

Research Article

ASSESSMENT OF PRINCIPALS' PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES IN EDUCATION SYSTEM OF TEHRAN PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

This research aims at investigating the principals' professional competencies in Tehran Province during the school year of 2012 to 2013. The research method has the survey type and is among the descriptive studies and is applied in terms of objective. The statistical population consists of all 14500 elementary, secondary, high and pre-university school principals in Tehran Province. The statistical sample consists of 400 samples selected based on Morgan Table by stratified random sampling method. The researcher-made questionnaire is the data collection tool and its validity is investigated by three experts and the reliability coefficient is obtained equal to 0.88 using the Cronbach's alpha. The results of data analysis through analysis of variance and t-test indicate that the most important competencies required for principals are as follows: Management and leadership competencies, social competencies, technological competencies, personal competencies, economic competencies (job and work), spiritual competencies, moral and religious competencies, intellectual competencies, research competencies, environmental competencies, global and international competencies, political competencies, and cultural competencies, and the education system authorities are suggested planning for development of these competencies in principals.

Keywords: *Assessment, Professional Competency, Principals, Education*

INTRODUCTION

Competency refers to a set of knowledge, attitude, skills and other personal dependent characteristics which affect the major part of job and it is correlated with the job performance, can be measured according to the totally accepted standards, and improved by retest and experience (Project Management Institute, 2004).

This institute has explained the dimensions of competencies as follows:

- Abilities (talent): The quality of ability to do work, and acquired natural talent and skill (PMBOK, 2004).

According to the description of managerial competencies by the United Nations, the competencies refers to the combination of personal and personality characteristics, skills, and behavior which directly affect the individual performance. The UN has provided two sets of competencies (Ghaemian, 2009).

A- Core abilities including the communicational abilities and skills, responsiveness and accountability, teamwork, customer orientation, commitment to continuous learning, planning and organizing, creativity, and technology awareness.

B- Complementary capabilities included the leadership, to have vision, empowering the other individuals, performance management, Trust building, judgment and decision-making.

In a research entitles as the managerial and leadership competencies, Young (2005) has considered the following cases as the most important competencies.

1- Managerial abilities and skills: Planning, coordination, decision making, control and time management;

2- Personnel management competencies: Supervision, companionship and compassion, motivation, encouragement, education and creating the working groups, and advice and consulting if necessary;

3- Communication skills: Listening skills, asking relevant questions, presentation skills, empathy, establishing the clear communication, and sympathy

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- 1- Personal traits and characteristics: Self-esteem, Enhancing the spirit of perseverance and patience, pressure adjustment, determination, self-awareness, self-motivation and self-motivation;
- 2- Change and Innovation: Transparency, creativity and innovation, being active, multidimensional thinking, innovative approach, passion for learning, ability to manage the rapid changes;
- 3- Scientific and technical skills: Utilization of classic knowledge, domination on issue, to have a high-level technical knowledge, subjectivity and technical intelligence;
- 4- Prospecting and goal-orientation: Ability to develop and promote a certain perspective and focusing on the relevant goals, being goal oriented;
- 5- Proper communication and interaction with external stakeholders: Managing the legal implementation of practices, ability to raise the capital, knowledge and ability to interact and communicate with various external organizations;
- 6- Abilities and skills of negotiation and pursuing the organizational goals: Negotiation skills, conflict management, the ability to persuade others, the customer orientation. Other individuals' opinions and accepting them.

In a research entitled as the "managerial competencies", Ghafarian (1999) considered six following cases as the manager' required competencies:

- 1- Professional knowledge;
- 2- Skills (behavioral skills, intellectual skills)
- 3- Personality characteristics (self-confidence, extroversion, etc.)
- 4- Insight and attitude (values, principles, policy orientation, etc.)
- 5- Professional reputation (strong formal communications, professional power, etc.)
- 6- Public reputation (strong formal communications, public reputation, etc.)

In a doctoral dissertation entitled as the "Assessment of elementary school principals' competencies and professional skills for designing the appropriate management model", Khajehei (2002) has classified the principals' most important competencies into three categories of technical, human and cognitive skills.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research has the survey type and is among the descriptive studies.

The statistical population consists of all 14500 elementary, secondary, high and pre-university school principals working in education system of Tehran province.

The statistical sample size is equal to 400 and selected based on Morgan Table by stratified random sampling method.

The researcher-made questionnaire is the data collection tool and its validity is investigated by three experts and its reliability is obtained equal to 0.88 using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

The descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation of scores) and inferential statistics (ANOVA and t-test) are utilized for data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of data analysis for responding to research questions are as follows:

- 1- What competencies do the principals need in the field of management and leadership dimension?

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Table 1: The results of subjects' responses to research questions in the field of leadership and management competencies

No.	Management and leadership competencies	Totally appropriate		Appropriate		Partially appropriate		Inappropriate		Totally inappropriate		Total	Mean	Standard deviation
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage			
1	Self-management	216	54	156	39	20	5	8	2	-	-	400	4.49	0.620
2	Time management	228	57	120	30	40	10	12	3	-	-	400	4.60	0.597
3	Crisis Management	220	55	160	40	16	4	4	1	0	0	400	4.40	0.728
4	Conflict management	120	30	180	45	60	15	36	9	4	1	400	4.10	0.787
5	Change Management	280	70	100	25	12	3	8	2	-	-	400	4.61	0.610
6	Participatory Management	284	71	80	20	32	8	4	1	-	-	400	4.67	0.610
7	Ability to make decisions	288	72	84	21	22	5.5	4	1	2	0.5	400	4.65	0.648
8	Need building	264	66	104	26	28	7	4	1	-	-	400	4.65	0.683
9	Future Research	232	58	140	35	24	6	4	1	-	-	400	4.47	0.655
10	Planning	200	50	168	42	24	6	8	2	-	-	400	4.41	0.668

According to the data contained in Table (1), the subjects believe that the principals' required competencies in the field of leadership and management are totally appropriate and appropriate. The self management (93%), time management (87%), crisis management (95%), conflict management (75%), change management (95%), participatory management (91%), the ability to make strategic decisions (93%), need building (92%), future research (93%) and planning (92%).

2- What competencies do the principals need in the field of social dimension?

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Table 2: The results of subjects' responses to research questions in the field of social competencies

No.	Social competencies	Totally appropriate		Appropriate		Partially appropriate		Inappropriate		Totally inappropriate		Total	Mean	Standard deviation
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Abundance	Percent			
1	Interpersonal relationship skills	280	70	100	25	16	4	4	1	-	-	400	4.66	0.570
2	Intrapersonal relationship skills	260	65	108	27	32	8	0	0	-	-	400	4.54	0.672
3	Extra-personal skills	200	50	140	35	40	10	20	5	-	-	400	4.43	0.691
4	Participation, cooperation and teamwork skills	296	74	80	20	24	6	-	-	-	-	400	4.67	0.595
5	Public skills	120	30	172	43	96	24	12	3	-	-	400	4.02	0.822
6	Skill of influencing the others and convincing them	208	52	132	33	56	14	4	1	-	-	400	4.39	0.699
7	Careful listening skill	240	60	136	34	22	5.5	2	0.5	-	-	400	4.49	0.660
8	Collective management skill	180	45	168	42	46	11.5	6	1.5	-	-	400	4.2	0.753
9	The desire for conflict resolution or the non-violent methods	232	58	128	32	34	8.5	6	1.5	-	-	400	4.0	0.771
10	Ability for teamwork	208	52	156	39	32	8	4	1	-	-	400	4.4	0.675
11	Accepting the responsibility for roles and tasks	240	60	140	35	16	4	4	1	-	-	400	4.9	0.682

According to the descriptive data contained in Table (2), the subjects believe that the principals' required competencies in the field of social competencies are totally appropriate and appropriate.

The interpersonal relationship skills (95%), intrapersonal relationship skills (92%), extra-personal relationship skills (85%), Participation, cooperation and teamwork skills (82%), public skills (73%), Skill of influencing the others and convincing them (85%), Careful listening skill (94%), collective management skill (87%), desire for conflict resolution or the non-violent methods (90%), ability for teamwork (91%), Accepting the responsibility for roles and tasks (85%).

3- What competencies do the principals need in the field of technological dimension?

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Table 3: The results of subjects' responses to research questions in the field of technological competencies

No.	Technological competencies	Totally appropriate		Appropriate		Partially appropriate		Inappropriate		Totally inappropriate		Total	Mean	Standard deviation
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency			
1	Information knowledge	124	31	160	40	92	23	22	5.5	2	0.5	400	3.97	0.879
2	The ability to retrieve and use information	240	60	128	32	32	8	0	0		0	400	4.45	0.701
3	Understanding the Network Culture	224	56	144	36	24	6	8	2	-	-	400	4.50	0.634
4	Understanding and respect in network manners	220	55	140	35	40	10	-	-	-	-	400	4.44	0.662
5	Ability to work and operate in cyberspace	200	50	180	45	20	5	-	-	-	-	400	4.42	0.610

According to the descriptive data contained in Table (3), the subjects believe that the principals' required competencies in the field of technological competencies are totally appropriate and appropriate.

The Information knowledge (71%), the ability to retrieve and use information (92%), understanding the network culture (92%), Understanding and respect in network manners (90%), Ability to work and operate in cyberspace (95 Percent);

4- What competencies do the principals need in the field of personal dimension?

Table 4: The results of subjects' responses to each question of questionnaire in the field of personal competencies

No.	Personal competencies	Totally appropriate		Appropriate		Partially appropriate		Inappropriate		Totally inappropriate		Total	Mean	Standard deviation
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency			
1	Self-regulation	260	65	100	25	38	9.5	2	0.5	-	-	400	4.60	0.626
2	Individual order	264	66	108	27	24	6	4	1	-	-	400	4.59	0.622
3	Collective order	120	30	160	40	112	28	6	1.5	2	0.5	400	3.96	0.866
4	Self confidence	240	60	124	31	24	6	12	3	-	-	400	4.55	0.627
5	Independence and self-leadership	200	50	160	40	40	10	0	0	-	-	400	4.40	0.679
6	Accountability	264	66	108	27	20	5	8	2	-	-	400	4.59	0.632
7	Self-control	132	33	160	40	80	20	20	5	8	2	400	3.99	0.896

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According to the data contained in Table (4), the subjects believe that the principals' required competencies in the field of personal competencies are totally appropriate and appropriate.

Self-regulation (90%), Individual order (93%), Collective order (70%), Self confidence (91%), independence and self-leadership (90%), accountability (93%), Self-control (73%)

5- What competencies do the principals need in the field of economic dimension?

Table 5: The results of subjects' responses to research questions in the field of economic competencies

No.	Economic competencies	Totally appropriate		Appropriate		Partially appropriate		Inappropriate		Totally inappropriate		Total	Mean	Standard deviation
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage			
1	Risk taking	300	75	60	15	32	8	8	2	-	-	400	4.69	0.593
2	Entrepreneurship	304	76	76	19	12	3	8	2	-	-	400	4.76	0.515
3	Money-making skills	292	73	100	25	8	2	0	0	-	-	400	4.69	0.554
4	Understanding the culture of productivity	280	70	60	15	40	10	20	5	-	-	400	4.71	0.598
5	Professional marketing competencies	320	80	76	19	4	1	-	-	-	-	400	4.76	0.473
6	Understanding the characteristics of knowledge economy	312	78	64	16	20	5	4	1	-	-	400	4.72	0.583
7	Effective learning skill	240	60	120	30	24	6	16	4	-	-	400	4.53	0.624
8	Achieving the professional identity	200	50	152	38	48	12	0	0	0	0	400	4.33	0.767
9	To have work conscience	260	65	116	29	20	5	4	1	-	-	400	4.59	0.608
10	To have work ethic	264	66	112	28	24	6	0	0	-	-	400	4.57	0.643

According to the descriptive data contained in Table (5), the subjects believe that the principals' required competencies in the field of economic competencies are totally appropriate and appropriate.

Risk taking (90%), entrepreneurship (95%), Money-making skills (98%), understanding the culture of productivity (85%), professional marketing (99%), understanding the characteristics of knowledge economy (94%), Effective learning skill (90%), achieving the professional identity (88%), to have work conscience (94%), to have work ethic (92%).

6- What competencies do the principals need in the field of spiritual, moral and religious dimension?

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Table 6: The results of subjects' responses to research questions in the field of spiritual, moral and religious competencies

No.	Spiritual, moral and religious dimension competencies		Totally appropriate		Appropriate		Partially appropriate		Inappropriate		Totally inappropriate		Total	Mean	Standard deviation
			Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage			
1	Maintaining	the	320	80	60	15	12	3	8	2	-	-	400	4.77	0.496
2	Sensitivity	to	300	75	80	20	20	5	-	-	0	0	400	4.69	0.581
3	Commitment	to	280	70	100	25	12	3	8	2	0	0	400	4.65	0.592
		consider the values													

According to the descriptive data contained in Table (6), the subjects believe that the principals' required competencies in the field of spiritual, moral and religious are totally appropriate and appropriate. Maintaining the divine values (95%), sensitivity to morality and spirituality (95%), commitment to consider the values (95%)

7- What competencies do the principals need in the field of intelligence (intellectual) dimension?

Table 7: The results of subjects' responses to research questions in the field of intelligence (intellectual) competencies

No.	Intelligence (intellectual) competencies		Totally appropriate		Appropriate		Partially appropriate		Inappropriate		Totally inappropriate		Total	Mean	Standard deviation
			Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage			
1	To have	the	236	59	140	35	24	6	-	-	-	-	400	4.54	0.580
2	To have	critical	232	57	136	34	32	8	4	1	-	-	400	4.57	0.677
3	To have	higher-level	228	56	140	35	28	7	8	2	-	-	400	4.49	0.656
4	The ability to use	the	276	69	104	26	16	4	4	1	-	-	400	4.64	0.585
5	The ability to give	new ideas	300	75	80	20	20	5	-	-	-	-	400	4.75	0.489
6	Lifelong learning		304	76	84	21	12	3	0	0	-	-	400	4.73	0.525

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According to the descriptive data contained in Table (7), the subjects believe that the principals' required competencies in the field of intelligence (intellectual) competencies are totally appropriate and appropriate.

To have the knowledge, skill and creativity (94%), to have the critical thinking skill (91%), to have the higher-level skill and thinking (91%), the ability to use the potential and create the new capacities (95%), ability to give new ideas (95%) and lifelong learning (97%).

8- What competencies do the principals need in the field of research dimension?

Table 8: The results of subjects' responses to research questions in the field of research competencies

No.	Research competencies	Totally appropriate		Appropriate		Partially appropriate		Inappropriate		Totally inappropriate		Total	Mean	Standard deviation
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage			
1	Research orientation in dealing with issues	320	80	60	15	16	4	4	1	-	-	400	4.74	0.551
2	Enjoying the spirit of researching	204	51	160	40	24	6	8	2	4	1	400	4.42	0.678
3	Promoting the research culture	280	70	100	25	20	5	-	-	-	-	400	4.67	0.546
4	Ability to make decision	280	70	96	24	16	4	8	2	-	-	400	4.65	0.586

According to the descriptive data contained in Table (8), the subjects believe that the principals' required competencies in the field of research competencies are totally appropriate and appropriate.

Research orientation in dealing with issues (95%), enjoying the spirit of researching (91%), promoting the research culture (95%), ability to make decision (94%)

9- What competencies do the principals need in the field of environmental dimension?

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Table 9: The results of subjects' responses to research questions in the field of environmental competencies

No.	Environmental competencies	Totally appropriate		Appropriate		Partially appropriate		Inappropriate		Totally inappropriate		Total	Mean	Standard deviation
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency			
1	Environmental knowledge	292	73	84	21	24	6	-	-	-	-	400	4.68	0.567
2	Aesthetics	280	70	100	25	20	5	-	-	-	-	400	4.66	0.565
3	Commitment to changing the lifestyle and consumption habits in order to preserve the environment	240	60	128	32	28	7	4	1	-	-	400	4.52	0.642

According to the descriptive data contained in Table (9), the subjects believe that the principals' required competencies in the field of environmental competencies are totally appropriate and appropriate. Environmental knowledge (94%), aesthetics (95%), commitment to changing the lifestyle and consumption habits in order to preserve the environment (92%)

10- What competencies do the principals need in the field of global and international dimensions?

Table 10: The results of subjects' responses to research questions in the field of global and international competencies

No.	Global and international competencies	Totally appropriate		Appropriate		Partially appropriate		Inappropriate		Totally inappropriate		Total	Mean	Standard deviation
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency			
1	The ability to consider the issues at the global level	160	40	156	39	76	19	8	2	0	0	400	4.10	0.841
2	Awareness and sensitivity to global issues	204	51	136	34	52	13	8	2	-	-	400	4.36	0.748
3	Global thinking and local acting	240	60	132	33	24	6	4	1	0	0	40	4.50	0.678

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According to the descriptive data contained in Table (10), the subjects believe that the principals' required competencies in the field of global and international competencies are totally appropriate and appropriate.

The ability to consider the issues at the global level (79%), awareness and sensitivity to global issues (85%), thinking and local acting (93%)

11- What competencies do the principals need in the field of political dimension?

Table 11: The results of subjects' responses to research questions in the field of political competencies

No.	Political competencies	Totally appropriate		Appropriate		Partially appropriate		Inappropriate		Totally inappropriate		Total	Mean	Standard deviation
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage			
1	Political awareness at the national, regional and global levels	240	60	136	34	24	6	0	0	-	-	400	4.49	0.669
2	Ability to participate in political activities at national and international levels	280	70	96	24	24	6	0	0	-	-	400	4.61	0.638

According to the data contained in Table (11), the subjects believe that the principals' required competencies in the field of political competencies are totally appropriate and appropriate.

Political awareness at the national, regional and global levels (94%), ability to participate in political activities at national and international levels (94%)

12- What competencies do the principals need in the field of cultural competencies?

Table 12: The results of subjects' responses to research questions in the field of cultural dimension

No.	Cultural competencies	Totally appropriate		Appropriate		Partially appropriate		Inappropriate		Totally inappropriate		Total	Mean	Standard deviation
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage			
1	Understanding the global culture	220	55	140	35	32	8	8	2	-	-	400	4.69	0.593
2	Cultural agreement	224	56	136	34	36	9	4	1	0	0	400	4.76	0.515
3	Development of cultural heritage	240	60	116	29	28	7	16	4	-	-	400	4.69	0.554
4	Cultural refinement	220	55	128	32	40	10	12	3	0	0	400	4.71	0.598
5	Sharing the cultural heritage	200	50	140	35	48	12	4	1	8	2	400	4.76	0.473
6	Tolerance and acceptance of cultural differences	244	61	120	30	36	9	0	0	-	-	400	4.72	0.583

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According to the data contained in Table (12), the subjects believe that the principals' required competencies in the field of cultural competencies are totally appropriate and appropriate.

Understanding the global culture (90%), cultural agreement (90%), the development of cultural heritage (89%), cultural refinement (87%), sharing the cultural heritage (85%) and tolerance and acceptance of cultural differences (91%)

Discussion

Using the analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t test, the difference between the school principals' views in different courses and degrees on the one hand and the principals with different teaching experience at male and female schools on the other hand suggest that there is no significant difference between their views on the principals' required competencies. Furthermore, the identified competencies in this study are among the principals' necessary competencies with the confidence of 95%.

The obtained results of data analysis in this study indicate that the principals' most important competencies are as follows:

Management and leadership competencies, social competencies, technological competencies, personal competencies, economic competencies (job and work), spiritual competencies, moral and religious competencies, intelligence (intellectual) competencies, research competencies, environmental competencies, global and international competencies (thinking and operation), political competencies, and cultural competencies.

These results are consistent with the findings of research by Competency Institute (2005), Ramsdan (2001), Van-Dam (2004), Overd (2008), Omajin (2005), Helene (2008), Labadi (2007), Farahi (2005), and Ghaffarian (1999). Therefore, the obtained results about the principals' required competencies have the high validity in this research, and thus the education system authorities are suggested planning for creating and developing these competencies in all education principals.

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