

**Research Article**

## **INVESTIGATING THE FACTORS AFFECTING THE PRINCIPALS' PERFORMANCE AT SCHOOLS OF MASJED SOLEYMAN CITY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims at investigating the factors affecting the principals' performance at elementary, secondary and high schools of Masjed Soleyman city. The statistical population consists of all principals at elementary, secondary and high schools of Masjed Soleyman city. The total statistical population is selected from 61 principals and deputies as the samples. A 25-item questionnaire is prepared to assess the factors affecting the principals' performance and their validity is obtained through the content validity; the reliability is measured equal to 99% according to Cronbach's alpha method and this is a high percentage. The research data is utilized according to the descriptive statistical methods including the measures of central tendency, dispersion and distribution according to the inferential statistics of SPSS.

The research results based on its hypotheses are as follows:

- 1- There is a correlation between the principals' performance and managerial skill and knowledge.
- 2- There is a correlation between the principals' performance and level of understanding the role.
- 3- There is a correlation between the principals' performance and the utilization of organizational support.
- 4- There is a correlation between the principals' performance and the rate of evaluating them.
- 5- There is a correlation between the principals' performance and the environmental suitability.
- 6- There is a correlation between the principals' performance and their motivation.
- 7- There is a correlation between the principals' performance and the quality of their working life.
- 8- There is a correlation between the principals' performance and legality of their measures.

**Keywords:** *Investigating, Factors Affecting, Principals' Performance*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The management and art of managing the large and small human groups in recent fifty years has become one of the most important specialized fields of humanities, and numerous educational institutions have been established and developed for training different managers in various educational degrees. Nowadays, the management is taken into special account, so that the art of management is considered as a major index in contemporary civilization (Allameh, 1993).

The management refers to the manager's performance in the field of executive affairs in institute as well as the employees and teachers' viewpoints in this regard and the other factors affecting the management utility. Therefore, the management is a very important and decisive issue in department of education and none of the educational system can usually reach their objectives without competent and experienced managers.

Therefore, the individual characteristics, skills and abilities, which are essential for their success in their tasks, should be taken into serious account by authorities in selecting the school principals. Achieving the optimal performance of management requires the acquisition and employment of principals who make the optimum use of all material facilities and human resources within and outside the organization (Piotrowski, 1989).

There are special models and structures in any educational system and they can specifically determine the education managers' performance. Despite the fact that the factors can be determined in the field of correlation between the factors and the principals' performance, these uncertainties can be identified as the major sources in determining the issue.

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Atkinson's research indicates that the performance is the outcome of motivation and ability. According to this viewpoint, a person may have the ability and desire to do his tasks as well as a good understanding of what needs to be done and how to do it, but it may not have the factors introduced by Hersi and Goldsmith's ACHIEVE model, and thus cannot be the effective assistance in improving the principals' performance (Feigenbaum, 1987).

In supervising and guiding the teaching staff, the principals should have the influence and leadership ability, consult with teaching staff about setting the work schedules, determining the implementation of tests and examinations, and also conduct the timely and fair evaluation of teaching staff [40].

Crockett *et al.*, (1961) have found that the workers' changes in emotional state have no impact on their performance conditioning that the necessary performance has a stereotyped nature and requires no attention or thinking, but it needs high attention in the case of technical change with a few stereotyped job tasks. The job performance is influenced by individual emotional states. Kase's test sufficiently predicted this issue; furthermore, a recent research by Greene and Badin (1974) confirms this prediction. Shakter *et al.*, (1961) have found that the changes in workers' emotional states have no impact on their performance. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, the way of satisfying that class can have a huge impact on the individual performance (Shirazi, 1997).

For maximum effectiveness in evaluating and resolving the performance issues, the principals need to determine the causes of issues. ACHIEVE model by Hersi and Goldsmith is developed to help the managers determine the cause of performance problems and create the strategies of change to solve these problems (Kabiri, 1992). Hersi and Goldsmith have considered two main objectives in developing a model for human performance analysis. They paid attention to key factors which can affect the employees or managers' performance and provided these factors in a way that the employed managers are able to utilize and remember them. The performance depends on the ability, knowledge, and expertise, understanding the role, assistance, evaluation, validation, and environment.

Hersi and Goldsmith selected seven variables associated to managers' performance from the rest of factor (Kabiri, 1992).

- 1- Transparency (understanding or image of role)
- 2- Assistance (organizational support)
- 3- Motivation (stimulation or desire)
- 4- Evaluation (training and performance feedback)
- 5- Validity
- 6- Environment (environmental conditions)
- 7- Ability (knowledge, skills, expertise)

It should be noted that the people are not a set of capabilities. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses. The key implementation of job (Rezaeian, 1993), refers to the job knowledge (formal and informal training) which successfully facilitates the completion of a specific task.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Research Objectives**

The main objective of this research is to identify the factors affecting the elementary, secondary and high school principals' performance in Masjed Soleyman City. Following this objective, the specific objectives below are also taken into consideration.

- 1- Investigating the correlation between principals' performance and managerial skill and knowledge;
- 2- Investigating the correlation between principals' performance and level of understanding the role;
- 3- Investigating the correlation between principals' performance and the utilization of organizational support;
- 4- Investigating the correlation between principals' performance and the rate of evaluating them;
- 5- Investigating the correlation between principals' performance and the environmental suitability;
- 6- Investigating the correlation between principals' performance and their motivation;
- 7- Investigating the correlation between principals' performance and the quality of their working life;

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8- Investigating the correlation between principals' performance and legality of their measures.

#### **Research Hypotheses**

Main research questions: What are the factors affecting the principals' performance?

- 1- There is a correlation between the principals' performance and managerial skill and knowledge.
- 2- There is a correlation between the principals' performance and level of understanding the role.
- 3- There is a correlation between the principals' performance and utilization of organizational support.
- 4- There is a correlation between the principals' performance and the rate of evaluating them.
- 5- There is a correlation between the principals' performance and the environmental suitability.
- 6- There is a correlation between the principals' performance and their motivation.
- 7- There is a correlation between the principals' performance and the quality of their working life.
- 8- There is a correlation between the principals' performance and legality of their measures.

The statistical population of this study consists of all male and female principals and their deputies at day and state male and female elementary, secondary and high schools in Masjed Soleyman City. According to the statistics of Department of Education in Khuzestan Province, Masjed Soleyman City during the school year of 2005-2006 and based on the total number of high school institutes, the total number of employed male and female principals and deputies has been equal to 61 in Masjed Soleyman City.

Therefore, the statistical population of this research consists of 61 male and female principals working at state and day male and female schools. Since the whole number of studied population was available, thus the total number of population members is investigated as the sample.

Measurement tools (data collection method)

The researcher-made questionnaire is utilized to collect the principals' views on the factors affecting the managerial performance and the deputies' views about the principals' performance. The questions of each component are set according to the reliable scientific sources associated with the principals' tasks and based on the advisor and supervisor professors' guidance after determining different components of performance.

Skill and knowledge process: Questions 1-2-3-4-5

Understanding process: Questions 6-25

Organizational support process: Questions 8-9

Process of evaluating the principals: Questions 10-13-14-15

Environmental suitability process: Questions 7-21-23-16

Motivation process: Questions 11-12

Quality of their working life process: Questions 18-19-20

Process of legality of principals' measures: Questions 17-24-22

#### **Validity of Questionnaire**

To estimate the content validity of research tool, a group of experts' views on the researcher-made questionnaire indicate that this 25-question questionnaire has a relatively proper content validity.

#### **Reliability of Questionnaire**

To determine the reliability of questionnaire, this questionnaire is implemented on 20 principals. The internal consistency coefficient among the questions is obtained equal to 99% which is perfect.

#### **Data Analysis Method**

In this regard, we have utilized the descriptive statistics method including the diagram- frequency percentage- and mean as well as the inferential statistics including the statistical indices and percentage according to SPSS software. The data is analyzed and described using descriptive statistics such as the frequency, percentage and column chart, and the questions are analyzed at the inferential statistics level through Chi-square method.

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**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Results**

**Table 1: Summary of indices associated with the principals' managerial skill and knowledge component**

	Total	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Managerial skill and knowledge	61	4.7213	55170	3.00	5.00

**Data Analysis**

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant correlation between the principals' performance and managerial skill and knowledge.

**Table 2: Summary of Chi-square test**

	Values
Chi-square	54.033
Degree of freedom	2
Significance level	0.000

As shown in Table 2, the result of chi-square (33-54) indicate that there is a significant correlation between the principals' performance and managerial skill and knowledge at the confidence level of 99%, thus there is enough evidence for approving the first hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant correlation between the principals' performance and level of understanding the role.

**Table 3: Statistical indices associated with the level of understanding the role**

	Total	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Level of understanding	61	4.6230	63676	3.00	5.00

**Table 4: Summary of Chi-square test**

	Level of understanding
Chi-square	39.475
Degree of freedom	2
Significance level	0.000

The result of chi-square test (39.475) in Table 4 indicates that there is a significant correlation between the principals' performance and level of understanding the role at the confidence level of 99%, thus there is enough evidence for approving the second hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant correlation between the principals' performance and the utilization of organizational support.

**Table 5: Summary of statistical indices associated with the of the utilization of organizational support**

	Total	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Organizational support	61	4.0820	89991	1.00	5.00

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**Table 6: Summary of Chi-square test**

	<b>Organizational support</b>
Chi-square	48.918
Degree of freedom	4
Significance level	0.000

The result of chi-square test (48.918) indicates that there is a significant correlation between the principals' performance and the utilization of organizational support at the confidence level of 99%, thus there is enough evidence for approving the third hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4: There is a significant correlation between the principals' performance and the rate of evaluating them.

**Table 7: Summary of statistical indices associated with the evaluation component**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
Evaluation	61	4.0984	81045	1.00	5.00

**Table 8: Summary of Chi-square test**

	<b>Evaluation</b>
Chi-square	57.934
Degree of freedom	4
Significance level	0.000

The result of chi-square test (57.934) in Table 4 indicates that there is a significant correlation between the principals' p principals' performance and the rate of evaluating them at the confidence level of 99%, thus there is enough evidence for approving the fourth hypothesis.

Hypothesis 5: There is a significant correlation between the principals' performance and the environmental suitability.

**Table 9: Summary of statistical indices associated with environmental suitability component**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
Environmental suitability	61	4.2951	69148	1.00	5.00

**Table 10: Summary of Chi-square test**

	<b>Environmental suitability</b>
Chi-square	54.344
Degree of freedom	3
Significance level	0.000

The result of chi-square test (54.344) indicates that there is a significant correlation between the principals' performance and the environmental suitability at the confidence level of 99%, thus there is enough evidence for approving the fifth hypothesis.

Hypothesis 6: There is a significant correlation between the principals' performance and their motivation.

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**Table 11: Summary of statistical indices associated with the motivation component**

	Total	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Motivation	61	3.8852	93271	1.00	5.00

**Table 12: Summary of Chi-square test**

	Motivation
Chi-square	38.590
Degree of freedom	4
Significance level	0.000

The result of chi-square test (38.590) indicates that there is a significant correlation between the principals' performance and their motivation at the confidence level of 99%, thus there is enough evidence for approving the sixth hypothesis.

Hypothesis 7: There is a significant correlation between the principals' performance and the quality of their working life.

**Table 13: Summary of statistical indices associated with the quality of working life**

	Total	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Quality of working life	61	4.4262	74070	1.00	5.00

**Table 14: Summary of Chi-square test**

	Quality of working life
Chi-square	47.787
Degree of freedom	3
Significance level	0.000

The result of chi-square test (47.787) indicates that there is a significant correlation between the principals' performance and quality of working life at the confidence level of 99%, thus there is enough evidence for approving the seventh hypothesis.

Hypothesis 8: There is a significant correlation between the principals' performance and legality of their measures.

**Table 15: Summary of statistical indices associated with the legality of principals' measures**

	Total	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Legality of measures	61	4.1311	84608	1.00	5.00

**Table 16: Summary of Chi-square test**

	Legality of principals' measures
Chi-square	23.918
Degree of freedom	3
Significance level	0.000

The result of chi-square test (23.918) indicates that there is a significant correlation between the principals' performance and legality of their measures at the confidence level of 99%, thus there is enough evidence for approving the eighth hypothesis.

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### **Discussion**

There is a correlation between the principals' performance and managerial skill and knowledge. This result is consistent with the findings by Saeed Amou-Zeydi and Hossein-Ali Rastegari. In other words, there is a significant positive correlation between the level of principals' managerial knowledge and skills. A research, entitled as "Investigating some of the factors affecting the principals' performance at high schools of new education system in Tehran", was conducted by Fatemeh Shirzadi in 1997 and it was the master's thesis of public management center on 19 districts of Tehran and thus 45 principals were randomly selected. The questionnaire was the data collection tool which utilized the variables, namely, the age, educational level, field of study, educational background, and management experience, by focusing on managers and their efficiency.

After data analysis through chi-square test and Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, the researcher came to the following conclusions:

- There is a positive correlation between the principals' educational levels and their performance and thus their performance is enhanced by increasing their high educational levels.

- In terms of correlation between the principals' field of study and their performance, it is concluded that there is a significant difference between the humanities and basic sciences with their performance. There is a significant correlation between the principals' management experience and their performance. Therefore, the management experience increasingly affects the principals' performance.

- This research, entitled as "Investigating some of the factors affecting the principals' performance at high schools of new education system in Tehran" is conducted in the field of Public Administration Training Centre Management in 1997.

- There is a correlation between the principals' performance and the utilization of organizational support. In other words, there is a positive and significant correlation between the utilization of organizational support and principals' performance. This result is consistent with the finding of research by Fereshteh Emamjome. Thus, this research confirms the positive and significant relationship between the principals' performance and organizational support.

- In another study, Entitled as "Investigating the relationship between principals' human skills and their performance from the perspective of high school teachers in Dorud City", and conducted by Mohammad Yarahmadi at Allameh Tabatabaei University in 1998, the researcher followed such this purpose. The school principals, more than any other managers, have close relationship with teachers, students, their parents and other people in society in order to fulfill the objectives of education. Establishing these relationships is so important, thus the principals' performance depends on them. Despite the fact that there is a need for human skills in all human relations, the need for training organizations and schools has not been understood well.

Therefore, it is essential to identify the relationship between the human skills and performance; the difference between trained and untrained principals' skills; and the statistical population of research. 105 teachers at high schools of Dorud city are randomly selected as the statistical samples.

A 15-item questionnaire is the collection tool and utilizes the 5-point Likert scale. The obtained results are as follows:

At the level of inferential statistics, Pearson correlation coefficient and correlation significance test and also t-test are utilized for comparing the independent mean. The results of this study generally confirm the correlation between the principals' human skills and their performance and it is found that there is a significant difference between inefficient and efficient principals in terms of all components of human skills.

- There is a correlation between the principals' performance and the rate of evaluating them.

This result is consistent with the finding obtained of research literature by Saeed Amou-Zeydi and Fereshteh Emamjome (Safi, 1997).

In other words, there is a correlation between the principals' performance and the rate of evaluating them.

- There is a correlation between the principals' performance and their motivation.

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This result is consistent with the findings of research literature by Abbas Sayadpour, Ali Mohammadi, Hossein Mohammadi, Hossein-Ali Rastegari, and Murray Ainsworth and Nevile Smith. In other words, there is a significant positive correlation between the principals' performance and their motivation.

- There is a correlation between the principals' performance and the environmental suitability.

The obtained result is consistent with the findings of research literature by Amou-Zeydi and Hossein-Ali Rastegari; in other words, there is a significant positive correlation between the principals' performance and the environmental suitability.

The research findings cover a wide range of results and can be generalized to studied population and other communities which are culturally, socially and economically close to this statistical population.

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