

The Relationship Between Participative Management and Organizational Productivity among Elementary School Principals

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Abstract: The present study aimed to determine the relationship between participative management and organizational productivity among elementary school principals. The method of this study was descriptive followed a correlational design. The statistical population included all male and female elementary school principals working in District 1 of Zahedan in the school year 2015-2016. The sample included 92 individuals selected using stratified random sampling method. The data collection tools were two questionnaires including a researcher-made questionnaire (Participative management questionnaire using a likert-type rating scale with a reliability of 93%) and a standardized scale (the productivity of human resources scale-Nasiripour) using a Likert-type scale with a reliability of 98%). The obtained data was analyzed in both descriptive (tables of mean and standard deviation) and inferential (the Pearson correlation coefficient and regression analysis) levels through applying SPSS. The results of this study indicated that productivity of human resources was significantly and directly correlated with subscales of participation (participation of students, parents, teachers and authorities). Moreover, the results of regression analysis conducted to examine the contribution of scores on subscales of participation in management affairs to determine the changes related to productivity revealed that among subscales of participation in management affairs, students' participation, teachers' participation and authorities' participation entered into the equation and explained 1.6% of the overall variance in the scores on productivity; however, parents' participation in management affairs was not able to explain productivity.

Key words: Participative management, organizational productivity, teachers' participation, students' participation, parents' participation, authorities' participation

INTRODUCTION

The education system is an important social institution which plays a key role in educating children and adolescents. Schools, as the formal mechanism of the education system, are places where educational and training activities are formally carried out distinguishing traditional societies from modern ones. In this regard, since schools play a key role in educating students and training a variety of teachings, attitudes and essential skills related to various fields, they are considered as the main educational mechanism of the education system.

From experts' point of view, productivity includes effectiveness and efficiency. Nowadays, managers consider productivity as a valuable factor affecting various organizations. All organizations attempt to achieve high levels of productivity. The new achievements in the field of management indicated that trying to achieve high levels of productivity in organizations is mainly due to the development of human

resources. Human resources, as one of the key factors in every organization, plays a key role in increasing organizations' quality and quantity.

Since, the participative management applies the suggestion system, as one of the key tools used to increase the productivity, it is regarded as an effective system which can be applied in educational institutions. The participative management system is based on an inclusive and broad-based system. Participation creates strong motivations, since it aids the employees to feel accepted. Creating this feeling leads to an increase in the levels of staff's self-esteem, job satisfaction, collaboration with their principals and consequently, the level of organizational productivity.

Managers suitable for today's organizations are those who in addition to having high individual skills and techniques have appropriate levels of cultural and emotional intelligence. Scholars, such as Bvyatzys and Cooper, considered the interviews conducted in a large-scale and among the world-class managers, explicitly

concluded that the considered managers require lower levels of technical skills, compared to other skills especially cognitive skills and among the cognitive skills, emotional intelligence obtained the highest score.

Nevertheless, participative management as an appropriate and effective mechanism has been used in various forms and obtained significant results. As an instance, one of the simplest and yet most useful participative management practices is applying the suggestion system (receiving and examining the suggestions) which attempts to consider the staff's comments and suggestions to promote effectiveness, efficiency and finally organizational productivity (Hosseininasab and Ghaderi, 2011).

An organization that has been ineffective and non-productive certainly is not healthy. Overall, organizational health implicitly refers to the sum of the productive work. An organization which through reducing its costs or acting quickly increases its effectiveness in the short term may damage its staff's morale, the level of participation and satisfaction. The classic example is attempting to achieve productivity through cost reduction which in the long term may lead to the staff's dissatisfaction and turnover (Shariatmadari, 2009).

The evidence showed that lack of adequate participation of principals, teachers, parents and students in making decisions related to school management and the method of solving issues and limitations and, consequently, low levels of schools' productivity have cast a shadow on Iran's education system for many years. Zahedan Department of Education, as a subset of this system, is no exception. Moreover, the complexity of today's issues and problems with which the educational organizations are faced requires a combination of experiences and expertise of all the members from the lowest level to the highest level to satisfy the beneficiaries of the educational system. Working in today's dynamic environment, school principals in Zahedan do not have sufficient knowledge to resolve all issues related to the schools and the need for collective wisdom can be easily observed among school principals.

The management style used in most governmental companies and organizations in Iran more than any other styles is based on Taylorism management principles and other management principles and concepts which were prevalent in the 1920s and 1930s in the Western countries. Although this management style is somehow in line with the Iranian norms, it is the main barrier to the staff's participation and is the major cause of low levels of productivity and efficiency (Imani, 2011).

Likert believed that collaboration between the staff puts an emphasis on the importance of creating a positive

attitude to the job and aids the staff to try to use their potential abilities which leads to an increase in the level of productivity in schools.

The main objective of participative management is to encourage the staff and members of an organization to commit to contribute to the success of the organization. Participative management is based on this premise that the staff should participate in the process of making decisions which affect their destiny and should have freedom in conducting their administrative and organizational job. In this way, the staff can have some control over their working lives and this creates motivation. As a result, the staff are satisfied with their jobs and their effectiveness and efficiency increases organizational productivity (Tash *et al.*, 2010).

The importance of participative management is to the extent that experts and management specialists such as Preston and Post, called it the third revolution in management. Moreover, organizations deal with an environment full of change and to continue their activities and to answer their staff's needs, they require people who are closely familiar with new issues on one hand and have executive responsibilities and authority to take actions to solve the issues on the other hand. Therefore, any constructive mechanism that may provide the opportunity to participate in the organizational issues naturally aids productivity. The significance of the current study is that the results obtained from this study can be applied by principals, professors, psychologists, curriculum planners, teachers, parents and also students and it can be used by other researchers and scholars as well.

Farahani *et al.* (2014) in a study entitled "The Relationship of Comprehensive Quality Management with Productivity in Physical Education Offices in East Azarbaijan", concluded that to examine the relationship between variables under study, the Spearman's correlation coefficient should be used. Moreover, to compare the comprehensive quality management of physical education offices, the Mann-Whitney U test was applied. The mean of TQM, in the studied population, was 88.10 and the standard deviation was 16.34. In addition, from the point of view of the managers and staff of the Physical Education Offices in East Azarbaijan, all the criteria of the comprehensive quality management and organizational productivity were significantly and positively related.

Ranani and Tabrizi in a study entitled "The Role of Managers' Cultural Diversity Management Skills in Improving Productivity in Schools (Through Measuring Students' Social Participation)", concluded that considering the level of applying cultural diversity management skills, there was a significant difference among the means of students' social participation. The

higher the level of managers' cultural diversity management skills, the greater the level of students' social participation. Additionally, considering the levels of applying religion diversity management skills and ethnic diversity management skills, there were significant differences among the means of students' social participation. In this regard, it can be stated that using cultural diversity management skills (in terms of ethnic and religion diversities) by managers can have an impact on increasing the level of students' social participation.

Bafrani, in a study entitled "The Relationship between Participative Management and Effectiveness in High Schools in Nain", concluded that participative management was significantly related to schools' effectiveness.

Sharifian and Raofi (2005) in a study entitled "The Role of Participative Management in the Level of Effectiveness of Managers' Organizational Behavior from the Perspective of Teachers in Female High Schools for Girls in the Academic Year 2014-2015 in District 5 of the Department of Education in Tehran", indicated that the statistical analysis of the obtained data using the correlation coefficient showed a significant relationship between participative management and effectiveness of managers' organizational behavior. In addition, participative management was significantly correlated with managers' flexibility, managers' human relations, creation of working groups and the use of new teaching methods. The results of multivariate regression analysis demonstrated that all these variables had a positive effect and made the managers' organizational behavior effective.

Sangdehi in a study entitled "The Impact of Participative Management Style and Promoting Productivity on Effectiveness of High School Principals in Tehran", concluded that implementing participative management lead to an increase in the level of the staff's efficiency. Moreover, efficiency and the participative management style all together can explain 49% of the variance in effectiveness.

Wu *et al.* (2012) in a study entitled "Efficiency Evaluation in Time Management for School Administration with Fuzzy Data", presented the productivity index between the observed time and the ideal time. Empirical studies showed that the use of interval data in studies conducted in social sciences seems realistic and reasonable.

Rathore *et al.* (2005) in a study entitled "Performance Management through Strategic Total Productivity Optimization", concluded that performance management in the contemporary organizations needed to be headed to optimize the overall productivity which had a strong impact on competitiveness. In this study, four probable

performance management strategies used to optimize the overall productivity were modeled through applying nonlinear mathematical programming approach.

Zwick (2004) in a study entitled "Employee Participation and Productivity", indicated that the effects of the employees' productivity would be much greater and stronger when accompanied with the establishment of work councils.

In another study, Zheng *et al.* (2010) revealed that knowledge management had an enormous impact on organizational effectiveness was a strong intermediate factor affecting the influence of organizational culture on organizational effectiveness and was a relatively moderate mediating factor affecting the influence of organizational structure on organizational effectiveness.

Samina (2007) in a study entitled "Examining the Relationship between the Schools Implementation of Core-plus Processes and Parent Involvement in Schools in Toronto" using the regression analysis, showed that school educational processes were related to educational curriculum and special classroom activities, creation of a good perspective from the school and school educational policies, the methods of communicating with the local community and also parental involvement in schools.

Participative management is effective in guiding the staff in the right direction which is achieving the organizational goals. Applying the best leadership style or management style leads to an increase in the level of organizational productivity. Considering this, it can be concluded that applying participative management in schools by the staff (including principals, teachers and authorities of the Department of Education), students and parents can have significant impacts on productivity in schools, achieving educational goals and academic achievement. Therefore, the present study sought to answer the following questions:

- Is there any significant relationship between participative management and productivity in elementary schools?
- Is there any significant relationship between parents' participation in management affairs and productivity in elementary schools?
- Is there any significant relationship between students' participation in management affairs and productivity in elementary schools?
- Is there any significant relationship between teachers' participation in management affairs and productivity in elementary schools?
- Is there any significant relationship between participation of the authorities' of the Department of Education in management affairs and productivity in elementary schools?

- Which one of the participative management subscales can predict productivity in elementary schools?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Considering the main objective of the current study, the method used was descriptive followed a correlational design. In this study, the statistical population included all male and female elementary school principals working in District 1 of Zahedan in the school year 2015-2016 (N = 120), among whom the sample was selected and studied.

With regard to the size of the statistical population, using the Cochran's formula, the sample size was obtained 92:

$$n = \frac{N^2 + pq}{Nd^2 + t^2pq} = \frac{120 \times (1/96)^2 \times (0/5) \times (0/5)}{120 \times (0/05)^2 + (1/96)^2 \times (0/5) \times (0/5)} = \frac{115/248}{1/2604} = 92$$

After determining the sample size, the sample was selected using stratified random sampling method. The data collection tools were two questionnaires which are as follows.

Participative management questionnaire: This is a researcher-made questionnaire which contains 20 items and 4 subscales including parents' participation, students' participation, teachers' participation and participation of authorities of the Department of Education. The method of scoring is based on a 5-point Likert-type scale. The respondents can choose 1 = very low, 2 = low, 3 = moderate, 4 = high and 5 = very high.

Questions related to each subscale:

- Parents' participation in management affairs: This subscale includes questions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
- Students' participation in management affairs: This subscale includes questions 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10
- Teachers' participation in management affairs: This subscale includes questions 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15
- Participation of authorities of the Department of Education in management affairs: This subscale includes questions 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20

The greater the respondents' scores, the higher their participative management. The validity of this scale was confirmed by a number of professors and faculty members of the Department of Educational Sciences. The reliability

of this questionnaire was calculated through conducting it on 30 members of the community. The results were examined using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, the result of which was 0.93. This result demonstrated the reliability of this questionnaire such that the Cronbach's alpha coefficients related to all 4 subscales were 0.93 which indicated that this questionnaire is reliable.

The standard productivity of human resources scale

Nasiripour: This standard scale includes 42, 5-point Likert-type scale, items. The items are scored using a Likert-type scale. The scores are: 1 = very low, 2 = low, 3 = moderate, 4 = high, 5 = very high. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this scale was obtained 0.98 which confirmed the reliability of this scale. Therefore, this scale is reliable. Components and questions related to each subscale are as follows: questions 1-18 relate to organizational culture, questions 19-25 associate with environmental conditions, questions 26-35 relate to motivation, questions 36-39 associate with empowerment and questions 40-42 relate to leadership style.

The obtained data in the current study was analyzed using both descriptive (tables of mean and standard deviation) and inferential (the Pearson correlation coefficient and stepwise regression analysis) statistics. All these analyses were conducted through applying SPSS.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Is there any significant relationship between participative management and productivity in elementary schools?

The results of the Pearson correlation coefficient show that parents' participation, students' participation, teachers' participation and authorities' participation are all correlated with productivity of human resources shown in Table 1 ($p < 0.005$). Therefore, the results indicate that productivity of human resources is significantly and directly related to participation of parents, students, teachers and authorities. This means that an increase in the predictor variable leads to an increase in the productivity of human resources.

Table 1: The results of the pearson correlation coefficient between subscales of participative management and productivity of human resources

Variables	Productivity of human resources	Sig.
Parents' participation	0.587	0.000
Students' participation	0.664	0.000
Teachers' participation	0.742	0.000
Authorities' participation	0.743	0.000

$p = 0.05$; $N = 92$

Table 2: The results of regression analysis conducted to predict productivity via subscales of participation in management affairs

Predictor variables	Pattern	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE	B	B	F	t-values	Sig.
Students' participation	Stepwise	0.597	0.773	16.891	6.79	2.924	0.366	43.542	3.111	0.003
Teachers' participation	Stepwise	0.635	0.792	23.281	6.84	3.005	0.353	43.542	3.263	0.002
Authorities' participation	Stepwise	0.667	0.817	24.388	6.97	3.111	0.291	43.542	3.101	0.000

Which component of participative management can predict productivity in elementary schools? Table 2 demonstrates the results of regression analysis conducted to examine the contribution of the scores on subscales of participation in management affairs to determine the changes related to productivity and shows that in the first step, students' participation explains 16.891% of the variance in the scores on productivity. Moreover, this subscale leads to an increase (0.579) in the correlation coefficient. In the second step, teachers' participation enters the equation and explains 23.281% of the variance in the scores on productivity. Additionally, this subscale leads to an increase (0.635) in the correlation coefficient. In the third step, authorities' participation explains 24.388% of the variance in the scores on productivity. In addition, this subscale leads to an increase (0.667) in the correlation coefficient.

Presenting the results of regression analysis conducted to examine the contribution of the scores on subscales of participation in management affairs to determine the changes related to productivity, Table 2 reveals that among subscales of participation in management affairs, students' participation, teachers' participation and authorities' participation enter the equation and explain 1.6% of the overall variance in the scores on productivity; however, parents' participation in management affairs is not able to explain productivity.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of the current study was to examine the relationship between participative management and organizational productivity among elementary school principals. Examining the first research question, the results indicated that the correlation coefficient of participative management and productivity of human resources was $r = 0.782$ which was significant at the 99% confidence level. Therefore, statistically speaking, there was a significant and direct correlation between participative management and productivity of human resources, i.e., with an increase in the participative management, productivity of human resources increases (Farahani *et al.*, 2014; Sharifian and Raofi, 2005; Zheng *et al.*, 2010; Zwick, 2004). Considering the significance of this correlation, it can be stated that accepting and examining the suggestions are among

executive tools applied in the participative management. In this system, all the staff actively think about the procedures and methods of solving problems and promoting productivity and present their ideas in the form of plans and proposals to the organization. In fact, the suggestion system is a technique through which human resources' ideas and findings are directly applied in solving problems, answering new questions, providing optimized solutions and are used to achieve the culture of change and continuous development and improvement of the organization.

Examining the second research question, the results showed that the correlation coefficient between parents' participation and productivity of human resources was $r = 0.587$ which was significant at the 99% confidence level. Therefore, statistically speaking, there was a significant and direct correlation between parents' participation and productivity of human resources, i.e., with an increase in parents' participation, productivity of human resources increases. This result is consistent with the results by Samina (2007). Considering the significance of this correlation, it can be noted that schools are important educational and training institutions which require parents' participation. Attracting parents' participation is among educational management principles. In some developed countries, parents have become interested in politics and the method of managing schools and have noticed that participation is the main principle of the educational system. Therefore, they actively participate in selecting and adjusting the school programs, determining teaching methods, the degree of concentration or distribution and standards and setting evaluation criteria (Kazemi, 2009).

The results related to the third research question revealed that the correlation coefficient between students' participation and productivity of human resources was $r = 0.664$ which was significant at the 99% confidence level. Therefore, statistically speaking, there was a significant and direct correlation between students' participation and productivity of human resources, i.e., with an increase in students' participation, productivity of human resources increases. This finding is consistent with the results by Atafar *et al.* (2012). With regard to this significant correlation, it can be stated that school principals play a fundamental crucial role in managing a small community, including various people with different

ethnic and religious backgrounds, within which future generations' identity and culture. Managing schools properly by the principals provides a lively, dynamic and active atmosphere for educational activities which can persuade students to participate more and more in cultural, sports and artistic activities. Having the essential skills related to managing cultural diversities is one of the basic needs of managements working in the education system which along with other educational management skills can aid students to grow and promote the productivity of the education system (Atafar *et al.*, 2012).

Investigating the fourth research question, the results indicated that the correlation coefficient between teachers' participation and productivity of human resources was $r = 0.742$ which was significant at the 99% confidence level. Therefore, statistically speaking, there was a significant and direct correlation between teachers' participation and productivity of human resources, i.e. with an increase in teachers' participation, productivity of human resources increases (Sharifian and Raofi, 2005; Samina, 2007; Zwick, 2004). Explaining this significant correlation, it can be noted that participative management is the dominant paradigm of the modern management based on which cooperation between principals and teachers aids them to achieve the organizational goals in a friendly environment which is full of understanding. Teachers' comments and plans can help managers to enhance the productivity in the organization through saving costs, applying innovations when conducting various affairs and improving the management and put an emphasis on the importance of participation and its role in increasing the productivity.

The results related to the fifth research question revealed that the correlation coefficient between authorities' participation and productivity of human resources was $r = 0.743$ which was significant at the 99% confidence level. Therefore, statistically speaking, there was a significant and direct correlation between authorities' participation and productivity of human resources, i.e., with an increase in authorities' participation, productivity of human resources increases (Farahani *et al.*, 2014; Sharifian and Raofi, 2005). Considering this significant relation, it can be noted that the Iranian education system, due to its centralized structure, makes decisions at the highest levels of the organization and does not involve its members in the decision-making process. This decreased the level of creativity and innovation which are needed to achieve the organizational goals and to increase productivity in the

organization, among new members and also faded the role of managers as people who can provide the appropriate grounds for the incident of creativity in the organization (Feizi and Bashir, 2009).

Considering the sixth research question, demonstrating the results of regression analysis conducted to examine the contribution of the scores on subscales of participation in management affairs to determine the changes related to productivity, the results revealed that among subscales of participation in management affairs, only students' participation, teachers' participation and authorities' participation entered into the equation. These components explained 1.6% of the overall variance in the scores on productivity; however, parents' participation in management affairs was not able to explain productivity (Farahani *et al.*, 2014; Sharifian and Raofi, 2005; Zheng *et al.*, 2010; Zwick, 2004). To explain this significant correlation, it can be stated that considering the results of previously conducted studies and experts' beliefs, whenever factors affecting productivity of human resources are recognized, one can expect an increase in the level of productivity.

To apply the results obtained from the current study, it is suggested that managers persuade their colleagues to actively participate in the school affairs through valuing the teamwork aimed to achieve mutual objectives, considering important people's opinions when making a decision, providing cultural and educational grounds to persuade teachers to participate in the school affairs and holding more meetings for creating a great coherence in measures.

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