

Effectiveness Attributes of School Administrators in Tehran Public Middle Schools

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Abstract: The objective of this study was to examine the effectiveness attributes of school administrators in Tehran public middle schools. The methodology used in this study was practical; data collection method was survey, and data analysis was descriptive statistics. Statistical population in this study was male and female school administrators in Tehran public schools. The study sample was determined at 135 based on Krejcie and Morgan table. The study sample was selected from Tehran Educational Districts by multistage cluster sampling. The number of questionnaires distributed was 170 and the number of responses received was 130 with 76% rate of return. The validity and reliability of questionnaire was evaluated by using SPSS and LISREL software. Study hypothesis was evaluated by using descriptive and deductive statistics. The findings of this study showed that: (1) Personality traits have significant relation with school administrators' effectiveness. Personal relations, enthusiasm for change, and pragmatism were the personal traits with the highest influence on administrators' effectiveness; (2) Leadership attributes are significantly related to school administrators' effectiveness. Educational programming, focus on learning, utilizing participation by parents, students, and educational practitioners are among leadership attributes with the highest impact on administrators' effectiveness; (3) Significant differences were observed between views of educational experts, educational scholars, and middle school administrators on the effects of personal and leadership attributes on school administrators' effectiveness. Middle school administrators expressed the highest belief on the influence of personal and leadership attributes on the effectiveness of school administrators; (4) School administrators believed employee enrichment, flexibility, and objective internalization among leadership attributes that have the highest influence on school administrators' effectiveness. Similarly, they believed personal stability, occupational commitment, and persistence among personal traits that have the highest influence on school administrators' effectiveness. whereas, educational scholars considered different traits such as management consistency, group participation, research orientation, innovation, and self-management to have the high influence on the effectiveness of middle school administrators. Demographic characteristics (gender, age, management experience, and educational background) did not have significant relations with personal and leadership attributes. However, educational degree had significant relation with personal and leadership attributes that influence school administrators' effectiveness.

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Introduction

Education is main drive in social, economic, cultural, and political development. Analysis of effective factors in the growth of developed countries has shown that these countries benefited from effective educational systems. Educational systems that suffer from weak leadership and management are not responsive to their growing responsibilities.

A successful school system is dependent on the achievement of educational objectives which requires effective leadership and management. The future of education will remain in doubt if educational system fails to develop capable and progressive managers through a sustainable program.

The future of our school system and its continuous improvement require effective managers. Educational scholars, experts, and managers have focused more

attention to effective management for school system during past decade. The effectiveness of a school may be examined in many levels. But, the real effectiveness lies in progress and success of one school versus others. This could be achieved only through professional and effective leadership on the part of school administrators.

The main concern in present study was the unsatisfactory conditions in Iran middle schools which produced low levels of quantitative and qualitative growth. According to statistical report of 2008-2009 academic year, the rate of failure in the first year of high school was 22.5% which is relatively high. A review of possible causes showed that weak school management was the main reason for such huge educational drop.

Comparative TIMSS studies of 1995, 1999, 2003, and 2007 together with PIRLS studies of 2001 and 2006 plus TIMSS Advance study of 2008 on educational performance of Iran middle schools in mathematics and sciences showed lower scores compared to the international average. This set back was attributed to educational leadership and management weakness (Karimi, 2008-2009).

Strong, professional, and effective leadership in schools create an environment for learning, concentration, and teaching. Monitoring students' educational progress and high expectations of them together with continuous and effective communication with parents will lead to educational improvement and reduce educational lag (Dulon and Grousin, 2008).

The leadership role of school administrators is related to the required skills for leading school toward achieving its objectives and outlook. The required skills include information management, decision making, problem solving, objective setting, project assignment, interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, motivating, and counseling.

Educational scholars and organizations have listed different required skills and personality traits for school administrators. Mirkamali has quoted McMoray (2005) that school administrators should have independence, self-reliance, proper judgment, initiative, comprehension, predictiveness, discipline, fairness, assertiveness, and ethical adherence. World Health Organization (1994) listed self-concept, congeniality, interpersonal relationship, decision making, problem solving, innovative thinking, critical thinking, anxiety and stress control as important traits for school administrators.

Smith and Andrews (1989) believed school administrators should possess the ability to prioritize educational programs, mobilize resources to achieve school objectives, attract teacher support and cooperation, generate high expectations, monitor student progress, direct teachers toward achieving educational objectives, provide time management, evaluate class performance and feedback, plus motivate school to achieve educational objectives.

Reza'ee (2007) included subordinate training, delegation, planning, prioritization, supervision, self-management, self-improvement, participative outlook, realistic information and communication technology development, and management knowledge as required skills and traits for school administrators.

An effective manager should be disciplined, honest, truthful, knowledgeable, and capable from Islamic points of view. Furthermore, managers should be fair to subordinates, respectful to others, decisive, humble, modest, with good background, open to criticism, faithful to the worthy cause, reliant on past,

forward looking, friendly, human oriented, elucidating, and self-confident (Sobhani, 2008).

In conclusion, an effective school administrator facilitates educational processes and emphasizes on professional development of educational practitioners.

Research Objectives

The important role of educational management in the success of educational system prompted this research. The objectives were to examine the traits that influenced the effectiveness of school administrators in Tehran public middle schools in order to devise proper strategies. **This study attempts to find answers to the following questions in achieving its objectives.**

1. **Is there a significant relation between personality traits and the effectiveness of school administrators in Tehran public middle schools?**
2. **Is there a significant relation between leadership attributes and the effectiveness of school administrators in Tehran public middle schools?**
3. **Are there significant relationships between demographic characteristics of school administrators and personality and leadership attributes?**
4. **Is there significant difference between views of school administrators and educational experts about the influence of personality and leadership attributes on effectiveness of school administrators?**

Research Methodology

The methodology in this research was practical based on the research objective. Data collection method was survey. Data analysis used descriptive statistics. Statistical population in this study was male and female school administrators in Tehran public schools. The study sample was determined at 135 based on Krejcie and Morgan table. The study sample was selected from Tehran Educational Districts by multistage cluster sampling. The number of questionnaires distributed was 170 and the number of responses received was 130 with 76% rate of return. The validity and reliability of questionnaire was measured by SPSS and LISREL software. Study hypothesis was evaluated by descriptive and deductive statistics.

Research Hypotheses

This study has two primary hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: *There is significant relation between the effectiveness of school administrators in Tehran public middle schools and personality traits.*

Hypothesis 2: *There is a significant relation between the effectiveness of school administrators in Tehran public middle schools and leadership attributes.*

Tables 1 and 2 show the statistical analyses on these two hypotheses.

Table 1: Personality Traits:

Variables	Path Coefficient β	t-Statistics	Coefficient of Determination R^2
Personal Relations	0.45	6.22	0.79
Innovative Mind	0.77	9.72	0.72
Change enthusiasm	0.71	7.72	0.78
Honesty	0.71	7.21	0.71
Decisiveness	0.43	4.32	0.40
Responsiveness	0.39	5.79	0.44
Pragmatism	0.93	9.37	0.72

P < 0.01

Table 2: Leadership attributes

Variables	Path Coefficient β	t-Statistics	Coefficient of Determination R^2
Outlook Development	0.94	4.97	0.68
Participation Encouragement	0.42	3.12	0.70
Enthusiastic Environment Creation	0.86	4.25	0.67
Educational Planning	0.73	3.43	0.90
Focus on Learning	0.77	5.08	0.84
Problem and Conflict Resolution	1.08	3.59	0.47
Focused Emphasis on Student Success	0.85	4.14	0.65

P < 0.01

These two hypotheses are confirmed with 99% level of confidence. We can conclude that the effectiveness of school administrators in Tehran public middle schools is significantly related to all personality traits and leadership attributes. The personality traits that have the highest effects are personal relations, enthusiasm for change, and pragmatism ranked from the highest effect. The leadership attributes that have the highest effects are educational planning, focus on learning, and taking advantage of participation by practitioners, parents, and students ranked from the highest effect.

Table 3: Ranking of Personality Traits and Leadership Attributes

Rank	Personality Traits	Rank	Leadership Attributes
1	Personal Relation	1	Educational Planning
2	Enthusiasm for Change	2	Focused Emphasis on Learning
3	Pragmatism	3	Taking Advantage of Participation by Practitioners, Parents, and Students

Research Findings

The findings of this research show that personality traits have significant relation with the effectiveness of school administrators. Personal relations, enthusiasm for change, and pragmatism were among personal traits with the highest influence on administrators' effectiveness.

Leadership attributes are significantly related to effectiveness of school administrators. Educational programming, focus on learning, utilizing participation by parents, students, and educational practitioners are among the leadership attributes with the highest impact.

Demographic characteristics of the study subjects including gender, age, management experience, and educational background had no significant relation with personal and leadership attributes. However, educational degree had significant relation with personal and leadership attributes that influence school administrators' effectiveness.

Significant differences were observed between views expressed by educational experts, educational scholars, and middle school administrators on the influence of personal and leadership attributes on the effectiveness of school administrators. Middle school administrators expressed the highest belief on the influence of personal and leadership attributes on the effectiveness of school administrators.

School administrators believed employee enrichment, flexibility, and objective internalization among leadership attributes that have the highest influence on the effective of school administrators. Similarly, they believed personal stability, occupational commitment, and persistence among personal traits that have the highest influence on the effective of school administrators. Meanwhile, educational scholars considered different traits such as management consistency, group participation, research orientation, innovation, and self-management to have the high influence on the effectiveness of middle school administrators.

Conclusion

Findings of this study showed that personal relations, enthusiasm for change, and pragmatism are among personal traits that have the highest influence on middle school administrators' effectiveness. Similarly, educational planning, focus on learning, and encouraging participation by parents, students, and educational practitioners are among leadership attributes that have the highest influence on the effectiveness of middle school administrators.

Recommendations

1. Conduct interviews and administer personality tests in order to differentiate between extroverts, pragmatism, and those with strong interpersonal relationships for school administration (importance of interpersonal relationships and pragmatism in effectiveness)
2. Pay attention and emphasize on on-the-job trainings for school administrators (importance of enthusiasm for change in effectiveness)
3. Motivate the school administrators to seek additional training, utilize current sciences and technologies, and welcome educational change (importance of enthusiasm for change in effectiveness)
4. Perform needs analysis and evaluation of educational priorities of school administrators periodically (importance of change in effectiveness)
5. Pay attention and emphasize on quality of education to promote quality orientation instead of quantity orientation (importance of concentration on learning)
6. Attract financial and human resources for better school administration (Importance of better resources on effectiveness).
7. Utilize student and teacher creativity and innovative ideas (importance of innovative thinking on effectiveness).
8. Select individuals with Master's or higher educational degrees for school administrators (relationship between educational degree and effectiveness).

The following educational programs are recommended for school administrators according to the order of importance:

1. Educational leadership and supervision
2. Educational and learning psychology
3. Personality psychology
4. Self-management and self-understanding
5. Educational planning principles
6. Interpersonal relations and organizational behavior management
7. Change management
8. Participative management

Effective managers emphasize on the professional development of educational practitioners in addition to facilitating education and learning processes. School administrators need to have higher levels of scientific knowledge in order to provide effective leadership. An effective school administrator is capable to manage school's limited resources

effectively and provide better solution for possible problems.

Therefore, the educational system should pay more attention in selection of school administrators by considering personality and leadership attributes that influence effective school administrators. Adaptation of such policy shall lead to a more productive educational system.

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