

Ranking Iran Private Schools and its Executive System

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Abstract: Constant improvement of quality of school activities and performance consists in determination of criteria, indicators and measures and rankings. For this reason, designing and developing tools and forms providing rankings of school are the main concerns of the research. The research is built on extraction and development of standards, indicators and measures of private school ranking. According to this, in addition to the study of available documents and related literature a theoretical framework is first developed for ranking schools and then factors contributing to the quality of schools are identified in 8 fields; management and planning, educational, cultural and nurturing process, student affairs, educational personnel affairs, relationship of school to society, facility and equipment, financial and administrative affairs. Subsequently, school ranking forms are developed. Validity of the ranking forms was measured and confirmed using opinions and reviews of some experts in different fields namely psychology, curriculum, space engineering, educational, financial and administrative affairs and a group of thinkers in the field of standardization and accreditation by means of holding conference and focus groups and Delphi technique. In order to determine priority of each field a pairwise method was implemented. Afterward, dimensions of scoring were set in the column of score scale from 0 to t in the tables of each field and the logic of scoring and relative value of each field in total system was developed and designed. For analysis of the elements and making it easier to evaluate private schools, the “RADAR” logic was used, in that measures can be of different types and the differences are obviously represented in the four scales. Accordingly, criteria, indicators and measures of the eight-fold area constitute “the framework of executive system of ranking private schools.

Key words: Ranking, executive system, private schools, implemented, accreditation

INTRODUCTION

Statement of problem: In the late 1980s, the Act of establishing private schools was passed by the Islamic Parliament as Education Organization System of Iran witnessed a surge of a group of people in need of education, while suitable educational programs were not seen at all. The act dated from 1988 allowed education and nurturing community to assist education organization in cooperation with people. According to Article 2 of Private School Act and development of public cooperation, private schools attempt to achieve a qualitative-based education and stage a healthy competition in schools Account for educational and nurturing needs of students and parents, Promote the quality of education organization activities and started engaging in this purpose in different cities of Iran and has been spread.

In the fundamental document of Iran education organization, school is referred to as one of the centers for

local progress and the role of school has been emphasized from cultural and social aspects. According to this, the role of school entails wider scope and its clients and audience are not just restricted to students. Thus, there are a variety of theories that can help to elaborate and emphasize the function and recognition of school beneficiaries further. Techniques of organizing and managing education system can have great impacts on students’ learning outputs when the current situation of school and its distance from optimal situation. In the meantime, the importance of quality of Education Organization and function and position of schools require criteria, indicators and measures that distinguish educational return and processes based on emergence of returns and hence judge and evaluate educational quality of activities, spaces and behaviors in this framework, paying attention to the quality and quantity of learners; experiences.

Under the current situation of Iran education system, we are faced with a variety of schools in which there are

plenty of differences in how to manage educational activities. In this regard, private schools have greater diversity due to private nonpublic facilities and resources and independence in decision makings about many educational opportunities such as complementary activities. Such circumstances have, on the one hand, made students' parents bewildered about the choice and selection of their ideal school for their children to educate and there are, on the other hand, no clear criterion for determining tuition fees in harmony with situations, services and facilities.

It would not be feasible unless benefitting from criteria, indicators and measures at school by which all aspects and angles affecting a school to work as an optimal learner organization are taken into consideration. For this reason, how to design and develop tools that can rank private schools based on quantitative and qualitative criteria in managerial, educational and nurturing and supporting fields, evaluate spaces and equipment, according to obtained results, provide the possibility of offering optimal services, facilities necessary for them in an attempt to continually improve quality are the main concerns of the research.

Overall goal: Designing executive system of Iran private schools.

Particular goals:

- To provide a theoretical framework for ranking private schools
- To determine criteria, indicators and measures of ranking Iran private schools based on educational periods, i.e. primary and secondary levels
- To offer an executive system for ranking Iran private schools

Questions:

- What are criteria, indicators and measures of ranking Iran private schools?
- What is the executive system of Iran private schools?

Theoretical frameworks and models for ranking and elevating a school: The conceptual framework of the ranking system of the research, whose ultimate goal is to elevate school, is built on the theoretical model EFQM. In addition to global demands, it encompasses a local study in accordance with education which was scientifically accredited and implemented by Nodedehi (2010) in the Education Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In most countries in the world, the category of quality has

been turned into one of the pivotal concepts in the large-scale educational policy makings and its improvement has received a lot of the attention of education experts, in sense that it is substantially funded every year. On the contrary, expectations of education stakeholders have increased, as has the importance of the role of education in economic competition and growth, even in parallel with survival of a nation. Therefore, administrators of education aim for fulfilling education stakeholders in order to promote its quality.

Organizational elevation and systemic approach based on the use of management quality principles and tools aim for organizational improvement in organization management. Organizational elevation is a systemic approach of set of prominent management measures in order to implement comprehensive management principles practically based on 8 fundamental concepts; result orientation, customer orientation, leadership and stability of goals, management by means of process and reality, development of individuals and participation, constant learning, innovation and improvement, development of partners and general accountability with emphasis on morality orientation, in that equal satisfaction of stakeholders (students', teachers' and employees', relevant organizations' and society's needs) are met and hence the likelihood of educational system success increases and improvement and growth are accomplished.

One of the most important criterial of organizational elevation expected by schools is the results of students, in the sense that other criteria can be judged in relation to this factor. For example, in line with this criterion, morality and social responsibility are reified in the model, because managers' everyday decisions like division of work and organization, teaching, use of technology, grading, encouragement and punishment can positively or negatively affect student's thought, personality, present and future behavior (Mirkamali, 2002). Determining basic values, considering society's benefits in decision makings, revising organizational culture, being a model, using justice, benevolence, appreciation of rights, integrity and honesty, devotion and rule orientation are viewed as dimensions of social morality and responsibility (ibid). To put differently, it can be said that education organization lays emphasis on "human values" with respect to organizational elevation model. Given the studies and goals of the new system of education, we can consider the criterion results of students together with the sub-criteria equal physical and intellectual growth, bodily and mental health, ethical and spiritual nurturing, artistic

and cultural nurturing, social nurturing, economic nurturing, political nurturing, scientific and practical education, in order to transfer intellectual capital and human civilization. Bazargan (2003) classifies results into three classes namely intermediate outcome, final outcome and consequence (employment, income, consumption pattern, job satisfaction, personal attitude, social behavior, beliefs and political participation, economic and social attitude and religious belief and behaviors and the like). Hoy and Miskel regard performance results of schools in three dimensions namely education progress, job satisfaction and understanding of school efficiency (quantity and quality of product, efficiency, consistency and flexibility). On the contrary, establishing human relationship is the key to the realization of making human which takes on another position in institutional management and is not comparable with other managements. As for indicators of human relationships, we can refer to understanding of needs and talents, acceptance of differences, understanding of individual situation, loving others, sending message properly and self-expression, selecting media or a right conduit, listening, expressing emotions and feeling, finding positive points in people, self-recognition and other-recognition, self-control, proper organizational climate, the organizational culture and mental health (ibid).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research is a qualitative research in which qualitative methods including Ward’s synthesis research (Marsh, 2008) is used with regard to the following four criteria:

- Inclusion: Paying attention to variables and important interaction
- Unequivocalness: Refusing to utilize terms involving ambiguous meanings
- Practicality: A guidance for making it applicable
- Consensus: Representing general agreement, being acceptable for researchers and practitioners and being related to their needs

In line with research synthesis, Delphi methods, focus group, nominal group and brainstorming were used for producing ranking and validating forms.

In addition to study and determination of contributing factors in quality of schools, data were classified into eight areas, management and planning, educational,

Table 1: Experts of different field

Title of field	Number		
	Criteria	Indicator	Measure
Management and planning	7	19	78
Administrative and financial affair	6	31	80
Student affair	5	11	57
Facility and equipment	5	50	151
Cultural and nurturing	9	33	169
School relationship and society	7	13	40
Education process	3	9	49
Administrative affaires	3	11	43
Total number	45	177	667

cultural and nurturing process, student affairs, educational personnel affairs, relationship of school to society, facility and equipment, financial and administrative affairs. Afterward, criteria representing each field in question are listed and below each operating indicators and measures are defined and determined. As a result, forms for evaluation are provided, based on which not only quantitative activities and representations can be measured and investigated (ranking) but also quality of schools. In each stage, in addition to scientific documents and high level documents, updated executive designs and plans offered by administrators of Education Organization are taken into consideration.

Throughout, the study expert ideas and investigations of some experts who have ideas, experience and activity in the executive process of private schools (a number of 60 individuals) and also those of private school principals and founders and staff experts (35 individuals) have been utilized and eventually an executive system for ranking schools was studied and confirmed by a group of experts in the field of standardization and accreditation by means of holding conference and focus groups. Additionally, selection of expert and principals and founders was made available in a purposive sampling. Experts of different fields management, psychology, curriculum, space and equipment engineering, nurturing, administrative and financial affairs were chosen based on fields of ranking system in this research. Principals of schools were chosen from total female and male principals (in different education periods) intended for this project. The numbers of criteria, indicators and measures of each field that can be effective in giving total related score in each field are presented in the following Table 1.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Moreover, the method of pairwise rating was used for determining priority of fields, in that researcher, main coworkers of the research along with 8 experts familiar with the affairs (a total of 12 people) were determined

in a session in order to comparatively study the 8-fold place of each field was set in terms of factors and according to the following table the priority importance in school system as follows (Table 2-4):

Table 2: Priority place of each field

Fields	Financial and administrative affair	Student affair	Facility and equipment	Cultural and nurturing	School relationship and society	Education process	Staff affairs	Planning	Total score	Scoring priority
Financial and administrative affairs	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2		Sixth
Student affairs	2	-	2	1	2	1	2	0	10	Second
Facility and equipment	2	0	-	0	1	0	2	0	5	Third
Cultural and nurturing	2	1	2	-	2	1	2	0	10	Second
School relationship and society	2	0	1	0	-	0	1	0	4	Fourth
Education process	2	1	2	1	2	-	2	0	10	Second
Staff affairs	1	0	0	0	1	0	-	1	3	Fifth
Management and planning	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	-	12	First
Total score	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	56	

Table 3: Giving Score to each field

Title of field	Score obtained based on priority of 1000
Management and planning	215
Student affairs	178
Cultural and nurturing	178
Education process	178
Facility and equipment	90
School relationship and society	72
Staff affair	53
Administrative and financial affairs	36
Total	1000

Trajectory of qualitative affairs to quantitative numbers

Table 4: Sample of school ranking from dimension of scoring in the column relating to score scale from (0-4)

Criteria	Indicator	Measure	RADAR	Evaluation guide	Coefficient		
School goals and orientations	Schools' distinctive goals	School has determined goals	A	Evaluation of school program and performance	3		
Practical programs in school	School's goals are written and made visible before those in charge	Guideline and high level documents are made available	D	Observation of preservation of guidelines and high level documents	1		
			D	Question from principal, deputy and other staff in school about content of evolution document and national curriculum and course goals	2		
		school has an active team with cooperative spirit for planning, monitoring and evaluating performance	D	Observation and review of related documents. Question from 20% of school staff	2		
			D	Review of session resolution and session schedules / verification through talking with planning administrators	2		
		Main and key themes of fundamental evolution document have made public to teachers and parents	D	instances of key points in th fundamental evolution document and goals of education period can be visible in school	D	Question from teachers/ observation of information providing method	1
			D	School planning in an attempt to realize its determined goals	A	Observation of methods of providing key points in the fundamental evolution document and goals of education period	1
		School has clear slogan and picture of future in order to guide activities which are used in different spaces	A	School has clear slogan and picture of future in order to guide activities which are used in different spaces	A	Consistency with school practice program	2
						Observation of school slogan and special picture	1

Table 4: Continue

Criteria	Indicator	Measure	RADAR	Evaluation guide	Coefficient
		Staff participation is utilized for planning and determining school's special goals	A	Review of related documents/ verification through questioning teachers	3
		There is a particular program for monitoring school activities in the way of goal realization	A	Observation of program/ questioning staff	2
		School uses team participation for planning, monitoring the implementation evaluating performance	D	Observation/ questioning 30% of staff by random selection/ qualitative evaluation of activity	3
		School's planning team holds regular and continuous sessions	D	Observation and review of session resolution	2

CONCLUSION

Purpose of executive system is to rank school, administrative system or organization which can be evaluated by utilizing structures and standards defined based on theories and capabilities of private schools on the part of experienced and trained evaluators in harmony with existing circumstances in evaluation and guides it toward elevation. In other words, private school organization will be able to rank private schools in all education levels in accordance with “the sample form of school ranking’ using an administrative system represented in evaluating forms in 8 fields (based on 4 education periods).

Answer to the research questions

The first question of the research: what are criteria, indicators and measures of ranking primary and secondary schools? Theoretical studies adapted from different models of organizational elevation in the world and experiences of implementing ranking system in other countries are believed to be invaluable assets for designing conceptual framework and executive framework for the research and hence the eight-fold areas:

- Management and planning
- Educational
- Cultural and nurturing process
- Student affairs
- Educational personnel affairs
- Relationship of school and society
- Facility and equipment
- Financial and administrative affairs along with criteria indicators and related measures in every area were developed as “school ranking forms” as addressed in the research methodology

The second question of the research: What is the executive system of Iran private schools? All evaluating forms containing areas, criteria, indicators, measures and their coefficients as well as evaluation guide and self-assessment properties and external evaluation were

approved in a scientific process, in that after developing ranking forms a number of 60 school principals agreed on areas, criteria, indicators and measures embedded in ranking forms in the first place through different focus groups and brainstorming and subsequently ideas were reviewed and analyzed in the presence of 35 academic and research center experts and senior experts of Education Organization and eventually were confirmed by the approval of most members.

Overall framework of the executive system of ranking

Iran’s private schools: All private schools will be evaluated in different education period based on the 8-fold areas. Schools’ activities should revolve around school’s annual program, in the sense that in the beginning and before the beginning of annual evaluation period, all tables and forms relating to the 8-fields are made available to the head offices of education organization in provinces and by means of the departments are made available to department of education organization in regions, counties, locals and representatives of Education Organization and hence they are made available to private schools accordingly. Principals of private schools are bound to design their annual action program and proceed with their activities and programs as planned based on the 8-fold areas.

Experienced and trained evaluators are responsible for external evaluation task. Evaluators should have a certificate of evaluation course approved by private school organization in order to perform evaluation.

In an attempt to lay emphasis on the procedure state of work and achievement of assured quality, for convenience during the implementation of annual program and before final evaluation at different time intervals, evaluators should attend school and remind principals and managerial team accompanying him about existing defects, deficiencies and executive problems as well as exchanging ideas with them. Evaluation of school should not be performed individually and it will be accomplished as they will be mentioned in the forthcoming pages.

It is necessary for education organization department at head office, province, region are a and representative

level to deploy a team who are more experienced in the department as evaluation consultant group consisting in particular days in a week so as to respond to possible questions of principals as main facilitators in ranking project and attempt to resolve ambiguity. At ministerial level and both website or exclusive portal of private school head office a section will be launched which will be completed gradually and useful experiences will be issued in addition to answers to possible questions relating to the project. Use of other facilities associated with updated technologies is also recommended.

It is imperative for managers, deputies and other practitioners in school to receive essential trainings on developing action program and self-assessment of school.

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