时，要加强对学校其他领导成员和中层管理人员的培训。培训要求参照本意见的有关精神执行。附：全国中小学校长提高培训指导性教学计划全国中小学校长提高培训指导性教学计划一、培训对象为已接受过岗位培训的中小学校长。二、培训目的以邓小平同志建设有中国特色社会主义理论为指导，围绕当前基础教育改革与发展的现实问题，结合工作需要，组织学员
学习新知识，总结新经验，探讨新问题，进一步提高其思想政治素质、理论素养、业务水平和管理能力。三、课程设置与课时分配

四、培训方式与时间可采取全脱产或在职自学为主，适当组织短期集中面授辅导、集体研讨等灵活多样的方式进行。各种方式培训累计不少于200学时。专项业务培训内容，如艺术教育、安全教育等，可由各地根据具体情况在选修课中予以安排。五、教学要求

1. 密切结合教育改革和发展新形势的需要，贯彻理论联系实际、学用一致、按需施教、注重实效的原则，坚持学习理论与研讨、分析解决教育教学改革和学校管理中的现实问题相结合。2. 贯彻“教育要面向现代化、面向世界、面向未来”的方针，丰富教学内容，改进教学方法，加强教学管理，建立培训教学评估制度，努力提高教学水平，切实保证培训质量。3. 充分考虑校长需求和成人在职教育的特点，贯彻自学、研讨为主的原则，从实际出发，综合运用理论教学、自学读书、研讨交流、案例分析、考察调研、论文写作等多种教学方法。组织学员开展专题研究活动，撰写学校管理案例、专题论文或研究报告等，形成个人研究和集体研究成果。六、考核与结业学员按本计划要求学完全部课程，并经考核合格者，由办学单位发给经主管部门验印的提高培训结业证书。