An Assessment of Skill Needs of a Sample of Iranian School Principals Based on “Successful Leaders’ Self-Development Model”

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Abstract. The present paper is aimed at identifying Iranian principals’ needs for attributes of leadership self-development. Data collection tool was a 110-item questionnaire. The results demonstrated that there were statistically significant differences in principals’ needs level based on their demographic variables. Regarding three levels of qualities, different mean ranks were obtained. Managerial skills and attributes were in the first priority from the principal viewpoint. Among 11 leadership qualities, most of the principals expressed high need to develop their mental agility. Female principals declared more needs for developing their analytic and problem solving skills than male ones.

Keywords: successful leaders, managerial skills, self-development, school principal.

Introduction

Over the last decade, organizations and their leaders have experienced sweeping changes in the workplace, such as rapid technological advancements, increased globalization, shifting organizational structures, and dynamic career patterns (Kraut & Korman, 1999). As the world of work continues to change at a rapid pace, schools and principals must investigate alternative means of developing the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by leaders to succeed in a dynamic environment. One response of organizations is to place greater responsibility on their leaders to develop themselves (Boyce, 2004). Highly effective leadership, particularly in a role of team leader, is of crucial importance to the
success of any school. To be highly effective as team leaders school principals need to know something about their own (Jones, 2004).

Nowadays leadership is likely to be playing a more important role in school life because it has become a matter of pressing importance for organizations. Good leadership overlaps with, but is different from, good management. Management efficiency and effectiveness have long been the hallmarks of organizational success; but this is no longer enough. Something else is needed. Organizations are massively challenged by change and need more leadership. Good managers are always important, but it is the ability to lead in the conditions of uncertainty, confusion and risk that makes the vital difference. In the past, leadership has been seen as the preserve of the few; today leadership is needed “at all levels” and “on every part of the pitch”. Most organizations and communities are short of this sort of widely distributed leadership. Leadership development programs have been established, but tend to focus on the next set of top people. The talents and potentials of the great majority of people remain neglected (Pedler, Brgyone, & Boydell, 2010).

A reason that has been advanced for poor results in schools is that principals are not appropriately skilled and trained for school leadership, and as a result, there are those who call for professional development of principals (Mathibe, 2007). Professional development may take different forms such as training, on-site processes, networks and professional development schools. As a human resource manager, a principal is required to set up mechanisms for nurturing and unfolding educators’ potential in order to enhance effective teaching and learning (Reitzug, 2002, p. 3).

Organizations are recognizing that, to be competitive they must promote and rely on their Leaders to engage in self-directed learning (Ellinger, Yang, & Howton, 2002). Formal training programs are not only too expensive and time-consuming, but also too disconnected from the current complex and dynamic environment (Hall, 1996). Further, leaders are appreciating the personal benefits associated with their self-directed professional development performance. Self-development is an approach that emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning. It recognizes that we all have a great potential for learning and for changing what we do. It differs from traditional, instructor-centered approaches by giving the primary responsibility for learning to learners themselves: they are shown how to use a variety of methods to diagnose their needs and then create an action plan for implementing change. Such an approach has become popular and successful because it helps people to adapt to, and enjoy, the new challenges of organizational life. Thus for these reasons, self-development has become the core of successful professional development. Development involves the progressive increase of the complexity of the activities of an agent with an associated increase of its capabilities. The principal stakeholders of a self-development program are the participants, organization, and facilitators of the program.

Regarding managers, self-development can be defined as personal development, with the manager taking primary responsibility for her or his own learning and for choosing...
the means to achieve this. Other commonly held views on the meaning and purposes of self-development are: career development and advancement; improving performance in an existing job; developing specific qualities or skills and achieving total potential—self-actualization.

The environment in which we work is changing more rapidly than ever before. If we are to invest on these changes, we need to become very skilled at learning in order to be able to respond quickly and appropriately. Some researchers showed that employees who participate in self-development activities are viewed as more productive (Gould & Penley, 1984) and effective (Temporal, 1982). In addition, because today’s leaders are more likely to work in multiple organizations during their careers, maintaining professional proficiency becomes a personal responsibility (Kraut & Korman, 1999).

Regarding school principals, self-development refers to intentional activities, which are done by a principal in leadership area. It is the belief to develop personal capacities to be effective on processes and roles of leaders, which empower them to be present in more complicated situations and gain more information. Self-development is a process where principals commit to gain the knowledge or a set of strong skills (Robert, Halpin, Brunner, 2012)

M. Pedler, J. Brgoyne and T. Boydell (2007) identified eleven attributes, which were found to be possessed by the successful managers and leaders:

1. Command of basic facts
2. Relevant professional knowledge
3. Continuing sensitivity to events
4. Analytical, problem-solving, decision/ judgment-making skills
5. Social skills and abilities
6. Emotional resilience
7. Proactivity-inclination to respond purposefully to events
8. Creativity
9. Mental agility
10. Balanced learning habits and skills
11. Self-knowledge

In M Pedler, J. Brgoyne and T. Boydell (2007) view these qualities fall into three groups, which constitute three different levels. Numbers 1 and 2 form the foundation level: they represent two kinds of basic knowledge and information that a manager may need to use in making decisions and taking action. Numbers 3 to 7 are specific skills and attributes that directly affect behavior and performance. Number 3 is the skill or quality that allows managers to acquire the basic knowledge and information involved in 1 and 2. Numbers 8 to 11 are those qualities that allow the manager to develop and deploy skills and resources in categories 3, 4, and 5. They may be called ‘meta-qualities’ because they allow the manager to develop the situation specific skills needed in particular circumstances. Many of the attributes are interconnected, that is, possession of
one contributes to possession of another. Below is a short explanation of each of these eleven attributes, providing the basic model for self-development.

1. **Command of basic facts**: Successful managers have a command of such basic facts as goals and plans, product knowledge, the roles and relationships between various departments, their own job and what is expected of them. If they do not store all this information, they know where to get it when they need it.

2. **Relevant professional knowledge**: This category includes ‘technical’ knowledge such as production technology, marketing techniques, engineering knowledge, relevant legislation, sources of finance, and knowledge of basic background management principles and theories, e.g., planning, organizing, and controlling.

3. **Continuing sensitivity to events**: The successful manager is relatively sensitive to events and can tune into what is going on and is perceptive and open to ‘hard’ information, such as figures and facts, and ‘soft’ information, such as the feelings of other people.

4. **Analytical, problem-solving and decision/judgment-making skills**: The manager must develop decision/judgment-making skills, including using logical, optimizing techniques, the ability to cope with ambiguity and uncertainty, striking a balance between the necessities at times to be guided by subjective feelings without throwing objective logic completely out of the window.

5. **Social skill and abilities**: The successful manager develops a range of abilities, which are essential in such activities: communicating, delegating, negotiating, resolving conflict, persuading, selling, using and responding to authority and power.

6. **Emotional resilience**: The successful manager needs to be sufficiently resilient to cope with uncertainty and ambiguity. ‘Resilient’ means that when feeling stressed, one does not get insensitive but manage to cope by maintaining self-control and by ‘giving’ to some extent.

7. **Pro-activity-inclination to respond purposefully to events**: Effective managers have, some purposes to achieve, rather than merely responding to demand. They cannot plan everything and at times, they must respond to the needs of the instant situation, but when making such a response the effective manager manages to consider the longer term.

8. **Creativity**: Creativity means the ability to come up with unique new responses to situations, and to have the breadth of insight to recognize and take up useful new approaches. It involves not only having new ideas oneself, but also thy ability to recognize a good idea when it is presented from another source.

9. **Mental agility**: The concept of ‘mental agility’ includes the ability to grasp problems quickly, to think of several things at once, to switch rapidly from one problem or situation to another, to see quickly the whole situation. Given the hectic nature of managerial work, these are particularly necessary qualities for success.

10. **Balanced learning habits and skills**: Data collected by observing and interviewing managers, demonstrate that a significant proportion of the degree of their success can be explained by the presence or absence of habits and skills related to learning. Successful
managers are more independent as learners. Successful managers are capable of abstract thinking, as well as concrete, practical thought. The ability to use a range of different learning processes is necessary for managerial success. Successful managers are more likely to have a relatively wide view of the nature of the skills of management.

**Self-knowledge:** Whatever each of us does is affected by our own view of our job or role, by our goals, values, feelings, strengths, weaknesses and a host of other personal factors. To keep a relatively high degree of self-control, the manager must be aware of these self-attributes and the part they play in influencing actions. The successful manager therefore needs skills of introspection (Pedlers’ et al., 2007).

Despite this need for professional self-development, little systematic research has been reported to advance the understanding of the characteristics associated with individuals who perform self-development or the effect of organizational support in promoting self-development performance.

Prior to 2003 (Maurer, Weiss, & Barbeite, 2003) relevant employee development research, while pioneering, primarily included limited variables focused on demographic predictors, relied on quasi-experimental, cross-sectional designs, self-report data, or non-managerial samples (e.g., London, Larsen, & Thisted, 1999; Maurer & Tarulli, 1994). As a result, researchers and practitioners are unable to predict which employees are likely to engage in self-learning activities or how organizations can increase and direct employees to perform professional or job-related self-development. Research is needed to identify personal attributes or characteristics that predict principals’ performance of self-development activities, understand why these attributes effect performance, and assess the effect of organizational support on school leaders’ performance of self-development activities.

In a recent research E. Mazari, K. Abili, J. Pourkarimi and K. Khabare (2014) explored a model for managers’ self-development for primary, middle and secondary schools in Iran. They found that needs of male principals were emotional resilience and mental agility; and regarding female counterparts, balanced learning habits and skills were their self-development needs.

Shirbagi, Zabardast and Amani (2016) in their research found that the propensity of female principals to self-development was significantly higher than that of their male counterparts and the inexperienced, compared to experienced principals had greater propensity to self-development. The relationships between motivational factors such as locus of control, job involvement, organizational commitment and that of self-regulatory skills such as meta-cognition, self-efficacy, and motivation with tendency to leadership self-development were meaningful.

With respect to leader self-development, principals will more likely engage in leader self-development if the following conditions hold true: (1) they value being a more effective leader; (2) they believe that successfully self-developing their leadership skills will lead to becoming a more effective leader, and (3) they deem that they can, in fact, successfully develop and conduct a personal leadership self-development program.
The skills necessary for individuals to perform leader self-development can be described as a synergy between instructional technology and self-regulatory skills. The instructional technology system provides a context for identifying and framing the instructional skills critical to self-development (Goldstein, 1993). These skills include 1) diagnosing learning needs, 2) designing and setting developmental goals, 3) identifying the developmental process, and 4) evaluating personal learning progress. While the goal of self-development is for leaders to initiate and direct their own professional developmental, organizational actions may facilitate or reduce leaders’ participation in self-development activities. Focusing on an aspect of organizational support that increases employees’ motivation and skills, directly relates to the propensity to self-develop framework.

This research has been planned to assess self-development needs of a sample of Iranian principals. Furthermore, it follows to achieve approaches to provide self-development programs of principals. The main purpose can be broken down as:

1. To assess principals’ needs to skills regarding basic knowledge and information related to their work.
2. To assess principals’ needs to skills regarding analytical, social, decision-making and judgment skills.
3. To assess principals’ needs to skills regarding meta-qualities.

This research assesses following questions to cover the aforementioned objectives:

1. Are self-development needs of principals based on basic knowledge and information (a. command of basic facts, b. relevant professional understanding of management)?
2. Are self-development needs of principals based on special skills (a) continuing sensitivity to event, b) analytical skills, c) social skills, d. emotional reliance, and e. productivity)?
3. Are self-development needs of principals based on Meta quality of skills and attributes (a) creativity, b) balanced learning skills, c) mental agility, and d. self-knowledge)?

**Method**

In the present study, a descriptive survey method was used. Sample: Participants of the study included 151 randomly selected school principals from Iranian mid-sized city, Sanandaj, in Kurdistan province (72 males and 79 females). The sample comprised of 14.72% (63) elementary school principals, 35.33% (53) guidance school principals and 29.80% (29.80) high school principals.

**Instruments:** The 110 items in the 11 subscales of Pedlers’ et al. (2007) “Leaders’ Self-Development Assessment Questionnaire” were randomly distributed into one instrument and completed by all participants in the study during the year of 2017. This instrument along with a demographic questionnaire was utilized to obtain levels
of school principals’ needs to self-development skills. The responses for 110-items questionnaire were based on five-point Likert scale anchored with strongly agree and strongly disagree. With permission of authors, the original scale (In English) was translated to Persian language using back translation approach. Comparison was made of the original and back translated version and no significant discrepancies in the translations were seen. In addition, reliability of Persian versions was obtained through Cronbach’s alphas and exceeded to satisfactory level (M = 362.3, SD = 33.54, α = 94), thus the translated version of questionnaire has defensible reliability for using within Iranian education context.

Statistical Techniques: Data were analyzed using the Freidman nonparametric test, a series of the t-tests to compare the differences of main variables between males and females, a series of ANOVA tests to assess differences of skills needs among different category of principals. SPSS® version 23.0 for Windows was the statistical software program used to perform all procedures

Results and Discussion

In order to compare the needs to eleven managerial skills from the principals’ view the Freidman nonparametric test was applied. Mean ranks in each condition and Friedman test statistics for testing of the null hypothesis have been given in the Table 1.

Table 1

| Skills                        | Mean Rank | Rank | \(\chi^2\) | df  | Sig. |
|------------------------------|-----------|------|------------|-----|------|
| 1 Command of basic facts     | 2.18      | 11   | 507.6      | 10  | .000 |
| 2 Relevant professional knowledge | 5.94      | 7    |            |     |      |
| 3 Continuing sensitivity to events | 6.47      | 5    |            |     |      |
| 4 Analytical, problem-solving | 7.03      | 4    |            |     |      |
| 5 Social skills and abilities | 7.45      | 2    |            |     |      |
| 6 Emotional resilience       | 9.33      | 1    |            |     |      |
| 7 Pro-activity               | 4.40      | 10   |            |     |      |
| 8 Creativity                 | 6.36      | 6    |            |     |      |
| 9 Mental agility             | 4.64      | 9    |            |     |      |
| 10 Balanced learning habits  | 7.39      | 3    |            |     |      |
| 11 Self-knowledge            | 4.79      | 8    |            |     |      |

The Table shows that these ranks are not randomly distributed across the conditions and mean rank for each condition is not similar to each other. Needs for the eleven managerial skills from the Iranian principals’ view was significantly different (\(\chi^2 = 507.6\),
df = 10, p < 0.001). The highest and lowest mean ranks belong to emotional resilience and command of basic facts, respectively.

In order to compare needs for three fundamental levels of managerial skills from principals’ viewpoint, the Freidman nonparametric test again was applied. Mean ranks in each condition and Friedman test statistics for testing of the null hypothesis are illustrated in the Table 2.

Table 2

| Skills                          | Mean Rank | Rank | χ² | df  | Sig. |
|---------------------------------|-----------|------|----|-----|------|
| Basic knowledge and information | 1.48      | 3    | 64.5 | 2   | .000 |
| Skills and attributes           | 2.36      | 1    |      |     |      |
| Meta-qualities                  | 2.16      | 2    |      |     |      |

The Table shows that the ranks are not randomly distributed across the conditions and mean rank for each condition is not similar to others. Needs for the three fundamental levels of managerial skills in the Iranian principals’ view were significantly different (χ² = 64.5, df = 2, p < 0.001). The highest and lowest mean ranks belong to skills and attributes, and basic knowledge and information, respectively.

The next section compares the means of males and female principals’ viewpoints using the independent samples t-test regarding eleven managerial skills and three fundamental levels of managerial skills. Table 3 shows descriptive statistics and t-values for variables under study.

Table 3

| Main Variables                   | Females (N = 79) | Males (N = 71) | t-value (df = 149) |
|----------------------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Command of basic facts           | 2.19 (.41)       | 2.15 (.37)     | .706              |
| Relevant professional knowledge  | 2.61 (.36)       | 2.63 (.34)     | .337              |
| Continuing sensitivity to events | 2.68 (.37)       | 2.64 (.45)     | .697              |
| Analytical, problem-solving, ... | 2.72 (.34)       | 2.73 (.37)     | .169              |
| Social skills and abilities      | 2.76 (.37)       | 2.75 (.35)     | .25               |
| Emotional resilience             | 2.95 (.35)       | 3.05 (.35)     | 1.80              |
| Pro-activity                     | 2.49 (.27)       | 2.42 (.35)     | 1.48              |
| Creativity                       | 2.67 (.34)       | 2.65 (.43)     | .309              |
| Mental agility                   | 2.49 (.34)       | 2.49 (.32)     | .086              |
| Balanced learning habits and skills | 2.77 (.29)   | 2.78 (.30)     | .148              |
The t-values in all cases were found to be non-significant at the 0.05 level of significance. It indicated that hypothesis of equality was confirmed at the specified level. It can be inferred that the differences were not genuine and that the female and male principals were not different in respect of their needs to managerial skills.

In order to study difference in the managerial skills variables between principals in regards to their teaching experiences, a null hypothesis was tested. Descriptive and ANOVA-test statistics for testing of the null hypothesis has been presented in the Table 4.

Table 4
Comparison of Principals’ View Regarding Main Variables Based On Schools Types

| Variables                   | Schools Type | N  | M      | SD     | SS  | df | MS  | F     |
|-----------------------------|--------------|----|--------|--------|-----|----|-----|-------|
| 2. Relevant professional knowledge | Elementary   | 62 | 2.5371 | .35998 | .881 | 2  | .440 | 3.554* |
|                             | Guidance     | 46 | 2.6391 | .35054 |     |    |     |       |
|                             | High School  | 43 | 2.7209 | .34195 |     |    |     |       |
| 7. Pro-activity             | Elementary   | 62 | 2.4265 | .30186 | .142 | 2  | .071 | .692* |
|                             | Guidance     | 46 | 2.4804 | .34488 |     |    |     |       |
|                             | High School  | 43 | 2.4953 | .31770 |     |    |     |       |
| 9. Mental agility           | Elementary   | 62 | 2.3821 | .32849 | 1.568 | 2  | .784 | 7.670** |
|                             | Guidance     | 46 | 2.5261 | .34924 |     |    |     |       |
|                             | High School  | 43 | 2.6256 | .27000 |     |    |     |       |
| 11. Self-knowledge          | Elementary   | 62 | 2.4403 | .32313 | .777 | 2  | .389 | 2.934* |
|                             | Guidance     | 46 | 2.5304 | .41251 |     |    |     |       |
|                             | High School  | 43 | 2.6140 | .36422 |     |    |     |       |
| 3. Meta-qualities           | Elementary   | 62 | 2.5311 | .21650 | .391 | 2  | .196 | 3.113* |
|                             | Guidance     | 46 | 2.6043 | .29909 |     |    |     |       |
|                             | High School  | 43 | 2.6523 | .23972 |     |    |     |       |

Note: *p < 0.05 and **p < 0.01.

Table 4 shows that he $F$- ratio in 5 cases regarding managerial skills were significant at .05 level. That is, levels of needs to managerial skills were significantly different among principals based on their school type. Post Hoc test was used to follow-up this finding.

In order to study difference in the managerial skills variables between principals in regards to their academic degree, a null hypothesis was tested. Descriptive and ANOVA-test statistics for testing of the null hypothesis are presented in the Table 5.
Table 5
Comparison of Principals’ View Regarding Main Variables based on their Academic Degree

| Variables                        | Principals’ Degree | N   | M      | SD     | SS   | df | MS      | F       |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|-----|--------|--------|------|----|---------|---------|
| 2. Relevant professional knowledge | Diploma            | 36  | 2.4806 | .31787 | .926 | 2  | .463    | 3.745*  |
|                                 | Associate Dip.     | 43  | 2.6651 | .30228 |      |    |         |         |
|                                 | BA                 | 72  | 2.6639 | .39229 |      |    |         |         |
| 3. Continuing sensitivity       | Diploma            | 36  | 2.4917 | .34507 | 1.534| 2  | .767    | 4.631*  |
|                                 | Associate Dip.     | 43  | 2.6558 | .41765 |      |    |         |         |
|                                 | BA                 | 72  | 2.7444 | .42819 |      |    |         |         |
| 7. Pro-activity                 | Diploma            | 36  | 2.3500 | .29809 | .649 | 2  | .324    | 3.278*  |
|                                 | Associate Dip.     | 43  | 2.4707 | .36990 |      |    |         |         |
|                                 | BA                 | 72  | 2.5139 | .28547 |      |    |         |         |
| 9. Mental agility               | Diploma            | 36  | 2.5667 | .24260 | .929 | 2  | .465    | 4.359*  |
|                                 | Associate Dip.     | 43  | 2.6484 | .38336 |      |    |         |         |
|                                 | BA                 | 72  | 2.7153 | .43852 |      |    |         |         |
| 11. Self-knowledge              | Diploma            | 36  | 2.3556 | .32288 | 1.111| 2  | .556    | 4.269*  |
|                                 | Associate Dip.     | 43  | 2.5486 | .32817 |      |    |         |         |
|                                 | BA                 | 72  | 2.5333 | .32717 |      |    |         |         |
| 3. Meta- qualities              | Diploma            | 36  | 2.3639 | .28998 | .425 | 2  | .213    | 3.397*  |
|                                 | Associate Dip.     | 43  | 2.5651 | .35716 |      |    |         |         |
|                                 | BA                 | 72  | 2.5653 | .39295 |      |    |         |         |

Table 5 shows that the F-ratio in 6 cases regarding managerial skills were significant at .05 level. That is, levels of needs to managerial skills were significantly different among principals based on their academic degree. Post Hoc test was used to follow-up this finding.

The next section compares the means of principals’ views using the independent samples t-test regarding 11 managerial skills and 3 fundamental levels of managerial skills based on their academic major (holding relevant or irrelevant managerial degree). Table 6 shows descriptive statistics and t-values for variables under study.
Table 6
Comparison of Principals’ Viewpoints Regarding Main Variables based on their Academic Major

| Main Variables                             | Relevant to Management (N = 79) | Irrelevant to Management (N = 71) | t-value (df = 149) |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
|                                            | M      | SD    | M      | SD    |                  |
| Command of basic facts                     | 2.19   | .41   | 2.15   | .37   | .706              |
| Relevant professional knowledge            | 2.61   | .36   | 2.63   | .34   | .337              |
| Continuing sensitivity to events           | 2.68   | .37   | 2.64   | .45   | .697              |
| Analytical, problem-solving, …             | 2.72   | .34   | 2.73   | .37   | .169              |
| Social skills and abilities                | 2.76   | .37   | 2.75   | .35   | .25               |
| Emotional resilience                       | 2.95   | .35   | 3.05   | .35   | 1.80              |
| Pro-activity                               | 2.49   | .27   | 2.42   | .35   | 1.48              |
| Creativity                                 | 2.67   | .34   | 2.65   | .43   | .309              |
| Mental agility                             | 2.49   | .34   | 2.49   | .32   | .086              |
| Balanced learning habits and skills        | 2.77   | .29   | 2.78   | .30   | .148              |
| Self-knowledge                             | 2.52   | .36   | 2.51   | .37   | .186              |
| Basic knowledge and information            | 2.42   | .35   | 2.44   | .34   | .276              |
| Skills and attributes                      | 2.63   | .26   | 2.62   | .27   | .148              |
| Meta-qualities                             | 2.58   | .27   | 2.59   | .23   | .170              |

Note: *p < 0.05 and **p < 0.01.

The t-values in all cases were found to be non-significant at the 0.05 level of significance. It indicated that hypothesis of equality was confirmed at the specified level. It can be inferred that the differences were not genuine and that the principals who had relevant degree to management and who had not this type of degree were not different in respect of their needs to managerial skills.

Conclusions

The results demonstrate that principals declared their willingness to increase management skills and abilities and need consulting and using experts’ opinions. Regarding “relevant professional understanding” skills, principals who had 1–5 years management experience, and especially female principals, remarked more needs than other principals did. This result is the same as Iranian Education Ministry (2007) research result conducted in high school education office; so that in this research, principals, especially low experienced ones, declared more need to professional skills, rules and education laws.
In respect to analytical, decision-making and judgment skills, results show that principals are not interested in sensitive and important decision-making skills and should be taught about analytical skills, of course female principals need more than male ones.

In addition, there was no significant difference among principals regarding their needs for social abilities and skills. This result is the same as R. L. Katz (1974) who believes that principals by different levels similarly need social and humanity skills. Female principals need emotional reliance more than males. Freedman test showed principals prioritized this skill as the first one.

Male principals who hold MA and upper level degree working in high schools require more creativity than others do. This result is the same as A. F. Osborn (1979) who states education is a preventing factor in creative treatment of problems. In other words, highly educated people are less creative than others are. Female principals who hold associated diploma degree required more mental agility skills than their counterpart. Furthermore, results reveal that principals who had irrelevant degree to management require more learning habits and skills than principals who had relevant administrative degree. Finally, elementary school principals require more self-knowledge than others do.

This research had some limitations as follows: first, lack of national and international researches similar to this subject has made effective comparison, interpretation and explanation of results impossible; therefore, it is essential to consider it in generalizing the results. Second, having conservative atmosphere in Iranian organizations like schools may affect answering the questions, so it must be considered in generalizing the results. Finally, being inclined to select average choices by individuals who answer the questionnaire and easy taking error are the problems of survey research so probably affecting the answers.

This research gives rise to some suggestions: educated irrelevant field principals should be taught about the ways of decision-making, evaluation, creativity and problem solving. Low experienced principals should be taught about professional information and principles of management. School principals should be familiar with controlling emotions and personal feelings. Through booklets, highly educated principals should be familiar with creating and fostering methods of creativity and innovation. Through in-service courses, school principals should be informed about new methods of self-evaluation and recognition of powerful and weak points. Finally, it suggests before doing any plan for professional development, principals are asked about their needs involved in developing process of leadership. Through useful guidance handbooks and booklets, approaches of achieving self-development skills should be explained for principals emphasizing self-learning. After determining and prioritizing needs, it is essential to predict and present practices for covering them.

The findings of the present study indicated that principals need to concentrate their learning on functional issues affecting the smooth running of schools: developing skills about ways to create the right kind of climate in which organization learning can take place; learning more about school community (teachers, students, parents), analytical
and judgment skills, pursuing personal development in communication within the school community; and acquiring the micro-political skills to ensure that the interests of school community are accommodated in what the school does; these are all important elements in the school leaders’ professional development, as N. Dempster (2001) also has found in his research. In the table of appendix, 42 educational practices to achieve 11 leadership self-development skills are illustrated. The practices devoted to each skill are marked with the sign (‘).

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Appendix

Activities/learning Areas Matrix

| Situational facts | professional knowledge | sensitivity to events | Analytical Skills | Social skills | Emotional resilience | Pro-activity | Creativity | Mental agility | Balanced learning habits | Self-knowledge |
|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Knowledge of situational facts | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 2. Making contacts | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 3. Managing your time | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4. Keeping up to date | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 5. Facts and assumptions | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 6. Personal journal | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 7. Decision making | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 8. Planning techniques | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 9. Choosing | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 10. Role set analysis | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 11. Planning change | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 12. Analysis of experiences | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 13. catastrophic contingencies | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 14. budgetary control | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 15. Asserting yourself | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 16. Response to conflict | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 17. Practicing new group behaviors | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 18. Interpreting yourself and others | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 19. Counseling style inventory | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 20. Getting to know you | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 21. Looking after yourself | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 22. Relaxation | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 23. Fitness | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 24. managing your feelings | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 25. Stability zones | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 26. who's the boss | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 27. Practicing change | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 28. Action planning | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 29. Imaging | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 30. Accepting other people's ideas | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 31. Brainstorming | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 32. Approaches to creativity | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 33. Attribute alternatives | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 34. Coping with complexity | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 35. Quick thinking | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 36. Developing a helicopter mind | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 37. managing your dependency | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 38. Understanding learning processes | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 39. Study skills | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 40. How do you learn? | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 41. Conversations with yourself | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 42. backwards review | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

Source: Pedler et al. (2007)
Summary

Vadovų veiksmingumas, ypač vadovaujančių komandai, yra labai svarbus bet kurios mokyklos sėkmės garantas. Kad būtų veiksmingi lyderiai, mokyklos vadovai turi pažinti savęs. Yra keletas modelių, padedančių mokymosi asmeninį tobulėjimą. Tarp jų yra savęs ugdymo poziūris, kuris pabrėžia mokymosi visą gyvenimą svarbą. Iš tiesų, asmeninis tobulėjimas yra savęs keitimas savo paties pastangomis. Šio tyrimo tikslas buvo nustatyti ir įvertinti Irano mokyklų vadovų poreikį ugdytis įgūdžius, kurie, kaip nustatyta, yra būdingi sėkmingiems lyderiams. Šie įgūdžiai buvo suskirstyti į tris lygias. Buvo taikomas klausimynu paremtas aprašomas tyrinėjimas. Duomenų rinkimo priemonė – 110 punktų klausimynas. Tyrimo rezultatai parodė, kad esama statistiškai reikšmingų lygų vadovų asmeninio tobulėjimo poreikių, atsižvelgiant į demografinius kintamuosius, skirtumų. Kalbant apie poreikio lygį, buvo gauti didžiulės įgūdžių, atsižvelgiant į klimatą ugdymo įstaigose. Vidutinis “Įgūdžių ir požymių” rangas buvo ~2,36 ir šis įgūdžių lygis buvo prioritetinis daugumai vadovų. Be to, iš 11 lyderių būdingų požymių vadovai išreiškė didelį poreikį plėtoti savo “protavimo” savybes. Moterys vadovės labiau išreiškė poreikį tobulinti „analitinius ir sprendimo įgūdžius“ nei vyrai. Buvo padarytos išvados, kad vadovams reikia sutelkti savo pastangas į veiklą, kuri turi įtakos sklandžiam mokyklų valdymui: ugdytis įgūdžius, kaip sukurti tinkamą klimatą ugdymo įstaigoje; ugdytis savo analitinius ir sprendimo priėmimo įgūdžius ir siekti asmeninio tobulėjimo bendraujant su mokyklos bendruomene.

Esminiai žodžiai: sėkmingi vadovai, vadovavimo įgūdžiai, asmeninis tobulėjimas, mokyklos vadovas.