# Surveying the effective factors in improving high school management from the viewpoints of school administrators and teachers of Urmiah City, Iran

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## Abstract

This study intended to survey the effective factors in improving high school management from the viewpoints of school administrators and teachers of Urmiah city, Iran. The method of research was descriptive surveying. We used cross-country method for gathering data by a researcher-made questionnaire, which after the confirmation of content and face validity by experts, the reliability in a sample of 30 using cronbach $\alpha$, with a correlation coefficient of 93% has been determined. The participants of this study were all secondary school administrators and teachers of Urmiah city, Iran, which were selected out of 1200. We used stratified sampling, because there were 2 groups: school administrators, and teachers. Our sample was 100. The analysis method was descriptive and inferential (t-Test). The results revealed that there was a significant difference between the views of school administrators' and teachers' about the effect of objective targeting, participatory leadership, and participatory decision-making, effective communication with staff and constant evaluation on the improvement of management.

**Keywords:** Management improvement, School administrators, Teachers, Education.

## Introduction

Social scientists believe that humans are beings who are members of different social groups and communities, in which they satisfy their individual and common needs, and through which they share with others. Social organizations have been classified and studied in various ways. These organizations have become very complicated and varied after the *industrial revolution* and the 20th century. Educational organizations are of the most significant and important social communities which due to their human and educational essence and special aim are distinct among others. Educational organizations are much distinct as opposed to other organizations which make them need a distinct model of leadership and management. Efficiency in educational centers (institutions) is the learning and holistic development of learners, so these institutions need efficacious methods of leadership and constant development. Organization and management are two inherent components of social life, which are made to reach specific aims. Organizations are constantly in need for constant development to be more efficient and efficacious; management is an inherent and integrator part of every organized society which is an undeniable necessity to ensure and develop the coordination of efficacy and fruitfulness of today complicated institutions and organizations. Their survival, development, success, or failure is dependent to their management quality. Based on this, it can be said that the most important activity among human activities is management, because the duty of managers is to prepare and preserve an environment in which individuals can make an efficient and effective group to reach organizational objectives and have collaboration (Pardakhtchi, 1996).

The management of formal organizations has always been in need of improvement and reform due to environmental changes, dealing with human beings, optimal use of material facilities and human resources. Organizational development and management is based upon *change theory* which tries to plan, employ, supervise, and control activities in the organization as a whole according to the results of behavioral sciences, in order

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to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization, besides adjusting itself to the environment and the developments, and make a development itself in the society. During the previous decade, in order to increase the operation of schools, there have been many educational reforms. There also has been an increase in the expectations regarding the schools' performances according to the modern methods of management and administration. We have experienced movements and reforms in the field of schools' administration. Today, there is an organized set of developing projects for schools, and school management which have identified the effective factors on the improvement of school management to some extent and can be used by school administrators (Harris, 2004). The operational development of organizations in a society, and the efficient and effective operation of the organizations all together will bring about success of the macro-system ruling the society in different fields such as economical, political, and cultural. This is because the managers by creating coordination and the correct application of human and material resources control and guide the organization activities and individuals in order to achieve defined goals. Management improvement is a strategy to change the beliefs, values, activities, and organizational structure in order to adapt to the environmental conditions. We know that there is a long way for organizations to reach the ideal situation on one hand; and on the other hand, organizations do not share a same level of efficiency and effectiveness. Accordingly management improvement is a constant process which has been used and is still being used in organizations (Aghahosseini, 2002). When managers make their employees participate in decision-makings, the employees feel satisfied and having freedom, resulting in higher productivity of the organization (Wood, 2008).

According to the participatory leadership style, managers should confer and consult with their staff and assistants and apply their views and recommendations for decision-making and choice of solutions. Expressing the views by students, teachers and staff will be considered by school administrators (Mirkamali, 1999). Participatory leadership is defined as a kind of leadership which involves the staff at all levels in decision-making and implementing the decisions (Boleslaw, 2009). Participatory management is the process through which personnel and staff collaborates in various degrees of decision-making actively and really, which is done through mental, voluntary and informed involvement in order to reach the group goals which can lead to the motivation of employees and make them effort to achieve the organization's

goals , responsibility, and creativity (Sadeghifar, 2003). Participatory management means that staff should involve in various fields of planning, decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation )Kopano, 2004). Bartel defines participatory management as the participation and influencing the views of staff in decisions that affect the organization (Bartel, 2006).

Management improvement is efforts which are done to educate and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of managers. To improve the management we should consider such issues as familiarity of administrators with the management philosophy, knowledge of organizational management and change in the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral characteristics, beliefs, attitudes and dynamic values. Therefore the aim of improving the management is to make changes in the cognitive, emotional and behavioral characteristics, and increasing the skills relevant to the management and planning, decision making, problem solving, constant evaluation, participatory leadership, and changing views and attitudes (Harris, 2004). Changing and improving management methods require the participation of all staff in all matters concerning the leadership and decision-making. Teachers and staff participation in school affairs is an essential requirement. Participation is a natural human right, particularly a right for professional and mature individuals in organizational environments (Harris, 2004). This study aimed to examine the effective factors in improving management from the viewpoints of school teachers of Urmia, Iran and make recommendations on effective school management.

What today expresses the importance of paying attention to organizational and social education is the phenomenon known as 'knowledge explosion'. The important role of management in the administration of organizations and achieving their goals, causes the level of knowledge and skills in operational management is considered important for managers. So in order to increase efficiency and to improve the management performance of educational organizations, it makes sense to pay more attention to managers training. But the crucial point is not to forget that training, with all of its importance and necessity, can be useful and effective only when it is coordinated with the present and future physical, spiritual and emotional needs of each and every of staff and managers (Khoshi, 2007). One of the main goals of communities is to achieve development in all domains. The realization of development in a society requires a number of factors such as capital, technology, skilled and dedicated manpower, and efficient and effective management. These factors and their application requires the development of culture, values and such

beliefs as progressions, rationalism, freedom of thinking, tolerance, innovation, continuous effort, thrift, discipline, order, teamwork and creativity. So an efficient cultural system that seeks social growth, development and desirability can be a basis for economic, social and political development of a society. The historical experiences of the developed countries have confirmed that cultural development precedes other aspects of development. Education system is the only institution which is formally responsible for the task of educating the population on various aspects of economic, social, cultural and political. Secondary schools are especially important because of their role in preparing the manpower to enter the society and labor market, creating accountability, independence, emotional and cognitive maturity in adolescents and the institutionalization of the culture of development. Moving towards these objectives requires special attention to the educational system of high schools, relevant goals, and content of textbooks, teaching methods, and methods of assessing the educational achievements (Aghahosseini, 2002). One of the major factors in organizations is the careful consideration of the key role of school management. School administrators besides planning, organizing, controlling and evaluating of human relations and skills, need to influence the employees and create a favorable organizational climate and know the various situations and conditions of the school in order to coordinate all the forces in school, and facilitate the achievement of educational goals. Today, societies are made up of several organizations, each of which responsible for specific duties and functions. Different types of products and services are offered by various organizations. Each organization with multiple tasks or functions is specialized for fulfilling a particular function in the society. These functions are usually so complicated that are not simply done, therefore social life and the progress of any society depends upon the growth, progress, and the effective operation of the social organizations (Alagheband, 2011).

Ansaripour (2006) in a research on primary school teachers' and administrators' viewpoints on the increase of the effectiveness of school administrators has concluded that professional features, good human relations, and supervision over school personnel is effective on the improvement of school management.

Pezeshk (2005), in a research, has shown that cognitive abilities such as good human relationships, acceptance of change and innovation, targeting, and functional abilities such as the participatory decision-making, constant evaluation and staff development are effective in the improvement and efficacy of educational management.

Mohammadi (2006), in a study titled 'Evaluation of Educational Administrators of Shout City in the Dimensions of Leadership, Educational, Human, Professional, and Administrative Relationships', has observed that there is a significant difference between the views of school administrators and teachers about the performance of administrative and professional relationships.

Maddux *et al.* (1999), in a study examined school management needs, also investigated and identified the basic needs of managers and efforts required to meet those basic needs (money, respect, etc.) and concluded that a balance is required between the needs of managers, and the needs should be met.

Pane (1999), believes that factors such as strengthening the program (determination of status quo, codifying the goals, setting long-term and short-term goals, and determination of activities, qualitative management of school, participatory leadership and decision-making, constructive and creative communication, execution, and coordination) and self-assessment, and reporting of results are effective.

Yangan & Lee (2003), introduced the Success Motivation Project in northern California designed to prepare managers to find the motivation in their job in the new world of business, and considered the following factors as important to create motivation: 1- having good preparations, 2- having achievement motivation and job promotion (business advancement), 3- reduction of the needs.

Levine (2004), has done a research on the staff of the department of education with emphasis on the school as a context for growth and the school administrator's role as a developer, and believes that participation in actions such as: curriculum planning, initiatives by teachers, assessment, redesigning, service training based on deficiencies to correct performance shortcomings, career ladder or financial rewards can motivate school administrators.

Broadbridge & Parsons (2007), in a study on the factors affecting job satisfaction, and job motivation of managers concluded that the motivation of business managers are affected by different factors such as income level and suitable rewards.

Accordingly, the research hypotheses are: 1- there is a significant difference between views of school administrators' and teachers' about the effect of objective targeting on the improvement of management, 2- there is a significant difference between views of school administrators' and teachers' about the effect of participatory leadership on the improvement of management, 3- there is a significant difference between views of school administrators' and teachers' about the effect

of participatory decision-making on the improvement of management, 4- there is a significant difference between views of school administrators' and teachers' about the effect of effective communication with staff on the improvement of management, 5- there is a significant difference between views of school administrators' and teachers' about the effect of constant evaluation on the improvement of management.

## Materials and methods

The purpose of this study was to describe and analyze the views of secondary school administrators and teachers about the factors affecting management improvement. According to the objectives, the nature of the subject, studied population, time and place conditions, and the best method to use was descriptive surveying. The studied population was all the teachers and administrators employed in the high schools of Urmia city, with a total of 1200. The population in this study being composed of two groups of administrators and teachers, we used stratified sampling. 100 subjects were selected from a total of 1,200. Data gathering tool was a researcher-made questionnaire comprised of 28 questions. To determine the validity of the questionnaire, we used expert validity. To determine the reliability of the present surveying, a preliminary study was done on the population. 30 subjects were selected randomly, and the cronbach $\alpha$ for this questionnaire was 93%. For data analysis, we used descriptive and inferential (t-Test) statistics analysis.

## Results

According to Table (1) the significance level of each factor is less than 05/0. Therefore, the five hypotheses of this research are confirmed, namely there was a significant difference between the views of school administrators and teachers about the effect of objective targeting, participatory decision-making and leadership, effective communication with the staff, and constant evaluation on the improvement of management with a rate of 095/0.

$$\begin{cases} H1 : \mu1 - \mu2 = 0 \\ H1 = \mu1 \neq \mu2 \end{cases}$$

**Table 1: T-test results**

| Variables | Mean difference | T-test Significance level | df | t | Standard deviation | Mean | N | Group |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Objective targeting | 01482/0 | 047/0 | 91 | 092/0 | 72728/0 | 0920/0 | 29 | administrator |
| | | | | | 71601/0 | 1068/2 | 64 | teacher |
| Participatory leadership | 31906/0 | 013/0 | 91 | 874/1 | 69224/0 | 9023/1 | 29 | administrator |
| | | | | | 78906/0 | 2214/2 | 64 | teacher |
| Participatory decision-making | 17143/0 | 034/0 | 91 | 870/0 | 91474/0 | 1437/2 | 29 | administrator |
| | | | | | 86430/0 | 151/2 | 64 | teacher |
| Communication with staff | 08860/0 | 041/0 | 91 | 426/0 | 96773/0 | 3333/2 | 29 | administrator |
| | | | | | 91141/0 | 4219/2 | 64 | teacher |
| Constant evaluation | 07355/0 | 039/0 | 91 | 612/0 | 60811/0 | 5345/1 | 29 | administrator |
| | | | | | 50197/0 | 4609/1 | 64 | teacher |

## Discussion

There is a significant difference between the views of school administrators and teachers about the effect of objective targeting on the improvement of management, which is in line with the results of the studies by Pezeshk (2005), Mohammadi (2006), and Pane (1999).

Organizational objectives are usually presented for guiding the organization's activities towards a desired target. Organizational targeting is usually done at two levels of conceptual and operational. Organizational targeting has basic functions, one of which is to guide the organization's activities which can lead to the identification of desired outcomes. Targeting is a process through which some targets are determined for indi-

viduals, groups or organization. Accurate and scientific targeting has a crucial role in positioning the organization. Targeting is the first factor in an organization, which if not performed correctly will create problems for the organization. Objective is defined as expected outcomes (specific and measurable work) within a certain time with a certain cost. In general, objective is a goal or result of a fact. And the four elements are determined in that, namely the expected measurable result, how the job is done, and the determination of time and cost. The ultimate goal (long-term) should have a clear sense of mission and well-understood staff, and attract the interest, dedication and commitment of staff and manager. On the other hand, it has the creativity and innovation to be used in accordance with changes, and has to be a source of the terms and principles in organizational structure. Short-term objective goals are considered as aimed towards ultimate goals, guiding the staff and are measurable.

There is a significant difference between the views of school administrators and teachers about the effect of participatory leadership and decision-making on the improvement of management, which is in line with the results of the studies by Pezeshk (2005), Levine (2004), Scotch (1993), and Pane (1999).

Manpower in terms of thinking, creativity, and innovation is everything in organization, because any improvement in organization, its processes and activities are done by humans. Using the talents and abilities of staff requires the participation of all staff in the management of organization; the manager must determine and establish mechanisms to prepare the ground for staff participation in all fields. Participation from the perspective of management is among human excellent motivations. The individual who participates in various activities, uses creativity and thinking, and takes steps towards the development and prosperity of his existence, in fact is walking along the path to perfection and development, and changing his mind and putting forward new ideas; and finally, seeks organizational and social objectives in achieving individual goals.

Participatory management is the collection of workflow and operations that involves the staff and workers of an organization in decision-making processes related to that organization. This kind of management emphasizes on the participation and voluntary cooperation of the staff; it also uses their ideas and initiatives. Therefore, the basis for the process of this kind of management is based on the division of powers between the manager and the staff. Participatory management opens the way for cooperation, sympathy and empathy, and strengthens the bond between staff and organization. This type of management is one of the main fields of scientific thought in the field of management. Its meaning is beyond the authority of one or a few persons, and rejects the linear relationship from top to bottom, and seeks to involve more people in the administration of the organization. There are commenting, psychological engagement, voluntary cooperation, helping, taking responsibilities, proposing innovations, role playing in group decision-making, awareness, equality, compassion, and commitment to one's job in the concept of participation. Participation in the organization can contribute to the development of high values of humanity, enhances the quality of working life, flourishes talents and creates a suitable environment for creativity and innovation, motivates people, reduces costs and waste, creates team spirit, reduces conflicts, and eradicates the culture of isolation and retreat.

Regarding the benefit of participation in organizations, we can say participation brings about the spirit of research among staff, so that staff tries to identify organizational problems, prioritize and seek solutions for them. On one hand, participation provides a ground for improving human relationships, enhancing mutual understanding and friendship through contact and association, fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect, and resolving misunderstandings and forming friendship groups. On the other hand, it contributes to the development and enrichment of organizational jobs, and pays attention to human values and the sense of commitment and belonging to the organization.

There is a significant difference between the views of school administrators and teachers about the effect of effective communication on the improvement of management, which is in line with the results of the studies by Broad Bridge & Parsons (2007), Yangan, & Lee (2003), Alaghehband (2003), Ansaripour (2006), Pezeshk (2005), Mohammadi (2006).

Communication is a crucial factor for funding and determining the progress and success of a project. No teacher, student, parent, and senior manager can execute programs without connection. One of the most important aspects of communicating is to achieve a comprehensive agreement. Consensus between teachers, staff and parents can be considered as a process. There may be an agreement at the beginning of the program. But the reduction of agreement is possible during program execution. Therefore, there should always exist a constructive relationship between the executers and other beneficiaries, which can help immediate solving in case of any deviation.

There is a significant difference between the views of school administrators and teachers about

the effect of constant evaluation on the improvement of management, which is in line with the results of the studies by Ansaripour (2006), Pezeshk (2005), Pane (1999) and Mohammadi (1996).

The third stage in the process of management improvement is evaluation and reporting of results to the public, officials, teachers and other social groups. At this stage, a summary of the programs and projects, the results obtained, as well as a critique and a description of how the proposed program was executed, and suggestions for the upcoming events should be prepared. After each academic year, it is necessary to conduct a self-evaluation and prepare progress reports. The third step in the improvement process of management is crucial.

In general, the results of this study revealed that there is a significant difference between the views of school administrators and teachers about the effect of objective targeting, participatory leadership, participatory decision-making, effective communication with staff, and constant evaluation of management on the improvement of management. Therefore, management improvement without considering the factors mentioned, in different situations, regardless of different opinions, is impossible.

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