

## **The Relationship Between the Performance of Educational Administrators and Organisational Health with a Focus on Teachers' Perception in High Schools**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This correlation study was aimed at determining the relationship between the performance of educational administrators and organisational health in high schools in Tehran, Iran. Cluster sampling method was used and the responses of a total of 180 teachers were obtained. Two selected questionnaires were used: the school organisational health questionnaire and the administrator performance questionnaire. The research data were analysed using SPSS software. Inferential and descriptive statistics were used: the variables were the Pearson correlation coefficient, coefficient of determination and t-test. The results of the study show that about two thirds of the schools that were studied enjoyed a high level of organisational health, and the teachers of about 30% of the schools believed that they had principals whose performance in different areas was weak. The results showed that there was a positive relationship between organisational health and the performance of the principals. The findings also indicated a relationship between administrator performance in the areas of education and the teaching programme, student affairs and staff affairs and organisational health.

*Keywords:* Educational administration, administrator performance, organizational health, teacher, high school

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The terms organisational culture, health and climate have been widely discussed by administrators, employers and academic institutions in the past 50 years. The use of these terms mostly shows the dominance of different scientific mentalities which have influenced academic management circles

and the related disciplines and in a way has provided “a special interpretation of the world” for the people interested in this field of human knowledge. This interpretation indicates the mental climate and the main worries of management scientists which are presented as theories to explain the organisational phenomena and issues (Madandar, 2006).

In fact, the presentation of different theories helps us understand what the dominant explanations, analyses and attitudes are and what factors affect the intellectual development of researchers in that field. Historically, the dominant interpretation of the relationship between manager and employees began with the presentation of the scientific theory of management and as the new theories followed an evolutionary path. The use and application of the term “organisational culture” indicates the dominance of sociology over the intellectual climate of management experts (Madandar & Abbasi, 2008). From this viewpoint, each organisation must be viewed as a social entity which is affected by the values, customs and rituals of its society. The analysis of the performance of people in this organisation without paying attention to these variables is impossible. On the other hand, the term “organisational health” is indicative of the dominance of viewpoints borrowed from psychology which consider the organisation as an organism which, like humans, follows a varied development from balance, health, sickness and, finally, to death. As a result, like a human being, organisations can be cultured, uncultured, healthy and unhealthy. The organisational

climate offers an interpretation of the organisational state as moving between the continuum of sociology and psychology (Glisson & James, 2002). Considering these issues, the governing approach taken in this article is directed towards the study of the relationship between the performance of the principal of an educational institution and the organisational health of the institution.

### **EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH OF SCHOOLS**

Management science as a modern field of enquiry, puts great emphasis on the role of leaders, among other factors affecting the success of an organisation. Additionally, because of the social nature of the school organisation, educational management experts consider the position of the administrator as doubly effective and believe that schools are very good fields in which to test, evaluate and critique management theories, which might not be as easily surveyed and measured in other organisations. According to these thinkers, although the role of other people in the educational system in attaining educational goals cannot be ignored, on the level of educational leadership, the abilities of administrators have a fundamental application and the impact of their performance in school cannot be denied (Hallinger & Heck, 2004; Lezotte, 1994; Sergiovanni, 1998; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003).

In fact, the principal of an educational institution becomes the head of the organisation of whose performance and

results, on one hand, society and people are very sensitive to, and on the other, whose tasks and responsibilities are very complex and depend on the knowledge, expertise and professional skills of, while at the same time requiring a close and friendly relationship with the teachers, students and others involved in the process of education (Mirkamali, 2005). The laboriousness of this task has resulted in the elaboration of a range of the required abilities in the definition of qualities and requirements of the administrator. Considering the dos and don'ts of educational administration, the administrator is a person who can adeptly apply scientific principles, findings and technical skills based on the situation at hand and at the same time observe ethical principles and solve problems and achieve goals. The basic requirement for such management in an educational environment is that the administrator knows the educational system's objectives and processes, is able to induce the proper organisational climate for the employees to carry out their tasks and responsibilities, utilise the available materials and human resources as needed, create the needed integration and synchronicity between the elements and components of the organisation and, finally, to arouse his colleagues and subordinates to effective work and activity (Alagheband, 2006).

Despite the aforementioned description which affirms the hidden complexities in the performance of the administrator and the span of the intervening factors, researchers in the field of educational

administration have tried to formulate a clear framework for the width and breadth of the responsibilities of the administrator so that they can properly evaluate their performance based on it. Based on this, according to Alagheband (2006), the responsibilities of educational administrators can be limited to the following six duties:

- Planning for education and teaching
- Student affairs
- Staff affairs
- The interactions between the school and society
- Facilities and equipment and
- Administrative and financial affairs

The administrator's performance in each of these areas is affected by the kind of relationship and the general environment that he has created, and this forms his behaviour towards others. Based on this, the organisational climate of the school as a general concept is the natural consequence of the kind of relationship the administrator has with the internal and external environment whose final outcome is known as organisational health (Alagheband, 2006). Organisational health is indicative of the extent to which the school organisation as a living and dynamic organism, under the influence of the administrator's performance in the aforementioned areas, will tend to move towards youth and liveliness or old age, helplessness and desperation. Therefore, the main question is what features or characteristics define the healthy organisation.

Some researchers believe that a healthy organisation is realistic about itself and the situation it is dealing with, flexible and able to use its resources in the best possible way in dealing with each problem (Saatchi, 1995). Lorenzo, Williams, Hunt and Haffner (2007) claimed that a healthy organisation was characterised by concentration on objectives, efficiency in communication, optimal distribution of power, the use of resources, unity and integration, morale, innovation, autonomy, adaptability to the environment and the capability to solve problems. According to Hoy and Miskel (2008), a healthy school is characterised by being secure against unreasonable pressure from the environment and parents, enjoys dynamic and lively management and has an administrator who is both task- and relationship-orientated. Such a school also supports the teachers and encourages them to improve their performance levels. In addition to influencing them, the administrator is independent in thought and practice. The students are highly motivated to participate in scientific and educational activities. Educational tools and instruments are available to the students. Finally, the teachers like and trust each other and are passionate about their work.

The organisational health of schools can be measured using the following seven variables:

- Institutional unity: School's capability for adaptation to the environment so that the integrity, concord and totality of educational programmes are preserved

- Influence of administrator: Administrator's ability to direct and to encourage solutions to the school's problems
- Considerateness: Friendly and open behaviour of the administrator based on mutual respect, trust and cooperation for and with staff
- Structuring: Defining the professional relationship among teachers, job expectations, performance standards, and procedures
- Resource support: Main educational facilities and equipment needed by the teachers for effective teaching
- Morale: Emotional state based on joy and satisfaction among staff and students or excitement-based behaviour
- Scientific emphasis: Desire and interest shown by students and staff to achieve cultural, educational and scientific superiority in comparison with other schools (Hoy & Miskel, 2008).

Considering the research findings on the mutual relationship between the administrators' performance inside and outside school and the level of organisational health, the present study has tried to examine the relationship between the six dimensions of the administrator's performance and the seven variables measuring organisational health in high schools. To achieve this goal, one general hypothesis and six detailed hypotheses are stated as follows:

General hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between the administrator's

performance and organisational health in high schools.

Hypothesis one: There is a significant relationship between the administrator's performance in educational and teaching programmes and organizational health.

Hypothesis two: There is a significant relationship between the administrator's performance in student affairs and organisational health.

Hypothesis three: There is a significant relationship between the administrator's performance in staff affairs and organisational health.

Hypothesis four: There is a significant relationship between the administrator's performance in school-society interactions and organisational health.

Hypothesis five: There is a significant relationship between the administrator's performance in the provision and management of school facilities and equipment and organisational health.

Hypothesis six: There is a significant relationship in administrative and financial affairs and organisational health.

## **A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

Hoy, Tarter and Kottkamp (1991) are some of the most renowned researchers who, in the recent three decades, have focussed their efforts on the explanation, clarification and analysis of the concept of organisational health and its function in educational organisations. According to

them, organisational health can be defined as the capability of the organisation for successful adaptation to the environment, preservation of concord between members and achievement of goals (Licata & Harper, 2001). For instance, a technical instrument for confirmation of the degree of organisational health in schools is the recognition and discernment of the presence of an open and trust-based relationship between the administrator and the teachers. Also, a positive, mutual and trust-based relationship between the administrator, students, parents and local authorities can guarantee organisational health on a grander scale. It appears as if healthy schools emphasise professional cooperation on technical, administrative and human levels (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986).

Numerous research studies on the organisational climate of schools show that the mutual commitment of the administrator and teachers to enhance the process of teaching-learning is only possible when the organisational health of the school is guaranteed (Schein, 2010). The findings of a new study by Roney, Coleman and Schlichting (2007) show that there is a direct relationship between a healthy organisational environment and the teachers' efficiency given the performance of the administrator. Murphy and Datnow (2003) have also found that the success of the proposed reforms by the administrator for inducing a healthy organisational environment depends on the establishment of a participatory relationship between the teachers and the administrator.

Another research study by Gronn (2003) corroborates the results of the previous study i.e. adoption of participatory strategies by the administrator leads to an enhancement in the individual and group performance of teachers and the administrators as educational leaders facilitate a healthy organisational environment for the school. Additionally, different studies and research have demonstrated that organisational health is an effective variable among many of the facets and dimensions of the educational system. As an example, research has shown a linear relationship between organisational health and the performance of the administrator on the one hand and the students' educational success on the other (Goddard, Sweetland, & Hoy, 2000; Hoy & Hannum, 1997; Hoy & Sabo, 1998; Hoy, *et al.*, 1991).

Zangal's research (2003) showed that: (1) there is no significant difference between the type of school and the organisational climate in terms of organisational health at the institutional level; (2) there is a significant difference between the type of school and the organisational climate in terms of organisational health at the administrative and technical level; (3) there is no significant difference between educational level and organisational climate in terms of organisational health at the institutional, administrative and technical level. Although there seems to be a contrast between some of the aforementioned findings and some international research studies, they generally confirm previous findings.

Another research study conducted by Mansouri (2007) shows that there is a middle level of organisational health in Tehran's high schools. Also, in terms of resource support, there is a significant difference between schools for boys and schools for girls. The research carried out by Javadi (2000) also confirms that among the effective variables in organisational health, the highest score belongs to morale and the lowest score to administrator's influence. A survey by Pourdehkordi (2009) revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the organisational health of high schools for boys and educational success.

## METHODOLOGY

This correlation study was carried out in Tehran's high schools with the objective of studying the relationship between the performance of educational administrators and organisational health. The sample includes 180 teachers who were selected using the cluster sampling method. First, all high schools in Tehran were divided into four geographical regions (North, South, East, and West). After determining the number of high schools in each region, 14 high schools and 13 teachers from each high school were selected at random.

The research instruments i.e. the administrator performance questionnaire and organisational health evaluation questionnaire, were made available to them. The organisational health questionnaire was prepared by Hoy *et al.* (1991) with three different forms for use in elementary schools, secondary schools and high



schools to measure important dimensions of organisational health. This questionnaire consisted of 44 items which were completed by the teachers. They were asked to complete the descriptive items as much as was true for their schools based on the Likert Scale. This scale involved a minimum score of 44 and a maximum score of 220 and a subsidiary dimension with a range of 1 to 5.

In order to evaluate the performance of school administrators and considering previous research and after consultations with expert instructors in the field of educational management and also the teachers, 55 questions were prepared and the teachers of two schools in the studied population were asked to evaluate the performance of the administrator by answering them. The initial results and evaluations led to the omission and modification of some of the questions, and the final questionnaire known as “administrator performance questionnaire” was prepared with 44 closed-ended questions and four open-ended questions. To determine the reliability of the organisational health questionnaire, using the SPSS software, Cronbach’s alpha was calculated, which was 0.78, and showed that the questionnaire had a satisfactory level of reliability. Cronbach’s alpha for the administrator performance questionnaire was calculated as being 0.85, which is quite a satisfactory result (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2009). To describe the research variables, in addition to using descriptive and inferential indices, the profiles of the organisational health and the administrators’ performance based on the seven dimensions

of organisational health and the six areas of administrator performance were illustrated in tabular form. In addition, to determine the extent of the relationship and the correlation between the two variables of administrator performance and organisational health, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used as an appropriate statistical index. Likewise, the results of the research showed that the relationship between the variables was significant.

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE RESULTS**

The collected data shows that 78.3% of the teachers in the studied sample were married, and 65% were younger than 35 and 85% were official (permanent) employees. Additionally, based on the distribution of their degrees, 80% of the participants had a bachelor’s degree. The aforementioned data indicate that the participating teachers possessed the necessary capabilities to answer the research questionnaires in terms of social responsibility, familiarity with the organisational and employment structure of the educational system and the needed expertise. Based on the evaluation of the collected data and the sorting of the organisational health evaluation questionnaire scores, the average scores of the studied high schools are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
Average Scores for the Organisational Health of the Research Sample (High Schools)

High School Number	Mean
1	160.44
2	148.48
3	196.67
4	166.83
5	167.5
6	163.42
7	165.77
8	163.06
9	163.53
10	149.30
11	143.32
12	170.71
13	159.64
14	168.17
Overall	163.35

The calculated average of the scores for the studied high schools is 163.35, which, if we consider this average as the criterion for the organisational health of the schools, gives us the following results: nine high schools from among all the surveyed schools had an average higher than the total average while five high schools had lower averages. Therefore, it can generally be said that about two thirds of the schools in the surveyed population (64.28%) enjoy high levels of organisational health and 35.72% have low levels of organisational health. Also, the study of the performance of the administrators of these high schools based on the second questionnaire as filled out by the teachers shows that the average scores for the administrators is 151.75. If we consider this the criterion for evaluating the performance of the administrators, we find

that nine high schools from among the 14 studied high schools have a higher average score than the total average and, according to the teachers, administrator performance in five high schools is lower than the total average. Table 2 shows the average scores for administrator performance.

TABLE 2  
The Average Scores for Administrator Performance in the Research Sample (High Schools)

High School Number	Mean
1	155.56
2	146.22
3	156.94
4	162.39
5	160.07
6	156.5
7	161.69
8	158.82
9	152.65
10	131.6
11	128.33
12	150.79
13	147.82
14	155.13
Overall	151.75

Considering the findings shown in Tables 1 and 2, we can infer that about two thirds of the schools in the surveyed population had organisational health at the desired levels and the performance of the administrators of these schools was accepted by the teachers. Under the circumstances, it is necessary to pay attention to the teacher's answers to the different items in the organisational health questionnaire to be able to find out which one of the seven variables has the highest impact on the



performance of the teachers. Table 3 shows the total average of the seven variables of organisational health.

TABLE 3  
Total Average of the Seven Organisational Health Variables

Variable	Average
Institutional unity	3.68
Administrator influence	3.35
Considerateness	4.23
Structuring	4.41
Resource support	3.78
Morale	4.59
Scientific emphasis	3.32
Overall	3.91

The total average shows that morale and structuring variables have the highest impact on the evaluation of performance while scientific emphasis and administrator influence have the lowest impact. After determining the level of the organisational health and administrator performance, given the available information, the main hypotheses of the research can be examined, and the relationship between the six dimensions of administrator performance and the seven organisational health variables can be scrutinised in terms of their function in the studied population.

The results obtained from the analysis of data for testing the main research hypothesis demonstrate that there is a positive and significant relationship between the

performance of educational administrators and organisational health in high schools. A summary of the results of statistical calculations necessary to test the hypothesis and to confirm or reject the null hypothesis is presented in Table 4.

The calculated correlation coefficient between the two variables of administrator performance and organisational health is  $r=0.555$  which, according to the table prepared by Delavar (2001), is at a medium level. The significance test of the above correlation coefficient (t-test) shows that the absolute value of the observed  $t$  (8.92) is greater than the critical value of  $t$  at the 0.01 level ( $\alpha=2.576$ ) with the degree of freedom of 178, and with %99 confidence, we can confirm the relationship between administrator performance and organisational health. Additionally, the calculation of the coefficient of determination as a generalisation index indicates that 30.8% of implementation and realisation capacity for organisational health in the aforementioned schools is affected by implementation and realisation capacity for administrator performance. Table 5 displays the information about the analysis of the correlation between variables in hypotheses one to six.

The information displayed in Table 5, with a view towards the six dimensions of administrators' performance, shows the relationship between each area of the

TABLE 4  
Summary of Information About the Correlation of Variables in General Hypothesis

T	Coefficient of determination	A	N	Df	Rxy
8.92	30.8	0.10	180	178	0.555

responsibilities of the administrator and the level of organisational health in the subsidiary hypotheses one through six.

The first hypothesis sets out to test the relationship between the performance of school administrators in the field of educational and teaching programmes and organizational health. The obtained information shows that the calculated correlation coefficient between these two variables in the field of educational and teaching programmes is 0.548 and because the value of the calculated  $t$  (10.54) is greater than the critical  $t$  ( $t=2.576$ ) at the significance level of  $\alpha=0.01$  with the degree of freedom of 178, therefore with a confidence coefficient of %99, the mutual effect of these two factors on each other can be confirmed. The calculation of the coefficient of determination indicates that %30 of the variation in organisational health and administrator performance in the field of educational and teaching programme is under the influence of this relationship.

Hypotheses two, three and four try to demonstrate the relationship between the performance of administrators in three fields (student affairs, staff affairs and society-school interactions) with organisational

health. The statistical results displayed in Table 5 indicate that the calculated  $t$  (for the three hypotheses respectively 10.45, 14.86, 11.55) is greater than the tabular  $t$  at  $\alpha=0.01$  with a degree of freedom of 178. Therefore, these hypotheses are confirmed with a confidence coefficient of %99.

In addition, hypotheses five and six try to demonstrate the relationship between the performance of administrators in two fields (facilities and equipment and financial affairs) and organisational health. The statistical evidence displayed in Table 5 indicate that the calculated  $t$  (11.74 and 8.11) is greater than the tabular  $t$  ( $t=7.576$ ) at  $\alpha=0.01$  with a degree of freedom of 178. Therefore, these hypotheses are confirmed with a confidence coefficient of %99.

Finally, we can infer that all the hypotheses were confirmed and moreover, the correlation coefficients show that from among the six different areas of administrator performance, the highest values of correlation belong to the subsidiary hypotheses one and two and the lowest value belongs to hypothesis six. Of course, an examination of the coefficients of determination of the percentage of variation in organisational health and school

TABLE 5  
Summary of Information About the Analysis of Correlation Between the Variables in Hypotheses One to Six

Hypothesis Number	T	Coefficient of Determination	A	N	Df	Rxy
1	10.45	30	0.01	180	178	0.548
2	10.45	30	0.01	180	178	0.548
3	14.86	27.77	0.01	180	178	0.527
4	11.55	21.53	0.01	180	178	0.468
5	11.74	21.9	0.01	180	178	0.468
6	8.11	14.29	0.01	180	178	0.378

administrator performance in the six areas also shows this descending trend from hypothesis one to six. As a result, it can be said that the coefficient of determination of the percentage of variations in organisational health and administrator performance in the field of educational and teaching programmes demonstrates the highest (30%) and in the field of administrative and financial affairs show the lowest (14.29%) impact.

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In this research, after conducting a general discussion of the status and the role of the administrators and their impact on organisational health, the relationship between these two factors was studied. The findings of this research concord with the findings of previous research on the relationship between the two factors of administrator performance and organisational health (Goddard, *et al.*, 2000; Hoy & Hannum, 1997; Hoy, *et al.*, 1991). In addition, the research findings indicate that about two thirds of the schools in the surveyed population have high levels of organisational health, while the other third has a low level of organisational health. This finding that the majority of the schools enjoy a proper level of organisational health can be explained and justified much better based on the research findings of Dastmalchian, Javidan and Alam (2001) and Madandar and Abasi (2008).

The aforementioned studies showed that mostly because of the presence of a “paternal organisational climate” and a “familiar

organisational climate” which governed the relationship between administrators and staff and which was under the influence of Iranian culture, and regardless of the problems and economic hardships, generally the employees, and especially in educational organisations, enjoyed strong morale. Of course, it is logical to assume that this issue would not be true for all areas administrator performance. Because of this, the present study confirms research findings by Mansouri (2007) and Darabi (2001) which showed that the significant relationship between administrator performance and organisational health can be mostly observed in the two areas of educational and teaching programme and student affairs.

The findings of this research also substantiate studies by Zangal (2003) and Darabi (2001) that although administrators were not able to solve the material and pecuniary problems of the teachers, they could create such an environment that these problems cause no serious disruption in the process of teaching-learning. The administrators should provide the necessary educational instruments and facilities for the school and the teachers adequately so that teaching can be done more effectively and this will result in a healthier organisational climate. The results of the present study support the findings of studies by Mansouri (2007) and Javadi (2000) that showed that the competence of the administrator in the field of administrative and financial activities and in establishing an effective relationship between the school and other social institutions can enhance organisational health.

Finally, it is suggested that the educational authorities select administrators who have the necessary administrative and managerial training and skills so that a healthy organisational climate will develop in high schools. It is obvious that adopting measures in order to increase decentralisation and increase the power and authority of schools and administrators can pave the way to facilitate organisational health.

It is concluded that organisational health which includes planning for education and teaching, student affairs, staff affairs, interactions between school and society, facilities and equipment and administrative and financial affairs have a significant relationship with variables measuring organisational health. These variables include institutional unity, influence of the administrator, considerateness, structuring, resource support, morale and scientific emphasis with a focus on teachers' perception in high school.

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