

THE ASSESSMENT OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The present research was conducted aiming to assess the performance of five-region charter schools and the Education Department from the viewpoints of principals, teachers, and parents in the academic year 2010-2011, Isfahan province. Accordingly, the performance of the charter school intending to enhance Educational, Training, Administrative, Financial Affairs in addition to parents' and instructors' contentment in terms of 7 questions were studied. The research was of descriptive survey type and statistical universe including the entire principals, teachers and parents in charter schools entering on five- region, Isfahan province. It all covers 36 of principal association, 1553 of teachers, and 1595 of parents. The sample under study was selected employing the simple stratified random and the formula of determination according to the volume from the statistical universe among 208 of the teachers, 305 of the parents, and whole principals. In order to gather the research data, researchers required the questionnaire from researcher's studies. The questionnaire's formal value and validity were confirmed by related pundits. The perpetuity of questionnaire, the Kronbach alpha coefficient of 98 percent was used. In the research statistical analysis, descriptive statistical methods and standard deviation; we used inferential statistic uni (t) and double (t) tests. The researches outcome indicated :Results showed that the performance of parents' and teachers' associations intending to enhance educational, training, administrative, financial affairs in addition to parents' and instructors' contentment from the viewpoint of principals, teachers and parents exceed limit .Factors and charter schools' performance were significantly different in principals attitude, and it indicates factors and performances of parents' contentment factor from the viewpoint of principals assigning highest average, factors of instructor's contentment and financial affair assigns the lowest .The average ranking aspect reveals factors and financial affair from the viewpoints of teachers assigning the highest rank and factors and training affair's performance has got the lowest rank. Additionally, from the viewpoint of parents, the factors and performances assign the financial enhancement of administrative tasks from the pupils' viewpoint to its highest rank and factors and training affairs performance assign the lowest .Eventually, from the viewpoint of teachers and parents according to their sex and grade differs drastically.

Key words: Assessment, Parents, Teachers, Performance, Charter Schools, Principals

1 INTRODUCTION

As a system, process, and social organization, education and training is composed of “board and sets of related elements” serving as a total unit which is aimed at accomplishing a desired and successful goal. Like many systems, educational system has a dynamic relation with the environment. The important point is that today’s society has undergone amazing changes and developments including educational, political, economic, and social developments, explosion of information, and creation of global village which has brought new needs and issues in the field of human communities in general and education and training in particular. Efforts made to realize the cooperation and involvement are among the examples of such changes in the field of education and training. It is believed that involvement in education and training is a factor which lays the foundation for continuous development, increasing efficiency,

productivity, the indicators of taking responsibility, and effective social interactions. These, in turn, contribute to innovation and creativity which are considered as survival dynamic factors in today's competitive conditions. It is believed that involvement as a social act, causes to keep on continuous development, increase efficiency and productivity, involve people in their fate, grow and reinforce the basics of civil community, prepare people to play roles in new society, grow and blossom human honour, reinforce and grow the sense of belonging to the society, learn to tolerate others, decrease deviations from the goal, prevent any exploitation, increase social unity, grow personality and decrease psychological depression, enhance people's cooperation with each other, follow the government, Enhance people's interest in their fate and the future of their society, establish trust in the goals of the Education and Training Department, decrease resistance against innovations, grow and reinforce national determination, recognize influential and effective forces of the society, and implement the rules [1].

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The starting point in involvement is making a cooperative group. It involves a group of people who actively work together to reach a common goal. In addition to one's behaviour, every individual has a responsibility for others' behaviour [2]. It is believed that dynamic education and training is indebted to public cooperation. Government's management over education is acceptable to the extent that it meets immediate needs of the society. However, if it exceeds this extent, it could be detrimental to the education and training system. In the majority of the developed countries, the required arrangements for other sectors to take part in education and training have been made in its simplest form and current statistics show parental satisfaction from this training system. One suggested way to attract people's involvement in education and training is to establish charter schools which strongly recommend the needs of parents as customers or receivers of the services. Innovation, creativity, taking responsibility, parents' and students' satisfaction, and quality improvement are strongly underlined as well [3].

The purpose of charter schools is to obtain thinking, emotional, cultural, and economic involvement of the parents in running a school. One characteristic of charter schools is that they are comprised of a board or group of principals, one of the school's education assistant, one of the education employees, the head of parents' and teachers' association, one of the students' parents, one of the Hozeh and university experts, an informed or trusted person from the region, a member the region council or sports and cultural institutions, a person from the management board in production and service centre who act with aim of attracting parental involvement, passing some school affairs to people and perfect improvement of central and ultra central management. The establishment of charter schools with the aim of attracting people's involvement, enhancing competition and quality could at least be examined from two viewpoints. First, people's involvement in education and training affairs and some other issues could resolve some of the problems including financial provision and problems that stem from it. Second, with parental involvement, treatment and training in its real and fundamental meaning is realized. Because education and training is a multilateral process, it requires the cooperation of all elements involved in the process of education and training, charter schools, through attracting the involvement of parents, teachers, principals, students, etc, allow seeking involvement in educational, training, financial, and office affairs happen perfectly and guarantee efficiency, productivity and education and training quality. Several studies have been conducted on charter schools and the evaluation of them in comparison to normal schools which are briefly reviewed.

Corwin and Flaherty (1995) used the evaluation of charter schools' studied 660 charter schools using the ideas of 230 teachers and 44 principals. The research finding indicated that charter schools enjoyed a high performance in such dimensions as education, financing, choosing staff, office policies, teachers' self-control, job satisfaction, parental involvement, innovation and creativity, time table changes, and reduction of the number of the students. In his study 'parental involvement and feedback strategies of primary school principals, Ma (2001) investigated teachers' role in attracting parental involvement. The findings showed three types of feedback strategies which were utilized by the teachers, namely, involvement, socialization, and conformity. They were significantly interrelated with parental involvement rate in different activities. His research concluded with the suggestion that principals should be aware of

their effective role in parental involvement and concentrate on establishing positive home-school relations [4].

Grossi (2001) in his study 'principals' role in attracting people for the explanation of education and training goals' referred to significant results about parents-teachers relations. According to his research findings, the role of the relationships is to establish trust and confidence between parties and observe human relations in managerial actions of educational teachers for attracting parental involvement [5]. In his study 'the examination of parental involvement in primary schools in Texas and Mexico border' Hollinger (2001) found that principals and teachers use various strategies and techniques to attract parental involvement, including, encouraging intimate and informal relations among parents and school employees, informing parents of different issues and establishing a warm and pleasant environment in school [6].

Al Taneiji (2001) in a study titled 'the relationship between parental involvement and school success in the United Arab Emirate' investigated types of parental involvement in the UAE. The finding showed few of parents were capable of supporting their children in education. Involvement activities were often limited to such affairs as holding celebrations in the form of giving a speech. Generally, parents were involved in school decision making and cultural differences were effective in involvement rate [7]. Gordon (2001) in his study 'parental involvement in school-based decision making In Victoria, Colombia, Britain, and Canada' investigated parental involvement rate in school affairs. Results showed parents were interested in the enhancement of their relations with schools and in having access to school management and budget system [8]. In his study 'the evaluation of Michigan charter schools' May (2006) indicated that in comparison to students of normal schools, students in charter schools enjoyed higher educational achievements [9]. Greene et, al (2007) in a study titled 'the evaluation of charter schools' found that the positive effects of charter schools served the public. Such schools had more independence in action in comparison to normal education and training systems and were faced with fundamental obstacles for making effective reforms and the main factors which limit the performance of this school is that they are new [10]. Finnegan et al (2008) in their study 'the evaluation of charter schools' found that such schools are flexible and compared to normal , they enjoy independence in general planning and decision making at the level of the school. However, according to principals of charter schools, at times, the independence of such schools is limited by the governments' education and training departments' policy and association-based organizations [11]. Investigating the establishment history of charter schools, Chen (2010) in a study titled 'what are charter schools like?' came to these conclusions: the advantage of such schools is the right of choice for students and parents; they cause competition among students; give more authority to teachers and students to make decision [12]. Lack of acceptance by all students due to high cost is one of the shortcomings of charter schools; though this paper takes into account the importance of charter schools in attracting people's involvement, enhancing the efficiency of education and deals with the evaluation of charter schools. The general research question is to what extent have charter schools, from principals', teachers', and parents' point of view, been effective in the enhancement of education and training affairs, provision of financial resources, improvement of parents' an teachers' satisfaction, and in optimal doing office duties?

3 METHODOLOGY

The present paper is of descriptive survey type. Participants included the entire principals, teachers, and student's parents from five regions of Education and Training Departments in Isfahan province, Iran. 36 principals, 1553 students' parents were chosen using stratified random sampling. The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire made by the researcher. The calculated reliability coefficients by using of Cronbach alpha (α) for the questionnaire were .98. Data was analyzed using t test with two independent groups and one way ANOVA.

4 Results

The research findings are summarized in the following tables: Question one: From principals', teachers', and parents' perspective, to what extent have charter schools been effective in the enhancement of educational affairs?

Table 1: The Mean Comparison of the Effect of Charter Schools on the Enhancement of Educational Affairs from the Perspective of Principals, Teachers, and Parents with Hypothetical Mean of three

Variable	Mean	SD	T	D f	p
Educational Affairs from Principals' perspective	3.68	0.79	-	-	-
Educational Affairs from Teachers' Perspective	3.64	0.84	8.979	135	0.001
Educational Affairs from Parents' Perspective	3.69	0.86	12.535	241	0.001

Question two: From principals', teachers', and parents' perspective, to what extent have charter schools been effective in the enhancement of training affairs?

Table 2: The Mean Comparison of the Effect of Charter Schools on the Enhancement of Training Affairs from the Perspective of Principals, Teachers, and Parents with Hypothetical Mean of three

Variable	Mean	SD	T	D f	p
Educational Affairs from Principals' perspective	3.89	0.75	-	-	-
Educational Affairs from Teachers' Perspective	3.91	0.79	14.397	156	0.001
Educational Affairs from Parents' Perspective	3.90	0.81	17.417	247	0.001

Question three: From principals', teachers', and parents' perspective, to what extent have charter schools been effective in the optimal enhancement of doing office duties?

Table 3 *The Mean Comparison of the Effect of Charter Schools on the Optimal Enhancement of Doing Office Duties from the Perspective of Principals, Teachers, and Parents with Hypothetical Mean of three*

Variable	Mean	SD	T	D f	p
Educational Affairs from Principals' perspective	3.85	0.69	-	-	-
Educational Affairs from Teachers'	4.06	0.67	21.411	184	0.001

Perspective Educational Affairs from Parents' Perspective	4.03	0.69	24.59	268	0.001
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Question four: From principals', teachers', and parents' perspective, to what extent have charter schools been effective in the enhancement of the provision of financial resources?

Table 4: *The Mean Comparison of the Effect of Charter Schools on the Enhancement of the Provision of Financial Resources from the Perspective of Principals*

Variable	Mean	SD	T	D f	p
Educational Affairs from Principals' perspective	3.65	0.75	-	-	-
Educational Affairs from Teachers' Perspective	3.73	0.81	21.411	179	0.001
Educational Affairs from Parents' Perspective	3.94	0.78	24.59	158	0.001

Question five: From principals', teachers', and parents' perspective, to what extent have charter schools been effective in the enhancement of the parents' satisfaction?

Table 5: *The Mean Comparison of the Effect of Charter Schools on the Enhancement of the Parents' Satisfaction from the Perspective of Principals, Teachers, and Parents with Hypothetical Mean of three*

Variable	Mean	SD	T	D f	p
Educational Affairs from Principals' perspective	3.97	0.67	-	-	-
Educational Affairs from Teachers' Perspective	4.08	0.82	17.150	169	0.001
Educational Affairs from Parents' Perspective	3.99	0.86	18.417	254	0.001

Question six: From principals', teachers', and parents' perspective, to what extent have charter schools been effective in the enhancement of the teachers' satisfaction?

Table 6 *The Mean Comparison of the Effect of Charter Schools on the Enhancement of the Teachers' Satisfaction from the Perspective of Principals, Teachers, and Parents with Hypothetical Mean of three*

Variable	Mean	SD	T	D f	p
Educational Affairs from Principals' perspective	3.65	0.82	-	-	-

Educational Affairs from Teachers' Perspective	3.66	0.83	10.302	165	0.001
Educational Affairs from Parents' Perspective	3.72	0.80	14.733	264	0.001

As shown in Tables 1-6, the calculated t was more than the t value in the table. Therefore, the effect of charter schools on the enhancement of educational affairs, Training Affairs, Doing Office, Provision of Financial Resources Enhancement of the Parents' Satisfaction and the Teachers' Satisfaction from the perspective of principals, teachers, and parents was higher than the mean level.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The issue of involvement is a sign showing the development of a country. People's involvement increases the sense of commitment and contributes to build confidence and creates a sense of unity for humans. It is a sign of one's personality and development. Involvement in a sense means: informed acceptance to perform parts of affairs in the form of willing cooperation with each other to improve one's social life which requires organization. Parents have a key role in making a fundamental revolution in education and training. In addition, their role in running the school is significant to the effect that posing specialized issues in teacher-parents meeting which, in fact, are considered as thinking rooms and asking the ideas of the entire parents to offer suitable solutions are the keys to the unrecoverable problems with which parents are faced. Thus, informed, experienced, skilful, highly educated and sophisticated people could be found among students' parents whose constructive suggestions and consultations pave the way for the caravan of science and politeness.

Therefore, it is necessary to reinforce a real belief and attitude in parents' role in society and demonstrate their position. If planned and implemented correctly, the examination of using parents' skills and expertise in the process education and training is a type of involvement which will be more effective than any other cooperation like financial and worldly one because when a student registers in a school, at least to persons become sensitive to school activities and with attracting their cooperation and involvement, the efficiency and productivity of the process of education and training could be enhanced by several times and parents' various skills and expertise could be utilized to run the school affairs. This way, the financial view could gradually be reduced to the minimum. On the other hand, the education and training, in nature, accepts involvement. Using parents' skills and expertise can be fruitful in changing and reforming authorities' approach, informing, monitoring, evaluating, and other school affairs.

Today, charter school is a solution that is suggested in line with the attraction of parents' real involvement. Charter schools have considerable importance concerning the changes and revolutions happened throughout the world such as competition and effort to gain higher quality, productivity, and efficiency.

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