Comparative qualitative assessment of technical and art schools’ internal effectiveness: a case study on the schools in Dezful, Iran

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Abstract

This study is an attempt at improving the quality of schools through determining how much the internal effectiveness is, with an emphasis on quantitative indexes, in Dezful’s technical and art schools in comparison with the average internal effectiveness of Khozestan’s, the Province in which Dezful city is located, and the whole country’s schools. In this study, Frank Hikler’s comparative method which is absolute and subjective was used. Population of the study incorporated Dezful’s technical and art schools’ students. The authors investigated the grades of these schools’ current students, and also tried to get statistics of the students from 2001 to 2006. Descriptive statistics (chart, frequency distribution, percentage) and inferential statistics (independent t-test, analysis of variance and so on) were used for quantitative assessment of the internal effectiveness. A researcher-made questionnaire was also used as the data collection tool and Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient for the instrument was 0.7266. A sample of 260 students, out of 800 junior students of these schools, were selected through simple random sampling to complete the researcher-made questionnaire. Some students and managers were interviewed and also facilities of these schools were considered for the qualitative assessment of these schools’ internal effectiveness. Qualitative assessment showed that the internal effectiveness of Dezful’s schools is 0.97, of Khozestan’s schools is 1.038, and of the whole country’s schools is 0.83. The results revealed that the percent of graduated students in Dezful’s schools from 2001 to 2006 were 13.25 percent lower than the percent of the graduated students from technical and art schools of Isfahan Province, Iran, from 1991 to 1996. Furthermore, the results revealed that the quality of technical and art schools can be improved through proper planning for in-service training and through equipping the schools with modern equipments and facilities. Analysis and investigation of the internal effectiveness of technical and art schools would enable the government to plan properly and to reduce unnecessary cost, and the government thus would invest properly and the wealth of a country can’t be wasted.

Keywords: Internal effectiveness, qualitative assessment, quantitative assessment, reducing costs, Iran

Introduction

The main objective of technical and art schools is to provide the opportunities and facilities for the students, so that they get the required skills which are necessary to the factories or elsewhere these students are needed. Given the importance and necessity of the existence of high schools, where the students can learn the required skills empirically, the performance, facilities and qualities of these schools should be highly considered (Nadimi & Boroj 1994:165). Internal assessment, which is sometimes called self-assessment, self-measurement, or group reconsidering, is considered a criteria which can describe the failures or successes, solve the problems and

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encourage the improvement of the present conditions (Mohammadi et al., 2005:70). The assessment largely emphasizes the programs and plans through which the weak and strong points, the status, objectives of the educational systems are revealed; this discoveries can guarantee and improve the qualities of the educational systems and let the officials adopt useful strategies (Tion 1996, cited in MirzaMohamadi 1997). According to shekarey (2004: 97), educational assessment and investigating the educational achievement of the students are based on ideal, educational and behavioural objectives, and determine the discrepancy between the present status of the students and the ideal status. Efficacy, meaning using the sources the best, is one of the most significant objectives of any economic system. As far as educational system is concerned, efficacy is studied in two ways: internal efficacy and external efficacy. The external efficacy is the very economic output; however, the internal efficacy deals with the point that how much the use of resources would enables us to reach educational objectives. The internal efficacy mainly discusses the relation between the spent costs and the degree of learning and educational achievement (Emadzadeh 2003:323.326). The easiest way to measure the educational products is identify the number of students who passes their courses, and got the required diploma in specific field. To determine how much success is achieved in an educational institution (i.e. school), the following things can be considered: the number of students failed or passed, the ratio of students to the teachers, the ratio of the students to the educational facilities and places, etc (Woodhall:2008:348). Therefore, to achieve the objectives set for the technical and art schools, it is necessary to analyze the educational situation, human forces and the present conditions of the field focused in these schools. Furthermore, the assessment would help us to identify the weak and strong points of the educational process, so that some solutions can be provided and economic costs and the lost and weakness of the human forces is prevented.

Objectives of the research

Main objective

Effectiveness or non-effectiveness of an educational system is measured through evaluating the internal and external efficacy of that system’s performance. This study aims at improving the quality of the schools through determining how much the internal effectiveness of the schools is, focusing on the quantitative indexes of the Dezful’s technical and art schools.

Secondary objective

The secondary objectives of the study include:

1. Identification and investigation of the present conditions and educational facilities of Dezful’s technical and art schools.
2. Comparing these school’s graduates with the graduates of the Khosetan Province and the whole country, etc.
3. Investigations of what percentage of the students failed their courses or leave the school for ever.
4. Investigation of what percentage of the students, studying the same field in different schools, passed their courses.
5. An investigation of the educational staff’s idea about the quality of the schools.

Research questions

1. How much is the internal effectiveness of Dezful’s technical and art schools in comparison with the average internal effectiveness of the country ran.
2. How well are the educational facilities and equipments of the Dezful’s technical and art schools?
3. What percentage of the students of these schools did pass the specialized courses?
4. What percentage of the students did fail the specialized courses or leave the schools for ever?
5. What is the internal effectiveness of these schools in comparison with the schools of the province and the whole country?
6. How well and skillful are the human forces of the Dezful’s schools?
7. What are the principals’ and other executive staff’s idea about the educational quality of these schools?

Population of the study

Population of the study incorporated all the technical and art schools located in Dezful City: 4 boys schools and 2 girls schools. As far as the qualitative assessment is concerned, since there was a consistency between the population and objectives of the research, no sampling method was used. However, when it came to the quantitative assessment, a sample of 260 students (junior students) out of 800 students were selected through stage random sampling. These students completed the researcher-made questionnaire which tried to get some information on the educational facilities of these schools from the vantage point of the selected students. It should be noted that since there was totally 17 fields of study which were taught in these schools, the students were selected in a way that 16 students from each field of study answered the questionnaire.

Research method

This study is an applied research and descriptive-survey design was used as the research method. As far as data collection is concerned, the students’ grades and the statistics of these schools’ graduates from 2001 to 2006 were considered for the quantitative assessment, and the researcher-made questionnaire, observation and interviews with the students and educational staff were used for the qualitative assessment. Chronbach Alpha reliability coefficient for this questionnaire was 0.9. To analyze the data, following methods were used: descriptive statistics (chart, frequency and percentage), independent t-test to compare the internal effectiveness of the schools with the average internal effectiveness of the schools of the whole province and country, one-way analysis of variance to compare the number of graduates of Dezful’s schools with the number of graduates of the schools of the whole province and country, analysis of variance to compare the internal effectiveness of those schools in which the same fields are taught, chi square to analyze the students’ idea on their schools.

Results of the study

1. As far as the first question of the research is concerned, the results of the study revealed that there was a significant difference between the number of the graduates of the technical and art schools of Khozestan province and of the whole country, Iran. In the 2001-2002 academic year, this difference is the most. Furthermore, the results revealed that the internal efficacy of Dezful’s schools are 34.0 lower than the average internal efficacy of the schools of the whole province, Khozestan; the internal efficacy of Dezful’s schools are 14.0 higher than the average internal efficacy of the schools of the whole country, Iran.
2. As far as the second question of the study is concerned, the students believed that 8.28 percent of the schools’ workplace has a pleasant and satisfactory condition; just 30 percent of the schools’ facilities are satisfactory and pleasant. The results of the chi-square test indicated that considering the width and facilities of the work place, there is a significant difference between the expected frequency and the observed frequency. Furthermore, according to the executive staff of these schools, it can be concluded that the facilities of these schools are in concordance with the modern technology, so that the appropriate opportunities are provided for the students to acquire the required skills.
3. As far as the third question of the study is concerned, the results showed that the average of the students passed their specialized course is %74 and also this kind of average in fields such as general cartography and electronics is lower than other fields.
4. As far as the fourth question of the study is concerned, it can generally be concluded that from 2001 to 2006 the number of the students who passed their courses become more than the number of the students who failed or left the school forever.
5. As far as the fifth question of the study is concerned, the results showed that the internal efficacy of a school called Shahid Beheshti was the most as compared with the schools of the province in 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 academic year; the internal efficacy of Shahid Mosavi school was the most as compared with the schools of the province in 2004-2005 and 2003-2004 academic year; the internal efficacy of Hadid school was the most in 2002-2003. The internal efficacy of Imam Khomeini school was the most in 2002-2003; the internal efficacy of Narjes school was the most in 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 academic year.

6. As far as the sixth question is concerned, the results indicated that there was a lack of skilful human forces in the work places of these schools.

7. As far as the seventh question is concerned, the results revealed that from the vantage point of the principals’ and other executive staff, in-service education, providing the needed equipments, improving the quality of facilities and providing enough books could help the students to acquire the required skills.

**Conclusion and Discussion**

It can be concluded that the results of the studies like this can help the government of a country to improve its educational system. Furthermore, if the results of these studies are considered by the governments, unnecessary costs and the lost and weakness of the human forces will be prevented. According to the results of the study the following strategies can be proposed to develop the internal effectiveness of Dezful’s technical and art schools:

1. Providing appropriate in-service education programme for the students and teachers to become familiar with modern technologies and knowledge, so that the quality of teaching and learning is improved.

2. Providing skilful human forces and educating the human forces can motivate the students to get the required skills and thus the internal quality of the schools is increased.

3. Providing the facilities and equipments which are in consistency with the modern technology and knowledge.

4. Identification of the weak points of the educational affairs in all fields of study to make the students skilful.

5. Providing a beautiful, clean place which foster the students’ and teachers’ spirit and so on.

Finally the following research topics are suggested:

1. An investigation of the causes and factors which bring about obstacles for the students to acquire the skills.

2. An investigation of the external effectiveness of the technical and art schools.

3. An investigation of some strategies which help the students to find a job.

4. An investigation of the weak and strong points of the technical and art schools.

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