



Comparison between Capabilities of Female and Male Principals in Primary Schools

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ABSTRACT: The present study has been carried out by aiming at a comparison between capabilities of female and male principals in primary schools based on Skinner's Theory in academic year 2012-13. Methodology of this study is of descriptive type (survey) in terms of data collection and it is of applied form from aspect of objective. Statistical population of this investigation includes principals and their educational deputies in both girl and boy primary schools in Tehran City. The sample space has been approximated based on H.S. Bola Sample Space Formula, comprising of 176 participants (88 females) and (88 males) where this figure has been selected from statistical population by means of simple randomized method. To gather data, standardized 24- question inventory for response package has been adopted to measure overall capabilities of principals including general, maturity, and leadership skills of principals. Through polling from the related experts, validity of this questionnaire was confirmed for this purpose. Similarly, reliability of this test was measured for a 30- participant group by a primary study and this figure was calculated as 86% by means of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. In order to analyze data, descriptive and inferential statistical methods (independent t- test and comparison of means) were utilized. The resulting outcomes indicated that despite of this fact that the level of tertiary skills in male principal was higher and greater than female principals but according to 95% confidence level it could be implied that there is no significant difference between female and male principals in variables of three-fold administrative skills including general-maturity and leadership skills.

Keywords: Principals 'General, Maturity, and Leadership Skills

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

INTRODUCTION

Training and Educational System is most fundamental among all the organizations which deal with education and this system is responsible for crucial role of training and education through schools.

School is a social system that consists of several elements. Human is deemed as its paramount element in this system including some individuals like principal, teacher, personnel and students. Since principal is considered as a basic cornerstone in this social system and most of experts maintain that improvement of quality in educational system of communities is owed to enhancement of quality among principals; therefore, training, preparation, and recognition of principals more than ever is one of the important issues to which the officials and planners of Educational system should pay attention seriously.

Among elements of this organization, human is deemed foremost so that in can be implied it is alone equivalent to all other elements and may be superior and among human factors, management factor also plays crucial and vital role (Mir Kamali, 1996) to the extent that it could be mentioned the performance of management in any organization forms the performance of that organization (Pardakhtchi, 2007). It is very important to identify personality traits

(features) of principals and their relationship with their managerial technique as educational leaders since behavioral technique of any individual, which used to influence in others' activities for long time, signifies his/ her leadership method that has been clarified, was investigated based on observation of real behavior of leaders within wide area in leadership positions. Principal's behavior is what should be taken into consideration that expresses the method which is used by organizational administration. Therefore, in order to study on their goals social organizations tend to identify and strengthen the effective behaviors in their principals and among several social organizations, school enjoys special position and importance and due to nature of educational activities and objectives, the community pays due attention and sensitivity to school and way of its administration. It is because of this fact that by providing facilities and investment in Training and Education Organization (TEO) the community expects the educational system to meet its professional requirements and to nurture personality of children according to community's appropriate models. Realization of organizational goals and thus improving the spirit in personnel and preparation for thriving creativity, innovation and

occupational dynamism in personnel are included in this model. But from above results it may be implied that paying attention to educational administration may affect remarkably that educational principal can play vital role in growth, mind, recognition, perception and conception of other managers like financial, official and industrial, and hospital (Behrangi, 1992). During its movement, any community may encounter with a lot of problems which are inevitable so it can take step toward solution and or reducing their quantity by adopting appropriate and timely policies among of which one can refer to educational problems in a community.

Therefore, one of the important factors that may lead someone to success is individual abilities and capabilities. It should be admitted that all human have been created equally. This means that all enjoy the equal rights to develop their own capabilities and thereby they could acquire the needed skills and capabilities. In fact, the line of demarcation between disables and capable people forms when they tend to acquire the necessary capabilities and skills for them and improve and develop those capabilities. This human's effort causes the given person to be successful throughout his/ her life. But, the important point which should be considered thriving internal potential is to move in the course of flourishing talents that must be along with wisdom as well as sufficient insight. This means that developing of capabilities should be based on several criteria according to human's existent dimensions (mental- psychological, corporal- physical, spiritual- emotional, sensual and physical). It is a long time that theorists in the field of management are seeking for finding the answer to this question that why some managers failed while some other act successfully under stressful working conditions.

The result of their study was only some incomplete responses and they ascribed the reasons for this condition to some factors like the appropriate culture of paying highly bonuses and goal- oriented management. While some of authors maintain that in the field of sustainable excellent performance, a successful strategy should be referred to human's existence as a whole. In fact, if we intend to achieve excellent performance for managers (principals) then we should provide regular and comprehensive training (like professional athletes) for them. According to this theory, in order to enjoy high quality managerial performance we should consider human's essential dimensions including mind (thought), his soul and body (corporality) and integrate them within a model called pyramid of performance. Fitness (physical health) is placed as the infrastructure at the base of this model (pyramid) and over which feeling

and emotional dimension occurs and at higher order there id mental- intellectual health is located and eventually spiritual health is situated at the top of this pyramid. All of aforesaid level may affect on each other and in order to prevent from failed performance, the appropriate position should be considered with respect to all of them. Under the condition and situation that organizations are exposed to environmental changes, constant high performance of managers is crucial more than ever and this vital issue will not be realized regardless of considering physical, spiritual and mental, emotional, kindred and heath and feeling and scientific aspects of managers from organizations. Managerial capability and educational leadership have been defined variously where all of them were intended to interpret those classes of characteristics and capabilities that if the educational leader or principal possesses them they could lead to effectiveness, efficiency, and eventually productivity of his/ her educational organization. Namely, productivity in educational organizations requires capabilities of educational leader or principal.

It necessitates paying attention to these capabilities and findings of study done by Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC, 2010) suggest that the more such capabilities exist in educational managers or leaders, the greater productivity occurs in educational organization (school).

Two essential points are important in this capability. First, these capabilities are relative and secondly, these capabilities should be observed with respect to systemic thinking. For instance, it is likely that an individual to be strong in terms of knowledge but at the same time he/ she could not be a successful manager or it is possible for a person who is disable and patient physically but he/ she might succeed in managerial task despite of such a problem. Managers' capabilities have been divided into three classes including: a) *General capabilities*: they are those capabilities that make managers succeed to administer an organization; like physical health, mental health, emotional health, rational health, and health of good belief and piety; b) *Maturity capabilities*: they are those capabilities which may lead to further success in occupational life of managers; for example, knowledge, human's conceptual skills, expertise, experience, decision- making, targeting etc.)

Leadership capabilities: they denote power and influence in others; for instance, economic power, scientific potentiality, executive power, charismatic power, ideological power; reinforcement (reward) power etc. the researcher intends to examine how these capabilities may affect on principals of primary schools both females and males.

With respect to what it mentioned the present study is mainly aimed at providing appropriate response to the following questions:

- 1- What is the difference between general capabilities in female and male principals?
- 2- What is the difference between maturity capabilities in female and male principals?
- 3- What is the difference between leadership capabilities in female and male principals?
- 4- How is the order preference for general, maturity, and leadership capabilities among female and male principals from primary schools in Tehran City Training and Educational Organization (TEO)?
- 5- What is the difference between general capabilities in males and females?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

His study is a descriptive type (survey) in terms of data collection technique and it is of applied form in terms of objective. The statistical population of this study includes the educational principals and their deputies in girl- and boy- primary schools in Tehran City. According to H.S. Bola Sample Space Formula (1970, quoted from Abily1996) size of sample has been approximated as 176 participants (88 females) and 88(88 males) where this figure was selected from statistical population by means of simple randomized method.

To gather data, a standardized 24- question inventory was utilized in order to measure general skills of principals including general, maturity, and leadership skills for the given principals. Validity of questionnaire was confirmed by polling from the related experts. Its reliability was also measured on a group of 30 participants in the primary study and it was computed as 86% by means of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient.

RESULTS

I) Descriptive: Data in Table 1 show that there is a partial difference among triple skills (general, maturity and leadership) as well as total score for female and male managerial skills of principals so that according to comments from participants in statistical sample, triple skills (general, maturity and leadership) as well as total score for skills in male principals is greater and higher than in these skills in female principals. But nevertheless, the evidence suggests that no remarkable and significant difference is seen in triple skills between two groups of principals and level of their skills is relatively identical and similar to each other.

II) Inferential

Benefitted from independent t- test, capabilities of female and male principals have been tested and examined. With respect to the given results in Table 2 and based on statistic of t- test, the resulting values of t- test have been respectively obtained for general capabilities as (1.74), in maturity capabilities as (1.1), for leadership capabilities (0.515), and in total capabilities as (-1.177) and these values are lesser than t- value in critical table (1.96) with degree of freedom (d.o.f) as 174 and for this reason difference in mean values is not significant among capabilities of female and male principals in their general, maturity, and leadership skills and total capabilities ($p > 0.05$). Thus it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between general, maturity, leadership, and total capabilities in female and male principals and they are relatively similar to each other in this respect.

The above table expresses that the order preferences (priorities) of triple capabilities in female principals respectively include: 1) Leadership capabilities (2, (30.91)); 2) Maturity capabilities (3, (38.40)); and General capabilities (36.59). Similarly, the priorities in triple capabilities in male principals are as follows: 1) Leadership capabilities (31.82); 2) Maturity capabilities (30.09), and 3) General capabilities (38.64).

Table 1: Mean values and standard deviation of managerial skills in female and male principals

Skills Index	Female Principals (88)		Male Principals (88)	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
General	36.59	8.87	38.64	6.47
Maturity	38.40	11.33	40.09	8.84
Leadership	40.91	12.40	41.82	10.98
Total	115.67	29.75	120.57	20.22

Table 2: Result for independent t- test to compare general capabilities in female and male principals

Subject	Female Principals		Male Principals		Independent t-test		
	Mean	St. Deviation	Mean	St. Deviation	t-ratio	DF	Sign. Level
General Capabilities	36.59	8.87	36.84	6.47	-1.749	174	0.082
Maturity Capabilities	38.40	11.33	40.09	8.84	-1.105	174	0.270
Leadership Capabilities	40.91	12.40	41.82	10.98	-0.515	174	0.607
Total Capabilities	115.67	29.75	120.57	20.22	-1.177	174	0.203

Table 3: Test for comparison among mean values of capabilities among female and male principals

Gender	General Capability	Maturity Capability	Leadership Capability
Female	36.59	38.40	40.91
Male	38.64	40.09	41.82

DISCUSSION

In a comparative analogy, findings and results of this study are in line with some parts of findings and investigations that have been conducted by Zali (1996) and Davarzani (2006) while these findings are not complied with some findings from studies done by Yasini (2009) but the other parts of his research may comply with these findings. In his study, Yasini (2009) has evaluated competences and skills in principals of high schools in Tehran from teachers' viewpoint and statistical population in his study included all employed teachers in both public and private sectors either females and males. The results show that there is no significant difference between types of schools in terms of technical skill. At the same time, there is no significant difference among perceptual skill and type of educational discipline. Perceptual skills and service records (working background) do not significantly differ from each other but there is a significant difference between triple skills and gender. Similarly, there is a significant difference among possession of managerial competencies among principals. Zali, who has examined subject of skills and attributes of researcher managers, interpreted in his result that in addition to the necessary skills and traits at different managerial levels, the researcher managers also need to common skills and characteristics at all levels. Regarding managers' skills, Robert Kitz's theory was adopted in this study. The results of this survey show that researcher managers need more technical skill at operational level and the closer we approach to the top of organizational pyramid, the lower importance needs for this skill. Alternately, perceptual skill is more important for top level researcher managers. Unlike Kitz's theory, human skill is more important for researcher managers at top level than other levels. This point has been proved in some studies that have been conducted inside the country. But in contrast, skill of establishing mutual individual relationships is important identically at all levels. The current study shows that problem- solving skill is important identically at all levels. In other words, researcher managers need to skill of problem- solving to the same extent at all levels. This is in fact due to researching nature of R&D organizations. In researching organizations, managers are seeking for research and problem- solving; thus, this skill is required identically at all level. In her dissertation, Davarzani (2006) has present a model for

measurement of organization learning ability in part manufacturing industry and expressed that with respect to modeling in this study, it has been tried to investigate into this model within two organization and also what had been generally obtained from this study. If officials like to improve organizational learning ability then they should follow those points in which they act poorly in them according to this tool. Among of them, they should provide more facilities for testing and examination of suggested methods in organization and particularly in researching divisions and for this reason it essentially requires reducing bureaucracy.

To conclude and interpret the results in general, one could acknowledge that managers should be able to play several roles to succeed in doing their tasks and they need to special skills to play their needed roles. These skills may be summarized under title of essential skills (including general, maturity and leadership) from this viewpoint. It seems that these skills are the paramount skills from which the managers are benefited further, they will exercise more achievements. In fact, these skills may be the most determinant factors in principals' success particularly within recent decades since during the recent decades we have witnessed fast and unprecedented changes and developments within all areas and management's tasks and practices have become wider, more complicated and difficult than ever and only ones, who were trained professionally for this responsibility, may do their assigned tasks and practices effectively and efficiently. Alternatively, to tackle with environmental threats and use the possible opportunities, organizations have to identify their own internal capacities and capabilities and recover their weak points and improve their strength pints so one of the important capacities is to employ efficient and effective managers. Success of organizations in realization of goals and doing their social responsibilities depends on their manager to great extent. Managers are constantly involved in decision making and in fact if manager do their task appropriately, organizational goals will be realized. Managers determine their organizational objectives and policies and organizational effectiveness and efficiency as the paramount indicator for evaluation of organizational performance are subjected to managers' capability and skill and with respect to necessity of organizational learning and the learning

organizations for survival in today variable environment, it requires that managers to possess several skills at high level for administration of organizations and to be able to manage their organizations effectively. It is because of this fact that it is reasonable efficiency of managers' performance that leads to improvement and growth in an organization. Skill denotes the ability for converting knowledge to function so that to lead to an appropriate performance. In this sense, Alaghehband also argues that these skills are technical, human-driven and perceptual skills (Alaghehband, 2004). Thus, it could be concluded that survival of any organization depends on different capabilities, skills, information, knowledge and specialties of its human resources including competent managers and if managers are more knowledgeable and skillful they may share better in enhancement of efficiency and effectiveness of their organizations. Today, all organizations are typically affected by transformation of managerial methods and techniques and for their maintenance and continuous life they have to inevitably create such transformations in their organizations in line with advancement in all dimensions of organization that are deemed as cornerstone and start point for all these change and developments and the important issue in management principles and proper utilization of human resources.

Therefore, with respect to knowledge and science along with hardware dimension, the organization may lead to quantitative and qualitative appropriate achievements whether in improvement of effectiveness dimension or increase in efficiency dimension. Today, it is proved that enjoying scientific ability may lead to thriving in various social and development dimensions. In fact, by finding out the reality of knowledge and increase in managers' science, organizations tended to direct not only themselves but also others through excellence path of organizational sciences. In the current environment where the change is in itself as stable factor and under such circumstance, it should be admitted that selection and improvement of effective managers is the important priority for any organization.

According to what it mentioned, the major activities are done inside schools so realization of training and educational objectives is subjected to efficiency and effectiveness of schools so educational administration will be mainly realized and implemented at school level. Thus, since principals in primary schools play valuable and key role in direction of affairs within primary schools in this country so the efficient, competent, skillful, experienced and fully- informed to management principles and techniques will guarantee

achievement of training and education in achieving their objectives. For this reason, today management is considered as the most essential phenomenon in communities and organizations and educational principals are deemed as strategic capital in educational and training institution particularly in primary school grades and no one can ignore the importance of position and levels of role of principals from primary schools as the major designers, guides and administrators.

On the other hand, the results of questions in this study indicated that although *skills and capabilities of principals in boy schools have been at higher and greater level than skills and capabilities of principals from girl schools*, but despite of this fact, no significant difference has been observed between general capabilities in males and females and the given results suggest the equal state of these capabilities and skills (general, maturity and leadership capabilities) among them. In the aforesaid analysis one could refer to this point that the reason for similarity and parity among these skills is in that it seems the level of managers' capabilities depends on many several factors. Today, management knowledge, creativity potential and innovation in individuals, Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and rate of improvement and application of this factor, hereditary and genetic issues, training techniques, individual skills and attributes and background and experience etc. and other several factors affect on empowerment or strengthening of principals' skills therefore it seems gender limits and only masculinity or femininity which lead to difference in rate of individuals' skills, will not be effective. It is likely inter alia due to higher sense of responsibility against their working position as well as perception of occupational sensitivity; female principals enjoy higher and better work efficiency as well. On the other hand, from viewpoint of the recent management experts, the real power for a manager is in that he/ she put the given capability at disposal of those individuals, who are in better position to adopt it. With assigning their power, these managers create commitment and creativity in their colleagues since personnel shows more commitment toward those decisions in which they closely share in process of their taking. Similarly, since personnel recognize the improvement in work process and solving the problems often better than the managers, if they possess the needed powers, they will search for better solutions for what it happened in this regard.

Applied Suggestions

In the course of research results and goals, the applied comments are presented as follows.

1- The present age is the accelerated and unpredictable development period, including in

educational centers and primary schools where managerial style and level differ from each other in other institutions. Thus, in order to improve management in such schools, paying attention to enhancing quality for each elements of this system is considered as important cases.

2- In the schools (especially primary schools) throughout this country, educational principals are considered as important factors to enhance quality of training for children and adults. Knowledge acquisition is permanently increasing for educational principals. These managers should be able to orient and guide their own activity area that is involved in several challenges. If these educational principals do not possess sufficient knowledge and skills, doubtlessly educational system will be not also effective, efficient and highly valid in schools and educational system.

3- Dramatic and unprecedented developments which have occurred with different aspects of human's knowledge, may reflect the importance of skills and competencies of educational principals more than ever and at large and complex scale so that only professional managers will be able to achieve effectiveness by doing their managerial tasks optimally. As a result, without the presence of well-informed, experienced and creative educational principals, realization of educational goals, strategies and curricula and or properly meeting to requirements of audiences of educational system is not possible. Thus with respect to competence (merit) system and emphasis on choosing strong principals for doing these difficult tasks, this issue is vitally important for educational system.

4- Today, competencies of school principals are ever- increasingly important in world of changes. Competences of principals may increase the ability for attraction, development, preservation and maintenance of efficient teachers and lead to organizational effectiveness and occupational requirements. Competencies may improve group of skills to fulfill organizational objectives and their growth and cause integration of management performance.

5- Due to their involvement in growth and development of humans, schools in educational system are considered as the most dynamic centers and paramount organizations. On the other hand, transformation and change are some distinct features in present time. To adjust these schools to external changes and developments and their maintenance and survival, and along with principals' competencies and knowledge which is deemed as essential task, it is also crucially important to consider subject of competent and efficient (empowered) principals.

6- In addition to considering attributes of competent managers, it is duly expedient to appoint efficient, competent, skillful, experienced principals, who are well- informed about management techniques and principles, in schools and at the top of organizations thereby success of these organizations will be guaranteed in achieving their goals and on the other hand paying attention to and focus on principles of organizational learning is a task beyond education and more complicated than individual learning. Organizational learning is a process in which the organization learns over time, changes and improves its performances, and advances by creation of change constantly and through improvement of its capabilities.

7- It is required to revise and evaluate the conditions and specifications relating to dismissal and appointment of school principals in educational system within certain time intervals in order to identify rate of work effectiveness and their activity. Social changes may require not only for changing objectives of educational system but also in change and revision in managerial and administrative policies and procedures. The inappropriate organizational structure and ineffective management may cause educational system to be retarded and misled. For this reason, renovation, organizing, and management in educational system shall be considered and emphasized and the pathology of these factors should be implemented.

8- More than anything else, achievement in playing the role and doing task are related to principals' power and effectiveness. Thus, high- ranking managers and official of educational system should keep this crucial point in their mind that effectiveness of mid- rank managers and CEOs also depends essentially on competence, skill, level of knowledge, insight, and their capabilities and due to importance of these factors in managers' success, constant inquiry and effort that should be made to find and train those ones who possess that type of competence and capabilities and skills, may convert them into effective managers and useful leaders and this measure should be taken in order this system not to be interrupted and stopped.

Research Suggestions

1- To establish relation among this study with the next researches it is suggested to examine researching issues as follows:

I) to examine subject of relationship between schools management methods and styles along with job satisfaction for teachers

II) Pathology of inhibiting and reinforcing factors for school principals

III) To conduct an independent study on impact and role of principals' performance on efficiency and effectiveness of educational system within educational achievement.

2- It is suggested to inform the personnel about general, maturity and leadership capabilities by holding training workshops by experienced teachers and within On the Job (OTJ) training course for principals.

3- It is purposed to conduct this study by experienced teachers (for all principals from educational system at three levels i.e. primary, secondary and high schools) at large scale.

4- It is suggested to choose those teachers for managerial positions who possess respectively leadership, maturity, and general capabilities in the process of recruitment of principals out of experienced teachers in educational administration and educational sciences field by organized interview.

Research Limitation

1- As it mentioned before, data in this study were derived by means of a 24- question inventory made by the researcher therefore if another standard questionnaire was used for this purpose, it might improve the higher confidence level with further validity and reliability.

2- Research sample has been exclusively gathered from 7 regions in educational system in Tehran City. If this study was done at larger scale it might possess higher validity and reliability as well as greater generalization.

3- Capabilities of principals are numerous while only three capabilities (general, maturity, and leadership) have been addressed in the present investigation. If some other capabilities were examined in this study, findings of this survey might be more generalized.

4- Testee's fear against giving response, especially their pretention to positive capabilities of their principals is one of the other factors, which may tarnish the reliability of the current study.

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