

## **The Impact of Principals' Knowledge of the Objectives of High Schools and the Influence on Their Managerial Practices**

**Mohammad Ghadiri Bayekolaee (Corresponding author)**

Education and Training District 2 Sari, Province Mazandaran, Iran

E-mail: mirzajanihassan@yahoo.com

**Omolbanin Abdi Sarkami**

Education and Training District 1 Sari, Province Mazandaran, Iran

**Seyed Ali Vahedi Moakher**

Department of Management Lincoln University College Malaysia, Branch Iran

**Hassan Razaghi Shani**

Department of Management Lincoln University College Malaysia, Branch Iran

**Seyed Majid Taheri Darkahi**

Department of Business Administration Lincoln University College Malaysia, Branch Iran

**Mehrdad Delavari**

Education and Training District 2 Sari, Province Mazandaran, Iran

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to assess the knowledge of the principals and educational assistants with high schools' objectives and determines its impact on the performance of their managerial courses (case study: the city of Sari). This is a descriptive study and different questionnaires were used to collect the data. The study population consisted of all managers and educational assistants of both sexes. In this study, a multi-stage cluster sampling method was used, based on Yamane formula, sample size was calculated 150. For processing and data analysis, SPSS software and descriptive statistics with central indexes, distribution, frequency tables and charts and to rule out or prove the research hypothesis, inferential statistics (T) are used for two independent groups. The result shows that in high schools the impact of principals and educational assistants' knowledge toward their managerial function are meaningful and decisive. The deeper the information, knowledge and skills of principals and educational assistants of the goals of high school, their managerial performance will be better.

**Keywords:** Managerial Function, Principal and educational assistants, Educational Goals

## 1. Introduction

Management is the process of effective and efficient use of human and material resources in the planning, organizing, directing, controlling and the mobilization of resources that is used to achieve organizational goals and satisfactory educational system (Rezaeaiian, 1994). We have faced significant and dramatic changes during the metamorphic complex of the last century. On the one hand, these developments led to the development in the areas of science and technology and on the other hand by creating new and complex needs, human problems have increased. Education institutions are among the institutions that are associated with these developments. Education is the most important social organization which is established by society and at the same time is the society's manufacturer and cause of evolution which has a great impact on national development and progress, which is called growth industry. Therefore, in parallel with these developments management plays a sensitive and valuable role (Rezaeaiian, 1994). Undoubtedly, achieving the educational goals involves several factors. Among them the role of managers and assistants is important in the realization of these goals.

## 2. Statement of the problem

The educational system has always pursued goals that reflect written or unwritten on the process structure and behavior of systems and subsystems of the educational system. These objectives might include scientific-educational, training-academic, social, vocational, cultural and even political and surely each of these objectives are included in training and academic programs, courses and grades.

The education system of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been separated, classified and structured in two parts: a) formal, b) informal. Based on this law, the Charter of Education rooted in formal education sector that is system of schools and courses developed as educational levels of the three basic fields of secondary school in science, mathematics, humanities, technical and vocational, and art. No doubt in order to achieve the goals of education all those involved in the field should have sufficient function and performance (Nadimi, 2001).

Perhaps it could be said that principals and assistants in educational institutions must be aware of quality and quantity, content, functions, practices and attitudes of educational goals and the level of knowledge must be significant in relation to the human product of this level, therefore, the most important question is: How much is the knowledge and skills of principals in secondary education and to what extent the level of their knowledge impact on managerial performance?

## 3. The Role of Educational Leaders

Since the official formation of education organization in the country, a century has passed. During this period due to various developments which have arisen in the community, the education system has developed and broadened. As a result, goals tasks and responsibilities get more complex and the operation is far more difficult. Due to the quantitative and

qualitative developments, qualitative transformation in the management and leadership in education has markedly raised and as one of the controversial issues in recent years (Alaghe band, 2009). Education is essential in the development and sustainability of society so leadership and management of the effectiveness is considered necessary for the design, implementation and evaluation of educational organizations. In recent decades, educational leadership and management practices have been changed in most societies. On one hand, introduction of new ideas in education and on the other hand improving quality of practices, revealed the necessity and importance of evolution and change in educational management for officials (Alaghe band, 1999). The meaning of Educational management in almost all countries is leadership at all levels of the educational system. However, in our education system educational activities are done outside the school system and in the highest levels of authority and hierarchy. The meaning of Educational management is to determine the objectives, policies, preparing and designing the rules of conduct for the entire education system (Mousavi, 2006). In this way the educational management issues at various levels remains unknown and unresolved, and the underlying principles have not been studied and is to be ignored. Unfortunately, the traditional school management will not lead to the all-round development of students. Leadership and management behaviors in these schools do not match with changes of education in this era. Training managers are not interested in thinking about their work and to the same scale will not notice the need for training and further research in the field of their activity. Education is considered and assessed with common criteria governing routine administrative matters. Neglecting critical thinking, creativity, initiative and innovation change principals to executive directors and therefore, discuss and think about new ideas and processes are unprofitable and have no practical value.

Such thinking in the community has led leadership and training management to apply criteria, rules and regulations, so provides and develops standard methods and procedures for the management of Education Organization's activities which are substituted by researches and theoretical framework for guiding actions. If educational administrators are trained for the tasks and responsibilities of leadership and management and be aware of theoretical foundations, they can recognize the different positions and make rational judgments and decisions (Niknami, 1995).

#### **4. Training Managers' Skills**

Skills needed by principals could be classified as technical, human and conceptual. The ability is reflected on nurturing the influential skills in the performance and survival tasks. The purpose of skills and abilities is the application of knowledge and personal experience. The main criteria of skills, is the effective action in a changing environment. The description of three management skills is as follows:

##### **4.1. Technical skills**

Technical skill is the knowledge and ability to perform specific tasks, which requires mastery in the use of special tools and techniques and practical competence in behavior and activity. Managers usually learn these skills through education and training courses which is characterized by knowledge, techniques and methods for planning, budgeting, controlling,

accounting, finance, personnel, business, and etc. The most obvious characteristic of skill is the highest grade of competence and expertise that can be achieved because the skill is precise and clear and has measurable criteria (Mirkamali, 1994). Therefore, control and evaluation during training and operation are easy. Technical skills needed for educational assistants are educational assessment, training tips, techniques and teaching methods and techniques of administrative and financial education.

#### 4.2. The human skill

Human skill is the ability and understanding for cooperation and doing things with each other, working effectively as a member of the group, understanding the motivation and influencing their behavior, in fact human skill is the opposite of technical skill. Human skills require that people know themselves more than anything else, to be aware of their weaknesses, their ideas and thoughts, have confidence, trust others, respect the beliefs, values and principles of them, and understand them (Seyed Javadein, 2006). Director of education should have enough human skill in order to affect members under his leadership.

#### 4.3. Cognitive Skills

Cognitive skill is the ability to understand the complexities of the entire organization and all elements and components of the image and organizational activities as a unit (system). In other words, the ability to understand and identify various functions of the organization which are related to each other in each sector, necessarily affects the other parts. Cognitive (or conceptual) skills acquisition requires education and moral science theories, especially theories of organization, management and decision-making and the use of them. Nowadays, the academic training courses in specialized fields, familiarity with the attitude and approach of the system and the use of studies and research on organizations provide cognitive skills for management. Director of education must have considerable cognitive skills for recognizing educational environment, understanding interrelationships among different factors, identifying educational priorities, and adopting effective decisions (Tosi, 2004).

### 5. Literature Review

Nowadays training managers have much effort in order to prepare themselves to achieve the appropriate procedures. People have also come to the conclusion that if educational leaders in the inflexible community want to show a better performance, their knowledge, skills and attitudes need to be different from training management programs that have already been implemented. School success is not possible without knowledge and understanding of school leaders.

Tahmasbzade (2008) evaluated the management factors in achieving the goal of education at secondary level from the perspective of high school teachers and principals. The findings indicate that both managers and head teachers believe that the improvement of teaching and learning can be effective in achieving the goal of education, training and implementation of the rules properly.

Also in this regard, Akbari (2007) evaluates principals' knowledge of the management

functions and its relationship with job success in high schools, the results of the study showed that there is a significant relationship between principals' knowledge of the management functions (decision-making, planning, organizing, leadership) and their career success and its dimension. Moreover, Mousavi (2006) evaluates principals' knowledge of their professional duties and the findings notes that the principals of education system have to match the communication system according to the organization's objectives, the needs of teachers, students, and parents.

Undoubtedly, one of the key factors in the success of a school is the successful principals. Teachers play a very important role in maintaining school discipline. Students' progress is more likely related to the cooperation of teachers and assistants (Rezayee, 2005). On the other hand, principals should conduct behaviors according to the views of school and also clear objectives. They should opt for the introduction and implementation of strategies that leads to the achievement of the objectives of their school (Zirak, 1997). Achieving high quality in this complex environment requires that the principal has high leadership skills as the leader of the school.

## 6. Research method

The method used in the research is descriptive survey. The study sample are 240 principals and educational assistants of high schools in the city of Sari. Sample size using Yamane formula and the accuracy of 5% is estimated as 150 people. In this study the multi-stage cluster sampling method is used. The instrument used in this study is researcher's questionnaire and questions are based on Likert five categories of statements (low, very low, somewhat, high, very high) that are used to measure the same default variable through which changes of dependent variable are measured. Also to calculate the reliability, principals and educational assistants' management of high schools run in two innings on 15 subjects and Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated as an indicator of its test-retest reliability. In addition to ensure the reliability or validity of questionnaires, the questions were presented to experts. Agreed questions were used as measuring instruments and other items that the experts did not agree on, were excluded.

## 7. Data analysis

One of the most important parts of any research is analyzing data since inaccuracy in data analysis may lead to a false conclusion and incorrect generalizations. Scientific-educational, moral, and social objectives are considered in analyzing the data, in this research relationship between variables was also examined.

**First hypothesis:** There is relationship between the knowledge of high schools' principals and educational assistants of the scientific-educational objectives and their management performance.

Table 1: the results using t-test for the hypothesis 1

Principals' Group	Average performance	Standard deviation	The obtained value of t	Degrees of freedom	The value of sig	Alpha value	Critical t-value
High awareness of goals	25.95	3.19	3.61	148	0.000	0.05	1.96
Low awareness of goals	24.26	2.30					

Also, comparing t statistics ( $t=3.61$  and  $\text{sig}=0$ ) to the critical t shows that the effect of principals and educational assistants' knowledge of their managerial functions in high schools is meaningful and decisive. The more information, knowledge and the familiarity of principals of scientific-education objectives, the greater the proportion of their managerial functions will be.

**Second hypothesis:** The knowledge of principals and educational assistants of moral-educational objectives in high school and their managerial functions.

Table 2: calculated results using t-test for the hypothesis 2

Principals' Group	Average performance	Standard deviation	The obtained value of t	Degrees of freedom	The value of sig	Alpha value	Critical t-value
High awareness of goals	25.21	3.49	3.57	148	0.000	0.05	1.96
Low awareness of goals	23.29	3.50					

Due to comparing the mean of the high and low familiarity of principals and assistants to the moral-educational purposes, attitudes towards the hypothesis of this study is positive. Hence, the familiarity of moral-educational purposes effects principals and educational assistants'

management function. Also, according to the t statistic ( $t=3.57$  and  $\text{sig}=0$ ) as compared to the critical t, the impact of principals and educational assistants' familiarity with managerial practices is significant and determining. The deeper the information, knowledge and understanding of principals of ethical goals, their managerial performance will be higher.

**The third hypothesis:** The knowledge of principals and educational assistants of social objectives in high school and their managerial functions.

Table 3: The calculated results using t-test for the hypothesis 3

Principals' Group	Average performance	Standard deviation	The obtained value of t	Degrees of freedom	The value of sig	Alpha value	Critical t-value
High awareness of goals	20.29	3.68	2.21	148	0.029	0.05	1.96
Low awareness of goals	19.01	3.35					

Due to comparing the mean of the high and low familiarity of principals and assistants to the social purposes, attitudes towards the hypothesis of this study is positive. Hence, the familiarity of social purposes effects principals and educational assistants' management function. Also, according to the t statistic ( $t=2.2$  and  $\text{sig}=0.029$ ) as compared to the critical t, the impact of principals and educational assistants' familiarity with managerial practices is significant and determining. The deeper the information, knowledge and understanding of principals of social goals, their managerial performance will be higher.

## 8. Discussion and conclusions

The result of t test shows a significant relationship with the first hypothesis that there is a relationship between the principals and educational assistants' knowledge of scientific-educational purposes and their managerial function. The result shows that the value of t with 3.61 is larger than critical t-value with 148 degrees of freedom in the 0.05 level equals to 1.96. The value of sig was also observed smaller than alpha, therefore the difference was significant and with regard to the comparison, principals' performance who had more knowledge and understanding of educational goals was 25.95 and principals' performance who had less knowledge and understanding of educational goals was 24.26. So the hypothesis is confirmed by 95%. Results of this hypothesis agree with the findings of Tahmasbzade (2008), Mousavi (2006), and Akbari (2007).

Regarding hypothesis 2, the result of t test and significant relationship show that there is a

relationship between the principals and educational assistants' knowledge of moral-educational purposes and their managerial function. The result shows that the value of  $t$  with 3.57 is larger than critical  $t$ -value with 148 degrees of freedom in the 0.05 level equals to 1.96. The value of  $sig$  was also observed smaller than  $\alpha$ , therefore the difference was significant and with regard to the comparison of averages, principals' performance who had more knowledge and understanding of moral goals was 25.21 and principals' performance who had less knowledge and understanding of educational goals was 23.29. So the hypothesis is confirmed by 95%. Results of this hypothesis agree with the findings of Zarrin Mehr (1999), and Zirak (1997).

In relation to the third hypothesis, the result of  $t$  test and significant relationship show that there is a relationship between the principals and educational assistants' knowledge of social purposes and their managerial function. The result shows that the value of  $t$  with 2.21 is larger than critical  $t$ -value with 148 degrees of freedom in the 0.05 level equals to 1.96. The value of  $sig$  was also observed smaller than  $\alpha$ , therefore the difference was significant and with regard to the comparison of averages, principals' performance who had more knowledge and understanding of social goals was 20.29 and principals' performance who had less knowledge and understanding of educational goals was 19.01. So the hypothesis is confirmed by 95%.

## **9. Suggestions based on the Findings**

According to the results of hypothesis 1 that principals and educational assistants' awareness of scientific and educational purposes is significant and its' impact on their managerial practices and the higher the level of principals and educational assistants' awareness of science and technology, there is increasingly greater impact on their managerial practices, we recommend strong and effective strategies to increase awareness of principals and educational assistants at schools.

Also according to the results of the second hypothesis that significant assumptions and knowledge of principals and educational assistants' of the ethical goals, high school education and its impact on their managerial practices, it is recommended that to have a better understanding of the objectives contained in the Education Charter, courses, in-service training, educational conferences and meetings should be held.

According to the results of the third hypothesis that significant assumptions and knowledge of principals and educational assistants' of the social goals, high school education and its impact on their managerial practices, it is recommended that principals and educational assistants of schools have an active presence in the social activities for the promotion of national development plans.

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