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Designing a Training Model for Value-Creating School Principals in Secondary School

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The objective of this study was to design a comprehensive training model for developing value-creating school principals in secondary education.

Methods and Materials: The research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The qualitative phase involved thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with educational experts and a review of relevant literature to identify essential competencies. The quantitative phase included a survey of 321 secondary school principals from North Khorasan Province, selected using simple random sampling. Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) with SPSS 24 and LISREL software to validate the identified competencies and develop the training model.

Findings: The study identified three critical dimensions for developing value-creating school principals: individual, social, and organizational competencies. Within these dimensions, key competencies such as the "spirit of seeking success," "creating an entrepreneurial attitude in parents and educators," and "organizational self-confidence" were highlighted as essential for effective school leadership. The findings suggest that while all identified competencies are important, those related to personal motivation, social engagement, and organizational innovation have the most significant impact on a principal's ability to create value in their schools.

Conclusion: The study provides a robust framework for the development of training programs aimed at cultivating value-creating school principals. By focusing on the identified individual, social, and organizational competencies, training programs can better prepare principals to lead effectively and drive educational excellence. The study also highlights the need for ongoing research and practice to further refine these competencies and adapt them to different educational contexts.

Keywords: Value-creating school principals, educational leadership, secondary education, training model, competencies.

1. Introduction

As the primary leaders in educational institutions, principals are not only tasked with administrative responsibilities but also with fostering an environment conducive to learning, innovation, and value creation (Emami et al., 2024; Hasanpour et al., 2020; Herawati et al., 2024; Nazari Ardabili et al., 2024; Omale, 2024; Sun et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024). The effectiveness of a principal's leadership can significantly impact various aspects of school life, including teacher performance, student outcomes, and overall school effectiveness (Emami Khotbesara et al., 2024; Ghaderi Sheykhi Abadi et al., 2023; McCarley et al., 2014; Shariati et al., 2024; Sheikhabadi et al., 2024).

Effective school leadership is widely recognized as a key determinant of school success (Ghaderi Sheykhi Abadi et al., 2023; Sheikhabadi et al., 2024). According to Alonge and Iwerebor (2023), school leadership effectiveness is a strong predictor of internal efficiency in public secondary schools, particularly in less developed communities (Alonge & Iwerebor, 2023). This is echoed by Attaullah and Khan (2023), who found that leadership and management training directly enhance the skills of school principals, thereby improving the overall quality of education (Attaullah & Khan, 2023). The significance of leadership in education is further emphasized by Gaol (2023), who conducted a deductive thematic analysis of educational leadership styles in Indonesian religious schools, highlighting the pivotal role of leadership in shaping educational outcomes (Gaol, 2023).

The complexity of the principal's role is further compounded by the need to balance administrative duties with instructional leadership. Lee, Dimmock, and Yeung (2009) explored who truly leads and manages the curriculum in primary schools, revealing the often-overlooked instructional leadership responsibilities that principals must assume. This dual role underscores the necessity for comprehensive training programs that equip principals with the skills required to manage both the administrative and instructional aspects of their roles effectively (Lee et al., 2009).

Different leadership styles have been shown to have varying impacts on school effectiveness. Imhangbe, Okecha, and Obozuwa (2018) examined the relationship between principals' leadership styles and teachers' job performance in Nigeria, concluding that transformational leadership, which emphasizes motivation and inspiration, leads to higher levels of teacher performance (Imhangbe et al., 2018). Similarly, Tajasom and Ahmad (2011) found that the leadership style

of school principals significantly influences the school climate, which in turn affects the overall effectiveness of the school (Tajasom & Ahmad, 2011). This is supported by the findings of Akinola (2013), who demonstrated that principals' leadership skills are directly linked to school effectiveness in Southwestern Nigeria (Akinola, 2013).

Transformational leadership, in particular, has been identified as a critical factor in creating a positive school climate and improving teacher performance. McCarley, Peters, and Decman (2014) highlighted the relationship between transformational leadership and school climate, noting that principals who adopt this leadership style are more likely to foster a supportive and collaborative environment (McCarley et al., 2014). This is further corroborated by the research of Waruwu (2019), who investigated the implementation of servant leadership in elementary schools, emphasizing the importance of leadership styles that prioritize the well-being and development of teachers (Waruwu, 2019).

Despite the recognized importance of effective leadership, many principals face significant challenges in their roles. Haile (2021) conducted an investigation into political interference in public secondary school management and leadership practices in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, highlighting the external pressures that can undermine a principal's authority and effectiveness (Haile, 2021). This issue is not unique to Ethiopia; Sintayehu (2020) found that the power sources and influences of secondary school principals in Eastern Ethiopia often lead to conflicts that impede their ability to lead effectively (Sintayehu, 2020).

In addition to external challenges, internal dynamics within schools can also affect a principal's leadership. Kuswati, Sayuti, and Kuat (2022) analyzed the impact of leadership quality and communication abilities on teacher performance, underscoring the need for principals to possess strong interpersonal skills to navigate the complex relationships within their schools (Kuswati et al., 2022). The findings of Bakare and Oredein (2021) further highlight the differences in leadership styles between public and private secondary schools, suggesting that the context in which a principal operates can significantly influence their leadership approach (Bakare & Oredein, 2021).

Given the complex and demanding nature of school leadership, there is a clear need for specialized training programs that prepare principals to meet these challenges. Miri (2024) emphasized the importance of designing leadership training programs specifically tailored to improve

the quality of school management. Such programs should not only focus on administrative skills but also on the development of leadership qualities that foster a positive school environment and drive educational success (Miri, 2024).

Asrin, Ramdhani, Muhaimi, and Maulyda (2022) explored the leadership strategies employed by principals to improve the "link and match" quality in vocational education, highlighting the need for training programs that address the specific demands of different educational contexts. This sentiment is echoed by John (2020), who investigated the relationship between principals' democratic leadership styles and student conformity to rules in Kenyan secondary schools, underscoring the importance of leadership styles that promote student engagement and discipline (Asrin et al., 2022).

Moreover, the role of mentoring and monitoring in leadership development cannot be overstated. Caayaman (2023) examined the mentoring and monitoring practices of school district supervisors, revealing the significant impact these practices have on the effectiveness of school principals (Caayaman, 2023). This aligns with the findings of Chalikias et al. (2020), who demonstrated that the school principal's role as a leader in teachers' professional development is crucial for maintaining high standards of education (Chalikias et al., 2020).

The link between effective leadership and school improvement has been well documented. Noureen, Shah, and Mahmood (2020) studied the impact of leadership traits on school improvement in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, highlighting the critical role that leadership plays in driving educational outcomes (Noureen et al., 2020). This is supported by the research of Kimathi (2017), who investigated the influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job satisfaction in Kenyan secondary schools, finding that effective leadership is essential for maintaining high levels of teacher morale and performance (Kimathi, 2017).

Furthermore, Hasan (2022) emphasized the role of principals and teachers as change agents within schools, suggesting that leadership training should focus on empowering these individuals to initiate and sustain school improvement efforts. This is particularly important in the context of developing countries, where resources are often limited, and the challenges faced by school leaders are more pronounced (Hasan, 2022).

Educational leadership is not only a local or regional concern but a global one. Yu and Yan (2020) conducted a

critical analysis of 40 years of education reform in educational leadership preparation in China, illustrating the evolving nature of leadership training programs worldwide. As educational systems continue to change, there is a growing need for leadership training programs that are adaptable and relevant to the specific needs of different countries and educational contexts (Yu & Yan, 2020).

The importance of cultural context in educational leadership is further highlighted by Rugano (2019), who explored the experiences of secondary school principals in Kenya, emphasizing the need for leadership training programs that are sensitive to the cultural and socio-political realities of the regions they serve (Rugano, 2019). Similarly, Norton (2004) addressed the challenges of attracting and retaining quality school principals, noting that effective leadership training is key to ensuring that principals are equipped to handle the demands of their roles (Norton, 2004).

In conclusion, the role of the school principal is critical to the success of educational institutions. Effective leadership not only enhances school performance but also contributes to the overall development of teachers and students. However, the challenges faced by school principals are numerous and varied, necessitating specialized training programs that address the specific needs of educational leaders. Therefore, this study seeks to design a training model aimed at cultivating value-creating school principals in secondary education, addressing a critical gap in the existing literature on educational leadership.

2. Methods and Materials

The current research utilized an exploratory mixed-methods design to identify the components essential for training value-creating managers. The study was conducted in two phases: qualitative and quantitative.

In the qualitative phase, a thematic analysis method was employed. This phase involved reviewing related literature and conducting semi-structured interviews. Themes were extracted using the three-step coding process developed by Strauss and Corbin. The qualitative research environment consisted of analyzing relevant texts and conducting interviews with experts. This approach allowed for the identification of key themes and sub-themes related to the training of value-creating school principals.

The quantitative phase included a survey of a statistical population of 1,972 management experts. A sample of 321 secondary school principals from North Khorasan Province,

all holding advanced degrees, was selected using the Morgan table and simple random sampling. The data collection tool for this phase was a researcher-developed questionnaire, which comprised two parts: demographic information and specific questions related to the research objectives. The questions were derived from the literature review and the results of the qualitative phase. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by six faculty members, selected based on their research experience and a minimum of 10 years of teaching in the field of management.

The questionnaire consisted of 3 components and 52 questions, scored on a Likert scale. To assess content validity, the Content Validity Ratio (CVR) was calculated for each question, with all questions meeting the acceptable threshold of 0.45. Additionally, Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated by summing the "relevant but needs revision" and "completely relevant" responses, divided by the total number of experts. Construct validity was also assessed through exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. Reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha

coefficient, which was found to be 0.977 for the overall questionnaire. This high value indicates that the questionnaire possesses adequate validity and reliability for measuring the components of value-creating school management.

Data analysis in the quantitative phase was conducted using structural equation modeling (SEM), specifically exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis in both first and second stages, with SPSS 24 and LISREL software used to process the data.

3. Findings and Results

The skewness and kurtosis values for the research variables fall within the range of +2 to -2, indicating a likely normal distribution. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test was used to determine the normality of the distribution. As the significance level of the K-S test is less than 0.05, the distribution is not normal. The results indicate that the p-values in the K-S test are less than 0.05 (Table 1).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

Factor	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation	K-S	Significance Level
Individual	35.6	55.64	55.64	0.50	0.000
Social	55.64	44.062	6.50	0.64	0.000
Organizational	55.65	56.154	5.40	0.65	0.000

The correlation analysis conducted in the study in Table 2 revealed significant positive relationships between the key dimensions of school leadership. Specifically, the Spearman correlation coefficients indicated strong correlations

between the individual and social competencies ($r = 0.563$, $p < 0.001$), individual and organizational competencies ($r = 0.555$, $p < 0.001$), and social and organizational competencies ($r = 0.543$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 2

Correlation Results

Correlation	Individual	Social	Organizational
Spearman	0.563	0.543	0.555
Significance Level	0.000	0.000	0.000
Spearman	0.563	1	0.543
Significance Level	0.000	0.000	0.000
Spearman	0.555	0.543	1
Significance Level	0.000	0.000	0.000

Three dimensions were identified in the development of value-creating school principals, and each dimension was analyzed.

Table 3
Model fit

Factor	p	t	Partial Least Squares	Convergent Validity (AVE)	Composite Reliability Coefficient	Factor Loading
Individual	0.000	105.655	0.360	0.043	0.505	0.550
Social	0.000	352.504	0.364	0.005	0.501	0.045
Organizational	0.000	352.504	0.364	0.005	0.501	0.045

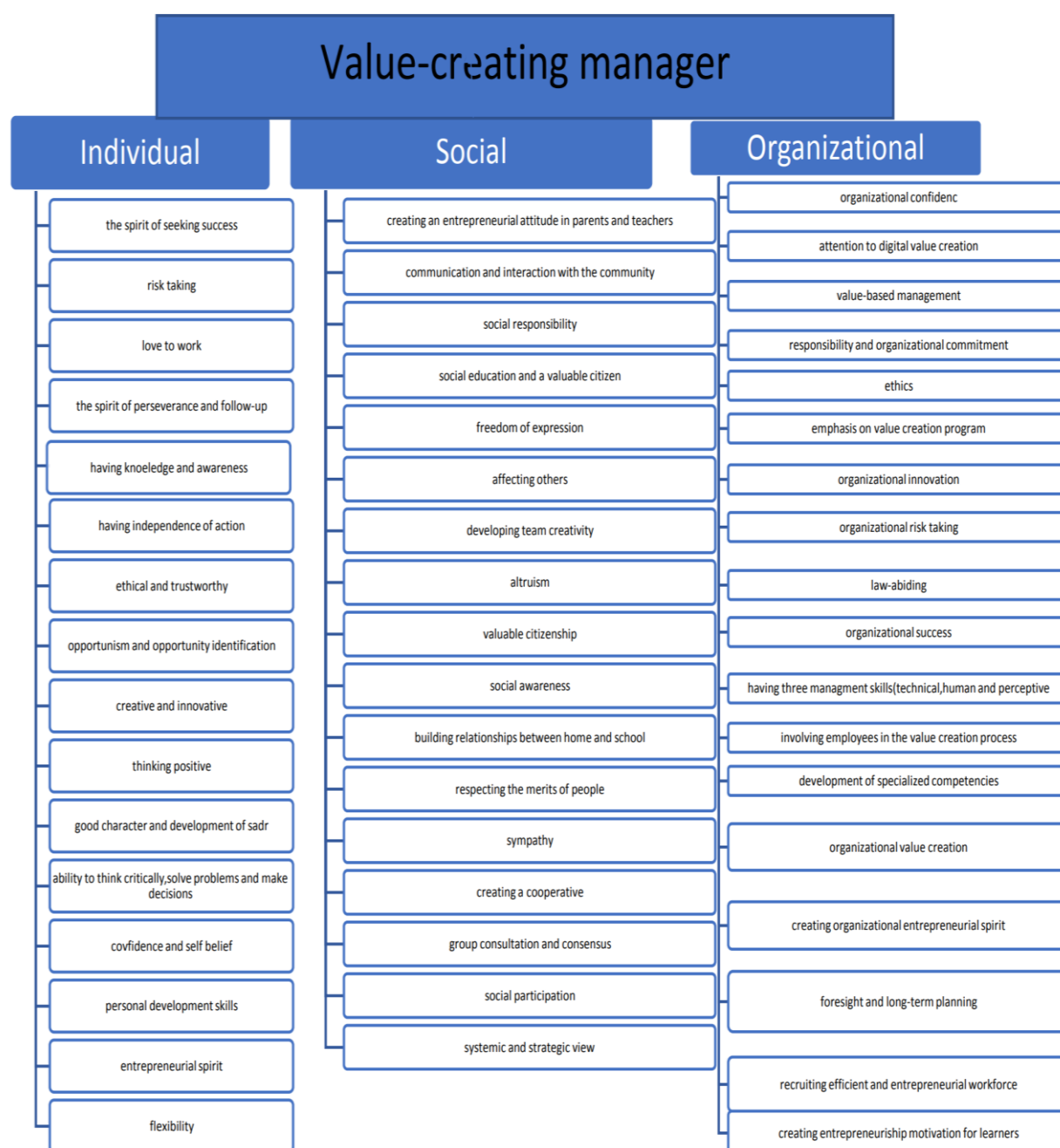
Figure 1
Final Conceptual Model


Figure 2

T-Values for Individual Dimension

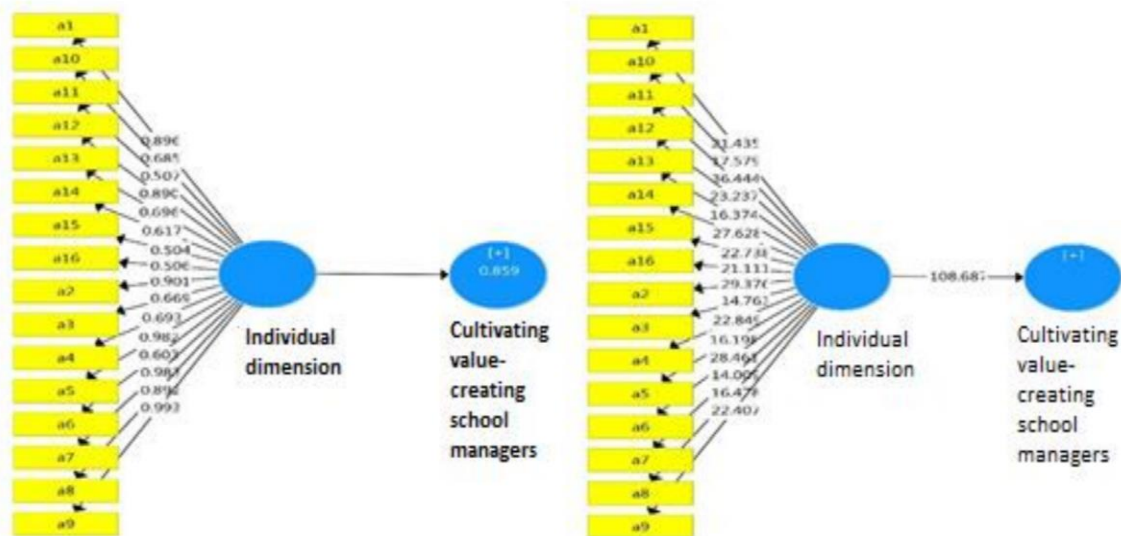


Figure 3

T-Values for Social Dimension

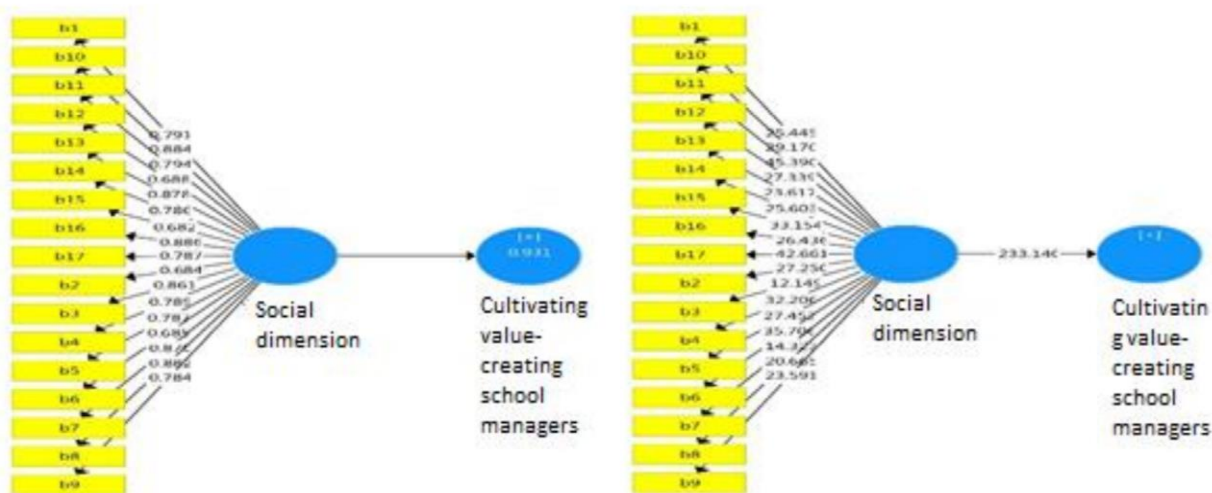
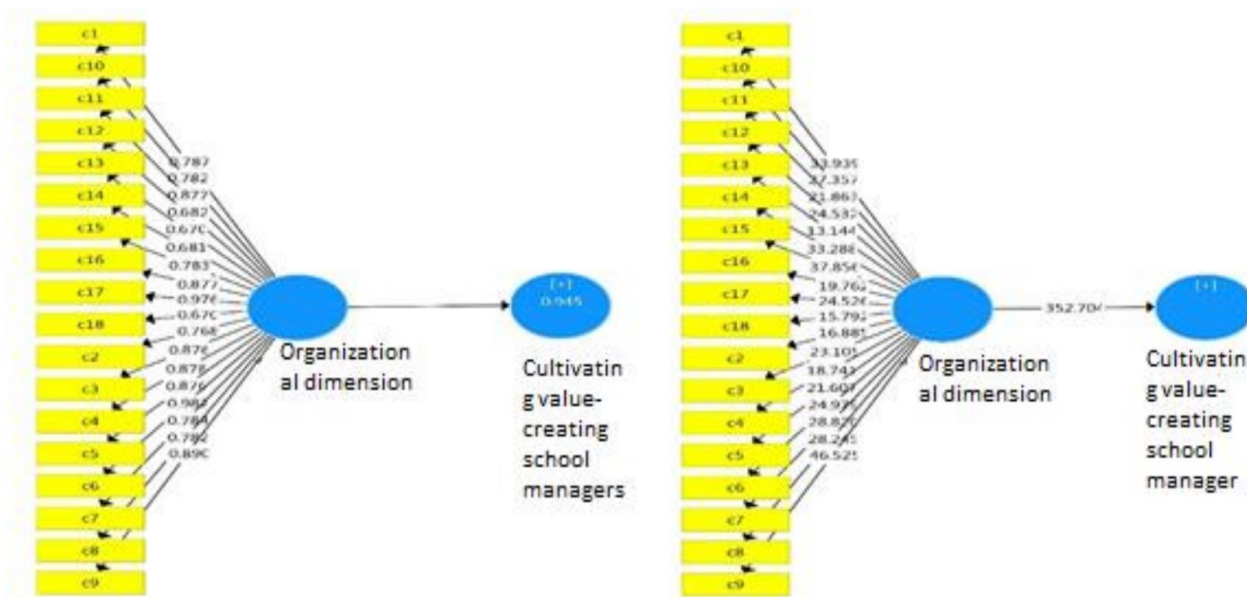


Figure 4

T-Values for Organizational Dimension



The overall evaluation indicators of the factorial model indicate that the data fit the model well. All indicators are within the desired range, confirming the adequacy of the factorial model and its alignment with the research objectives.

The prioritization of the components within each dimension was assessed to determine their relative importance. In the individual dimension, the "spirit of seeking success" was identified as the most critical component, while "flexibility" was considered the least important. In the social dimension, "creating an entrepreneurial attitude among parents and educators" was prioritized highest, whereas "systemic and strategic perspective" received the lowest priority. In the organizational dimension, "organizational self-confidence" was deemed most crucial, with "creating entrepreneurial motivation for learners" ranked lowest.

The conceptual framework was developed by establishing the relationships between the identified components and their relative priorities.

The fit of the model was confirmed by examining all components. The results demonstrate that the model possesses a high degree of fit, as indicated by the Goodness of Fit (Gof) values across all criteria.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to design a training model for value-creating school principals in secondary education, utilizing a mixed-methods approach. The findings of this study revealed three critical dimensions for developing

value-creating principals: individual, social, and organizational competencies. Each of these dimensions comprises various components that together form a comprehensive framework for effective school leadership. This discussion will elaborate on the significance of these findings, comparing them with previous studies and highlighting how they contribute to the broader field of educational leadership.

The study identified the "spirit of seeking success" as the most important individual competency for value-creating school principals. This finding aligns with the work of McCarley, Peters, and Decman (2014), who emphasized the importance of transformational leadership qualities, such as a strong drive for success, in fostering a positive school climate (McCarley et al., 2014). Similarly, Akinola (2013) found that principals with a high level of personal motivation and a clear vision for success are more effective in leading schools to achieve their goals. The emphasis on individual competencies underscores the need for principals to possess a strong personal commitment to their professional growth and the success of their schools (Akinola, 2013).

The study also highlighted the importance of "flexibility" as a key individual competency, although it was ranked lower in priority compared to other competencies. Flexibility is crucial for principals as it enables them to adapt to changing circumstances and respond effectively to unexpected challenges. This finding is supported by the work of Imhangbe, Okecha, and Obozuwa (2018), who demonstrated that flexible leadership styles contribute to better teacher performance and overall school effectiveness

(Imhangbe et al., 2018). However, the relatively lower priority given to flexibility in this study suggests that while it is important, other personal traits such as perseverance and a strong drive for success may have a more direct impact on a principal's ability to create value in their schools.

In the social dimension, the study found that "creating an entrepreneurial attitude in parents and educators" was the most significant competency. This aligns with the findings of Waruwu (2019), who emphasized the role of servant leadership in promoting a collaborative and entrepreneurial culture within schools (Waruwu, 2019). By fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among stakeholders, principals can encourage innovation and creativity, which are essential for driving school improvement and enhancing student outcomes. This competency is particularly relevant in the context of developing countries, where educational resources are often limited, and innovation is necessary to overcome these challenges (Noureen et al., 2020).

Another critical social competency identified in this study is "social responsibility," which was also highlighted by Kuswati, Sayuti, and Kuat (2022). Social responsibility involves the principal's ability to engage with the broader community and ensure that the school's activities align with societal values and expectations (Kuswati et al., 2022). This competency is crucial for building trust and cooperation between the school and its community, which can lead to better support for school initiatives and a more positive school environment.

The study's findings also suggest that while "systemic and strategic perspective" is important, it was ranked lower in priority compared to other social competencies. This could be due to the immediate and tangible benefits that social responsibility and entrepreneurial attitudes provide, as opposed to the more abstract and long-term benefits of strategic planning. This observation aligns with the findings of Rugano (2019), who noted that while strategic leadership is essential, it is often overshadowed by the need to address more immediate social concerns in the school community (Rugano, 2019).

Within the organizational dimension, "organizational self-confidence" emerged as the most critical competency. This finding is consistent with the work of Tajasom and Ahmad (2011), who found that confident leadership is key to creating a positive school climate and driving school effectiveness (Tajasom & Ahmad, 2011). Organizational self-confidence allows principals to make bold decisions and lead their schools with authority, which is crucial for

implementing new initiatives and overcoming resistance to change.

The study also highlighted the importance of "organizational innovation" as a key competency. This finding aligns with the research of McCarley et al. (2014), who emphasized the role of innovation in maintaining a dynamic and responsive school environment (McCarley et al., 2014). Innovation is particularly important in the context of educational leadership, where principals must continually adapt to new challenges and find creative solutions to complex problems (Hasan, 2022). The study's emphasis on innovation reflects the growing recognition that schools must be forward-thinking and adaptable to succeed in today's rapidly changing educational landscape.

However, the study found that "creating entrepreneurial motivation for learners" was ranked lower in priority within the organizational dimension. This finding suggests that while it is important for principals to encourage entrepreneurship among students, other organizational competencies, such as self-confidence and innovation, may have a more immediate impact on the school's overall effectiveness. This observation is supported by the findings of Kimathi (2017), who noted that while student entrepreneurship is valuable, the primary focus of school leadership should be on creating an environment that supports overall educational excellence (Kimathi, 2017).

Despite the valuable insights provided by this study, there are several limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the study was conducted within a specific cultural and educational context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or countries. Educational systems vary widely across different cultures, and the competencies identified in this study may not be equally applicable in all settings. For example, the emphasis on entrepreneurial attitudes in parents and educators might be less relevant in educational contexts where entrepreneurship is not a primary focus.

Second, the study relied on self-reported data from principals and educational experts, which may introduce bias into the findings. Participants may have overestimated the importance of certain competencies or underreported others due to social desirability bias or personal preferences. While the mixed-methods approach helped mitigate some of these biases by triangulating data from different sources, the potential for bias remains a limitation of the study.

Third, the study focused primarily on the competencies of individual principals without fully considering the broader systemic factors that influence school leadership. Factors

such as government policies, funding, and community support can significantly impact a principal's ability to lead effectively, but these were not extensively explored in this study. Future research should consider these contextual factors to provide a more comprehensive understanding of what it takes to develop value-creating school principals.

Building on the findings and limitations of this study, several avenues for future research are recommended. First, future studies should explore the applicability of the identified competencies in different cultural and educational contexts. Comparative studies across different countries or regions could provide valuable insights into how these competencies manifest in various educational systems and whether certain competencies are more universally applicable than others.

Second, there is a need for longitudinal research that tracks the development of these competencies over time. Understanding how principals develop and refine these competencies throughout their careers could provide valuable insights into the most effective training and professional development programs. Longitudinal studies could also help identify which competencies are most critical at different stages of a principal's career, allowing for more targeted and effective training interventions.

Third, future research should explore the impact of systemic factors on the development of value-creating principals. This could include studies on the role of government policies, community support, and funding in shaping school leadership. By understanding how these external factors influence leadership development, researchers can provide more comprehensive recommendations for creating environments that support effective school leadership.

The findings of this study have several practical implications for the development of training programs for school principals. First, training programs should prioritize the development of individual competencies, particularly those related to personal motivation and success orientation. Programs that help principals cultivate a strong drive for success and perseverance are likely to be most effective in preparing them for the challenges of school leadership.

Second, training programs should emphasize the importance of social competencies, particularly those related to fostering entrepreneurial attitudes and social responsibility. By equipping principals with the skills to engage with their communities and promote innovation, these programs can help create school leaders who are capable of driving meaningful change in their schools.

Third, training programs should focus on building organizational self-confidence and innovation. These competencies are critical for leading schools in today's rapidly changing educational landscape. Programs that include components on strategic decision-making, risk management, and creative problem-solving are likely to be particularly valuable in helping principals navigate the complexities of school leadership.

In addition to these training recommendations, educational policymakers and school districts should consider implementing mentoring and monitoring programs that support the ongoing development of these competencies in school principals. By providing principals with access to experienced mentors and regular feedback, these programs can help ensure that principals continue to grow and develop throughout their careers.

Finally, it is essential to recognize that the development of value-creating school principals requires a supportive educational environment. Governments and educational institutions should work together to create policies and provide resources that enable principals to implement the competencies identified in this study. This includes ensuring that principals have the autonomy to make decisions, the resources to implement innovative ideas, and the support of their communities to drive change.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the competencies required for effective school leadership in secondary education. By identifying and prioritizing the individual, social, and organizational competencies that contribute to value creation, this study offers a comprehensive framework for developing training programs that can equip school principals with the skills they need to succeed. While there are limitations to the study, the findings offer a strong foundation for future research and practical applications in the field of educational leadership. Through continued research and the implementation of targeted training programs, it is possible to cultivate a new generation of school leaders who are capable of driving educational excellence and innovation in their schools.

Authors' Contributions

All authors significantly contributed to this study.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

In this study, to observe ethical considerations, participants were informed about the goals and importance of the research before the start of the interview and participated in the research with informed consent.

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