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Studying the Educational Needs of Alborz Elementary School Principals based on the Professional Competencies

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Research Paper

Abstract

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Purpose: Investigating the educational needs of different groups always helps to better understand the current situation and to have a good perspective on the future. Therefore, the purpose of this research was studying the educational needs of elementary school principals based on the professional competencies.

Methodology: This research in terms of purpose was applied and in terms of purpose implementation method was descriptive from type of survey. The research population was public elementary school principals of Alborz province with number 584 people (381 women and 203 men) in the 2017-18 academic years. The research sample was 231 managers who were selected by multi-stage cluster sampling method. The research tool was educational needs of principals based on professional competencies with 89 items that designed by the present study researchers. For data analysis were used from exploratory factor analysis and chi-square test in SPSS-19 software.

Findings: The findings showed that for the educational needs of elementary school principals based on the professional competencies were identified 8 factors of management expertise, knowledge of teacher skills, perceptive-human skills, artistic skills, moral-social skills, technical skills, motivational skills and knowledge of physical space standards of schools and the factor loading of all items was higher than 0.40. Also, the factor load of all factors was higher than 0.50, the average variance extracted of all factors was higher than 0.60, and the reliability of all factors with using Cronbach's alpha and combined methods was higher than 0.80, and the reliability of the whole tool with using Cronbach's alpha method was estimated 0.91. In addition, according to the elementary school principals there was a significant difference between the amount of observed value and the amount of expected value in all 8 identified needs (management expertise, knowledge of teacher skills, perceptive-human skills, artistic skills, moral-social skills, technical skills, motivational skills and knowledge of physical space standards of schools) ($P < 0.05$). In the other words, according to most of the principals of elementary schools all 8 needs were very important needs.

Conclusion: According to the results of this study, education managers and officials in order to improve the professional competence of managers should provide the context for improving each of the eight needs of management expertise, knowledge of teacher skills, perceptive-human skills, artistic skills, moral-social skills, technical skills, motivational skills and knowledge of physical space standards of schools through educational workshops and in-service courses.



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Detailed abstract

Purpose: Today's managers are dealing with a changing and transformed world, and in order to face it, accept and understand risks, prepare for the future, increase commitment and accountability, and recognize and apply modern management knowledge need to update their professional skills and competencies. Based on the changes and transformations in the societies, if managers can perform their duties successfully and bring the organization to the desired goals, which they have the right conditions, position and platform for activity and have the right competencies. Managers are responsible for managing the organization and ensuring its success or failure, and what they do directly or indirectly impact the performance of the organization and society. Therefore, not paying attention to their professional competencies including expertise, experience, efficiency, interest and ability causes inappropriate decisions, actions and behaviors. Professional competence is a set of knowledge, attitude and skill competences that are appropriate for any job or profession and are determined by the individual in educational and experimental processes in educational, professional or business environments and become professional behavior. Also, professional competencies are abilities and capacities which people based on can play a role within the framework of intra-organizational and extra-organizational constraints and perform their work duties in an optimal way. The education and improvement of human resources is a continuous and planned effort to improve knowledge, skills, attitude and appropriate behavior to increase the capabilities of employees and improve their performance and professional competencies level. Paying attention to educating and improving human resources has a special place and despite the increase investment and increasing attention to this area, there is some doubt among the investors of organizations about the effectiveness of educating programs and their desire to increase educating investment, and it seems that educational needs assessment in this field can be successful. Because educational needs assessment is a method to coordinate skills and improve them. The study of educational needs is an organized and legal process to identify the type of information provided to employees with the aim of improving and elevating knowledge, awareness, abilities, skills, tendencies and attitudes in the educational environment. Educational needs investigate helps practitioners and planners to identify educational goals with two basic questions. Who needs educating? What kind of educating do people in need of educating need? Therefore, recognizing educational needs can help to improve competencies and job performance. Educational needs assessment or educational needs investigate can be a useful tool in various aspects of educational planning such as design, implementation and evaluation to be used by managers. Therefore, determining educational needs is the first, most important and fundamental step in educational planning, which is done based on appropriate and accurate patterns and techniques led to increases its effectiveness and efficiency in the organization. Educational needs indicate the desired changes that must be made in people in terms of knowledge, attitude, skills and behavior so that they can perform their duties and responsibilities in an acceptable, desirable and compliant manner and provide the basis for the growth and excellence of themselves and the organization. Every organization needs trained and expert employees to carry out its missions and realize its goals and visions, and organizations in this field are more successful if they consider educating as an investment and design and implement their educating based on the study of educational needs. Investigating the educational needs of different groups always helps to better understand the current situation and to have a good perspective on the future. Therefore, the purpose of this research was studying the educational needs of elementary school principals based on the professional competencies.

Methodology: This research in terms of purpose was applied and in terms of purpose implementation method was descriptive from type of survey. The research population was public elementary school principals of Alborz province with number 584 people (381 women and 203 men) in the 2017-18 academic years. The research sample was 231 managers who were selected by multi -stage cluster sampling method. In the multi-stage cluster sampling

method, first 3 departments randomly were selected from among all education departments in the Alborz province, and then among each department school of some regions randomly were selected and all the principals of their public elementary schools responded to the research tools. The research tool was educational needs of principals based on professional competencies with 89 items that designed by the present study researchers. This tool had 8 factors or components of management expertise, knowledge of teacher skills, perceptive-human skills, artistic skills, moral-social skills, technical skills, motivational skills and knowledge of physical space standards of schools which to respond to each of its items was used from the spectrum a five-point Likert scale of I completely disagree with score one, I disagree with score two, I have no opinion with score three, I agree with score four, and I completely agree with score five. The face validity of the questionnaire of educational needs of principals based on professional competencies was confirmed by the opinion of experts and its total reliability was calculated with using Cronbach's alpha method 0.91. For data analysis of questionnaire of educational needs of principals based on professional competencies were used from exploratory factor analysis and chi-square test in SPSS version 19 software at a significant level of 0.05.

Findings: The findings showed that for the educational needs of elementary school principals based on the professional competencies were identified 8 factors of management expertise, knowledge of teacher skills, perceptive-human skills, artistic skills, moral-social skills, technical skills, motivational skills and knowledge of physical space standards of schools and the factor loading of all items was higher than 0.40. Also, the factor load of all factors was higher than 0.50, the average variance extracted of all factors was higher than 0.60, and the reliability of all factors with using Cronbach's alpha and combined methods was higher than 0.80, and the reliability of the whole tool with using Cronbach's alpha method was estimated 0.91. In addition, according to the elementary school principals there was a significant difference between the amount of observed value and the amount of expected value in all 8 identified needs (management expertise, knowledge of teacher skills, perceptive-human skills, artistic skills, moral-social skills, technical skills, motivational skills and knowledge of physical space standards of schools) ($P < 0.05$). In the other words, according to most of the principals of elementary schools all 8 needs were very important needs.

Conclusion: According to the results of this study, education managers and officials in order to improve the professional competence of managers should provide the context for improving each of the eight needs of management expertise, knowledge of teacher skills, perceptive-human skills, artistic skills, moral-social skills, technical skills, motivational skills and knowledge of physical space standards of schools through educational workshops and in-service courses.