




Research Paper

Development of a healthy school model and compliance of schools from the perspective of teachers and principals

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Abstract

Aim: The aim of this research was to develop a healthy school model and compliance of schools from the perspective of teachers and principals. This mixed method study used phenomenological approach for the qualitative phase and survey-descriptive approach for the quantitative phase. Its target population in the qualitative phase included educational team leaders, principals, education experts and curriculum specialists. Principals and teachers of schools in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad and Fars provinces constituted the statistical population in the quantitative phase. Seventeen individuals were selected by criterion-based purposive sampling for the qualitative phase, and 300 individuals were selected by stratified random sampling for the quantitative phase. The research tool was a semi-structured interview in the qualitative phase and a researcher-made questionnaire with 5-point Likert scale in the quantitative phase. The results were categorized into three sets of basic, organizing, and comprehensive themes and organized into a network of themes. The results included 37 subcategories and 7 categories, namely 1- physical environment, 2- managerial characteristics, 3- human resources, 4- school culture, 5- communication and social participation, 6- emotional-psychological-social environment, 7- curriculum elements. The results of one-sample t-student test showed that the average status of the aspects such as managerial characteristics,

human resources, curriculum, participation and social communication is significantly higher than the average of the population in a good status.

Keywords: *healthy school, principals, teachers*

Introduction

The Education Department is one of the most important and effective social systems that focus on educating human and developing their personality (Safi, 2012). Ascertaining the ultimate mission of schools and achieving macro, economic, social, and cultural, and educational goals is possible when schools are healthy and dynamic because the fulfillment of the serious mission of education takes place in a site called school, and that is why turning the school into a healthy, lively, dynamic, and exciting place is one of the biggest challenges for those involved in any educational system (Rahimian et al., 2016).

Since school is the place to fulfil educational goals, it is necessary to address the safety and soundness of all its components, which is possible through the concept of a healthy school. Studies by Hui and Tarter (1991)(1992)(2013) (Proterius and Elsab (2009), American Institute for Healthy School (2013), Al-Qarni (2016), Hoy and Cutcump (2013), Kaplan (1993), Leiden and Klinge (2000), Lapoint and Stephen (2006), Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006), Fisher and Saik (2007), Graham Lowe (2010)), Lake and Fritler (2012), Ramdas (2012), Bafandeh Zand (2017), Torkzadeh (2008) (1396) (1387), and Rahimian (2017) all emphasize the importance of a healthy school and its aspects. To ascertain the effectiveness in school in the conceptual light of healthy school requires defining aspects, elements, and components that can lead to the conceptual explanation of a healthy school. Therefore, first the aspects of a healthy school are identified using a qualitative approach and then, the current status of the aspects in schools in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad and Fars provinces is evaluated from the perspective of principals and teachers. Accordingly, the research questions are as follows:

What are the components and aspects of a healthy school?

How is the current situation of the aspects of healthy schools from the perspective of principals and teachers?

Which of the following aspects has the greatest impact and importance on school safety and soundness?

Methodology

The present research is a mixed method study with a qualitative phase for identifying the components of a healthy school and a quantitative phase for measuring the compliance of schools.

The qualitative phenomenological approach was used to answer the first question and a quantitative survey approach was used for the second and third questions. The research population in the qualitative phase included educational team leaders, principals, education experts and curriculum specialists. Principals and teachers of the schools in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad and Fars provinces (n=1360) constituted the statistical population in the qualitative phase.

For the quantitative phase, 300 principals, teachers, and educators were selected via stratified sampling method. For the qualitative phase, 17 individuals including 4 curriculum specialists, 4 educational team leaders, 4 educational experts and 5 principals were selected using criterion-based purposive sampling method. The research tool was semi-structured interviews based on notes in the qualitative phase and a researcher-made questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale in the quantitative phase. The content validity of the tool was confirmed by 7 education specialists and its reliability was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87.

Results

Question 1: What are the components and aspects of a healthy school?

In the first phase, data were collected during in-depth structured interviews. This process yielded the thematic network of healthy school aspects consisting of 7 themes organizing the first level, 37 themes organizing the second level, and 82 basic themes.

The aspects include physical school environment, managerial characteristics, human resources, school culture, communications and social participation, curriculum, emotional-social-psychological environment.

Question 2: How is the current state of the aspects of healthy schools from the perspective of principals and teachers"?

According to Table 10, the numerical value of the significance coefficient of the aspects of managerial characteristics, human resources, participation and social relations, and curriculum elements has been less than 0.05 and the average scores of these components are higher than the assumed average (3) and the average score of these aspects are significantly larger than the theoretical average. Therefore, we conclude that the aspects of managerial characteristics, human resources, participation and social communication, curriculum elements are at a desirable level. On the other hand, the numerical value of the significance coefficient of the aspects such as

physical environment, emotional-psychological-social environment, school culture has been less than 0.05, but the average scores of these aspects are lower than the assumed average (3) and the average score of these aspects is significantly lower than the theoretical average, so we conclude that the aspects of the physical environment, emotional-psychological-social environment, and school culture are not at desirable level.

Question 3: Which of the existing aspects has the greatest impact and importance on school safety and soundness?

The aspects of healthy schools are significantly distinct in terms of prioritizing and influencing the school safety and soundness. In addition, emotional environment with a ranking of 5.89 has the greatest impact on the safety and soundness of schools, and the physical environment with a ranking of 1.36 has the least impact on and importance for the safety and soundness of schools.

Discussion and conclusion

Having a healthy school has currently changed into a global demand because parents send their children to school for a better future. Children enthusiastically attend classes from the first day and look forward to a bright future. Teachers consider schools as platforms for work and effort and fulfillment of their will, and principals, politicians, and thinkers want to train their future citizens in this place. The purpose of this research was to develop a healthy school model and determine the compliance of schools from the perspective of school teachers and principals. In line with the results of the research, it is suggested that architects of the physical environment of schools pay attention to the psychological-emotional aspect of students during school construction. As is clear from the theoretical foundations, the design of schools' architectural elements affects students' mentality, psych-body, and soul. Since one of the aspects of healthy schools is their psychological-emotional aspect, it is recommended to use colors and lights in accordance with the ages and interests of students to help prevent or reduce some mental diseases such as depression, anxiety, stress, and aggression. It is hoped that the findings of this research are used by education planners of the Islamic Republic of Iran to help improve schools and achieve the components and aspects of a healthy school.

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