

## Assessing Teachers' Curriculum Literacy of Elementary Schools in Kermanshah City

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**ABSTRACT:** The purpose of this study was to assess the curriculum literacy of elementary school teachers. Literacy of curriculum in this study consists of educational needs components, learning objectives, teaching methods, curriculum concepts and educational evaluation. The method of study was descriptive and population consists of the masters of primary schools of Kermanshah city. Population consisted of 811 masters in primary schools. Population was selected by a simple random cluster sampling and based on Morgan's table 260 people were selected. In this study the researcher made questionnaire tool (containing 20 4-options questions) was used. Data in two descriptive (frequency tables, frequency percentage, diagrams, mode and standard deviation) and inferential (T test and Analysis of variance) levels by SPSS Software were analyzed. Most important findings is that, because there is no significant difference between the theoretical mean (10.5) and the experimental mean (10.496) of respondents in literacy of curriculum in primary school, so it can be said that the knowledge of maters from curriculum is moderate. Highest mean of scores is for teachers with field of primary education and BA and history of 15 to 20 years and minimum of them are related to teachers, with a degree in disciplines not relevant to Educational Sciences and history of education aged 25 to 30 years.

**Key words:** Literacy Assessment, Curriculum, Elementary Teachers

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### INTRODUCTION

In structure of Iran's education in 1871, elementary schools have been announced as the first phase of public education. Primary school is a course of education, which is general, public and compulsory and hence is called with different names (primary education), (compulsory Education), (general Education) and (public Education). It is concluded that education in this course should employ the students' general talents through direct experience in a natural known environment. In other words, in primary schools students' general potential talents are discovered and become the verb through regular activities which is planned for children (Nadimi et al., 2000).

Depending on the importance of education in this course that in most or all of the education system in the world, including Iran, providing individuals' right for public education and create the conditions required for all children in compulsory education is considered as the basic goals of public education and generalization of public education and enjoyment of the blessings of education is emphasized (Safi, 2005). Educational systems in the transition of quantitative issues and generalizing education are forced to pay attention to the quality of the educational process and promotion of quality education while considering the resources and equipment through the most important factor in an educational system namely (teacher) have been considered and targeted (Sharma, 2001).

Therefore, the most common goals in educating teachers include: professionalizing (focus on teachers with no quality or low quality) capacity building of teachers (Teachers preparation for assuming the new

responsibilities or facing with curriculum changes) to keep update teachers and its knowledge of teaching ability proportional to new teaching methods and conditions (Haberman, 2004).

Schwab (1982) considers teacher as the main member of curriculum decision-making groups and says the first answer to the question who is the main member of curriculum decision-making groups, is teacher. The first cause is that the teacher is besides students at best time, the second, teacher is the only personality who can provides appropriate information about how students learning (Mehr Mohamadi, 2004), hence Curriculum is so important in the education organization.

Thus, curriculum planning and its principles has special place in the education organization. Arnshtain and Hankinz (1997) speculate that principles of curriculum identifies the limits of the outer boundaries of the curriculum and determines which valid information source from which theories, principles and ideas acceptable are relevant to the curriculum. Decision about elements of curriculum course within a coherent theoretical foundation is organized and forms a viewpoint of the curriculum.

In this study, we sought to investigate this issue, the literacy rate of male teachers in the elementary school of Kermanshah city from different aspects of curriculum including assessment, different levels of educational objectives, concepts of the curriculum, evaluation methods and teaching ways, therefore, in this study we are facing the question how much the man teachers' literacy rate of the Kermanshah city primary school from curriculum. Abyar (2006) in the research entitled factors affecting the efficiency of the

teachers in teaching in perspectives of Ilam school administrators and teachers concluded that there is a significant relationship among factors such as in-service training, job satisfaction, education, appropriate environment of work, welfare services, appropriate teaching methods and teachers' evaluation and efficiency this means that these factors have a positive effect on the efficiency of the teachers. Sami'ei (1976) in the research examined Tehran high school teachers' knowledge of teaching methods and concluded that work experience is one of the affecting factors on teachers' knowledge of the teaching methods and also increase work experience, education level and participating in short times training leads to increase the teachers' awareness of the teaching methods. Jon Daei Zadeh (2006) conducted a study of secondary school teachers' knowledge of curriculum and learning principals in Mazandaran city that looked at the effect of this was that: Most teachers' awareness of the principles of curriculum and learning principles is moderate. According to the studies mentioned above, this study aims to assess Kermanshah city's elementary schools male teacher's curriculum literacy curriculum. To achieve to the purpose, the following questions were answered during research:

1. Are primary school teachers of Kermanshah city aware of the need for educational needs?
2. Are primary school teachers of Kermanshah city aware of the different levels of learning objectives?
3. Are primary school teachers of Kermanshah city aware of the concepts in the curriculum?
4. Are primary school teachers of Kermanshah city aware of the various methods of evaluation?
5. Are primary school teachers of Kermanshah city aware of the various methods of teaching?

#### Methods of the study performance

Given the purpose and fundamental questions posed in this study, research method was descriptive during which the level of teachers' literacy of curriculum and its analysis have been addressed.

The study population included all male teachers (n = 811) employed in elementary schools \ in Kermanshah city in academic years 89-90. Sampling method is that there were 216, 322 and 273 teachers in areas 1, 2 and 3, respectively. One of the areas were selected randomly and according to Morgan table about 260 teachers were selected as sample size. In this study for data gathering test tool was used as follows: The test consists of 20 researcher made questions that with regard to specific research questions and based on the topics of curriculum has been developed and its formal and content validity have been approved by professionals and test validity using Cronbach's Alpha 0.89 that was available to all participants and after the answering were collected.

To analysis research data two statistical methods of descriptive and inferential statistics were used. In descriptive analysis using statistical characteristics such as: frequency, percentage of frequency, means, mode, standard deviation and chart was analyzed. In inferential analysis also t test and variance analysis were used.

## RESULTS

**Question 1:** Are primary school teachers of Kermanshah city aware of the need for educational needs?

The results showed that the mean score of respondents for indices of need assessment (1.457) with respect to it is lower than the theoretical mean (2.5), and there is a significant difference between respondents' theatrical mean and empirical mean about needs assessment and with regard to the negative sign of value t, empirical mean earned significantly is lower than the theoretical mean so we can say male primary school teachers in the city of Kermanshah have low awareness of needs assessment in curriculum.

**Table 1.** Result of single sample T test for assessing different of theoretical and empirical averages of educational needs questions

Items	Theoretical mean = 2.5			
	Amount t	Degrees of freedom	Sig	Difference
Needs assessment	18.821	259	0.000	1.0423

Experimental mean = 1.457

**Question 2:** Are primary school teachers of Kermanshah city aware of the different levels of learning objectives?

The results showed that there is a significant difference between respondents' theatrical mean (2.5) and empirical mean (1.546) about questions of different levels of educational objectives and with regard to the negative sign of value t, empirical mean earned significantly is lower than the theoretical mean so we can say male primary school teachers in the city of Kermanshah have low awareness of different levels of educational objectives in curriculum.

**Table 2.** Result of single sample T test for assessing different of averages in questions of educational objectives

Items	Theoretical mean = 2.5			
	Amount t	Degrees of freedom	Sig	Difference
Educational Goals	-17.144	259	0.000	-0.9538

Experimental mean = 1.546

**Question 3:** Are primary school teachers of Kermanshah city aware of the concepts in the curriculum?

The results showed that respondents' average earned (1.761) of indices of curriculum concepts with regard to that is lower theoretical mean (2.5), there is a significant difference between respondents' theoretical mean and empirical mean about questions of curriculum concepts and with regard to the negative sign of value t, empirical mean earned significantly is lower than the theoretical mean so we can say male primary school teachers in the city of Kermanshah have low awareness of curriculum concepts in curriculum.

**Table 3.** Result of single sample T test for assessing different of averages in questions of curriculum concepts

	Theoretical mean = 2.5			
	Amount t	Degrees of freedom	Sig	Difference
Educational Goals	11.636	259	0.000	0.738

Experimental mean = 1.761

**Question 4:** Are primary school teachers of Kermanshah city aware of the various methods of evaluation?

The results showed that there is a significant difference between respondents' theoretical mean (2.92) and empirical mean (2.5) about questions of teaching methods and with regard to the positive value of t of empirical mean earned significantly is lower than the theoretical mean so we can say male primary school teachers in the city of Kermanshah have moderate and higher than moderate awareness of teaching methods, thus about this indices teachers have higher than moderate of awareness.

**Table 4.** Result of single sample T test for assessing different of averages in questions of teaching methods

	Theoretical mean = 2.5			
	Amount t	Degrees of freedom	Sig	Difference
Educational Goals	4.486	259	0.000	0.303

Experimental mean = 2.80

**Question 5:** Are primary school teachers of Kermanshah city aware of the various methods of teaching?

The results showed that respondents' average earned (2.92) of indices of evaluation methods with regard to that is lower theoretical mean (2.5), there is a significant difference between respondents' theoretical mean and empirical mean about questions of evaluation methods and with regard to the positive value of empirical mean t earned significantly is higher than the theoretical mean so we can say male primary

school teachers in the city of Kermanshah have moderate and higher than moderate awareness of evaluation methods in curriculum.

**Table 5.** Result of single sample T test for assessing different of averages in questions of evaluation methods

	Theoretical mean = 2.5			
	Amount t	Degrees of freedom	Sig	Difference
Educational Goals	6.256	259	0.000	0.426

Experimental mean = 2.92

**Description of teachers' planning literacy**

The information in Table 6 indicates that there is no significant difference between the theoretical mean (10.5) and experimental mean (10.496) of respondents about planning literacy, 46.2% of respondents have achieved scores below average of planning literacy. According to above mentioned results it can be said the elementary male teachers have moderate and almost average literacy planning.

**Table 6.** Result of single sample T test for assessing different of curriculum literacy averages

	Theoretical mean = 2.5			
	Amount t	Degrees of freedom	Sig	Difference
Literacy Planning	0.024	259	0.98	0.0038

Experimental mean = 10.496

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the study findings overall the level of literacy curriculum of elementary schools teachers is moderate. Based on the mentioned research, many of teachers have not enough awareness of learning principles and teaching methods and scientific principles of evaluation, educational technology curriculum goals. Average level of teachers understanding of curriculum and lack of being at the desirable level of knowledge may be caused by a lack of attention to the foundation and principles of education and integrated and interdisciplinary curriculum about teacher training and retraining of teachers. Its other causes, paying less attention teachers to accurate sense of education, philosophy of education, educational psychology, sociology and curriculum. In this field of education to education and retrain and professional empowering of teachers should be conducted workshops, to be provided the field of awareness of most teachers' understanding of the fundamentals of education and curriculum more than ever, by it.

The results show participation in short term training and workshops leads to promote knowledge

and professional skills of teachers. Therefore, the short-term and long-term strategic determining in fields of education and retraining and professional empowering of teachers based on studies and empowerment of teachers based on careful studies of the needs assessments and scientific planning to prompt knowledge, their professional qualifications and skills are the necessary and inevitable basic issues to efficiently building the education system.

### **Suggestions**

-According to the findings of research on teachers' curriculum literacy it is recommended that in in-service curriculum be held special training courses to familiarize them with the components of the curriculum.

-According to the results of primary school teachers have not a good understanding of the concepts of the curriculum and educational need assessment, thus, in planning in-service training of teachers, strengthening these two components of the curriculum in the areas of the curriculum should be attended by planners of Ministry of Education.

-To evaluate efficiency and effectiveness of teachers' educational programs, their participation in planning and holding educational workshops is essential. It is suggested that decision-making and planning and design and implementation of in-service training should be done with the involvement of and presence of teachers and exit from traditional state and carried out in form of practical and application workshops.

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