



## Diagnosis of School principals' Assignment in Education

Morad Mehdipour<sup>1</sup>, Sakineh Shahi<sup>2\*</sup>, Yadollah Mehralizadeh<sup>3</sup>

### ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

#### Received:

18/08/2021

#### Accepted:

18/02/2022

Available  
online:

Winter 2022

#### Keyword:

Appointment,  
principals,  
selection  
method,  
selection  
conditions

### Abstract

This study aimed to find how principals have been appointed in one of provinces of Khuzestan. Qualitative method based on Grandad theory was used. Participants were principals, teachers, safeguard and monitoring managers, assistants, instruction experts of province education and responsible s of selecting principals whom chose purposefully. 30 informed persons with 10 years work experiences were deep interviewed until reach to theoretical saturation. The method of data analysis was open, radial and selective coding. So, data collected from interview, coding and a category was chosen as axial of this study. Then, other categories were extracted and at the end, paradigm pattern was structured. Based on results, legal and executive deficiencies, applicant's motives factors and lack of political leadership skill were recognized as causal factors. Clannishness was axial and key category on creative undesirable conditions of selection principals. Personal factors were contextual and politics forces were meddler factors. Strategies, which are used by that province education, were control and legal supervision in one hand, and in the other hand, outward paying attention to law and yielding in front of political elements; so their consequences were inefficiency and decrease of educational quality of schools.

Mehdipour, M, Shahi, SH., & Mehralizadeh, Y. (2022). Diagnosis of School principals' Assignment in Education, 9(4), 40-61.

1. MA. Student, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Ahvaz, Iran.

2. Assistant professor, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Member of lifelong learning excellence center, Ahvaz, Iran.

\* Corresponding Author : Email: sshahi@scu.ac.ir

3. Professor, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Member of lifelong learning excellence center, Ahvaz, Iran.

## Introduction

Nowadays, art and science of management are considered as one of the most delicate, difficult and productive works of human being and they are considered as one of the most important indicators of contemporary civilization and one of the factors contributing to the economic growth and development of today's societies. According to Drucker, management is a vital part of the organization (Parsa and Heydariyeh, 2014). In the present century, the importance and effectiveness of this human knowledge is so great that some scholars regard the 20th century as the age of management, and today's world as the world of conscious managers (Sirota et al., Jalali translation, 2004).

Community management is the result of the selection and implementation of management methods and principles that win or lose (Momeni, 2011). Optimal usage of human resources in all organizations, especially in educational organizations, requires competent and efficient educational administrators with different skills, especially human skills (Sharifzadeh, 2006). The school is a purposeful social space that provides students growth and excellence opportunities through chain of situations, where they are required to understand and improve their own and others' status through formal and non-formal learning (Theoretical Foundations of the Fundamental Transformation Document in the Formal and Public Education System of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 2011). Since the influence of the education institution on all aspects of society and the fate of the country, as well as, school deals with human beings more than any other social organization, school management is more difficult, sensitive and important than others (Sharifzadeh, 2006). Successful schools have principals who have created a professional and effective school culture. They are knowledgeable about teaching and learning, and move themselves away from activities that delay professional growth (Normor, 2004). As Crews and Weakley (1995) stated if you show us a good school, we will show you a good school principal ... That is why it is important to select school principals.

According to Whitaker (2003) successful and effective selection and recruitment of school principals has become one of the most important human resource challenges. Since principals play a decisive role in the effectiveness of schools, if the appointment of principals is based on selected criteria, it is possible for schools to

perform their job best and optimally. Castetter (2000) believes that the process of selecting managers is a key activity in which to decide which personnel can hold managerial positions. Providing organizational and social benefits will be beneficial if managers are selected correctly. This is especially important for the managers of organizations that are associated with a diverse staff of different cultures and values.

The HR managers of the organizations mainly do the selection and assignment of managers. The presence of a human resource manager with a strategic role creates the special responsibility and accountability required by having a strategic vision and a broad understanding of the specialized areas of HRM. According to Armstrong's definition (2006), human resource management is the strategic and integrated attitude of management toward the most valuable assets of the organization - the employees - who, individually or as a group, contribute to the organization's goals. From a strategic point of view, managers through effective approaches in attracting, retaining, employing and improving staff should appoint individuals with the personality and morality appropriate to the culture and mission of the organization. They have a deep work ethic and culture rather than employing continuous monitoring and control tools (Mirsepassi, 2015).

According to Hajalian, Shibet al-Hamadi and Alimadadi (2013), the method of recruiting a manager is usually performed during the following executive steps:

- Needs Administrator Analysis: Creating a new positions or changing is considered.
- Distributing or sending application forms to schools
- Selection; The methods and tools used for selection include Receiving Requests, Preliminary Selection, and Invitation to Selection, Preliminary Selection Interviews, Preliminary Tests, and Final Interviews
- Appointment: At this stage, the appointment of the elected person to the new management position.

The way in which educational administrators are selected is related to the way in which each state's education is centralized or decentralized. So educational administrators may be governed in one of the following ways:

1. Choosing a principal among the peer group in educational organizations through their selecting of the same organization is one of the most common ways of dealing with the

decentralized approach. This approach is also related to the laissez – faire approach in management. Currently, in some countries of the world, educational administrators, especially school principals, are elected among the colleagues. PAs are the kind of schools that usually care about implementing this approach. In this way, principal often have the support of their colleagues in designing and implementing the programs they want.

2. Appointment to Management Position: In this way, administrator of educational institutions gains their power from the group. In fact, principals are appointed by higher organizational authorities and imposed outside the group. Senior administrative officials mostly support such executives outside the organization.

3. Elective-Appointment Method: In this way, the peer group in each school selects and mentions a number of nomeniees to the organizational officials. Officials outside the group select and nominate one of the proposed individuals.

4. Searching- Appointment Method: In this way, usually senior organizational officials delegate the task of finding the right managers to an authorized team. This team nominates the individuals to the higher management and the organizational authority appoints the principal. In fact, this is essentially an appointment method, but top executives appoint a principal by approving the team.

In Iran, higher, middle, and executive (schools) administrators of education are usually appointed in second and fourth way. In education organizations, the third approach seems to be appropriate and better suited to the nature of their work and the profound impact that the ethical, practical and experiential personality and creativity of educational managers have on achieving organizational goals. Therefore, different education administrators, especially schools, should be appointed in a selective-appointed manner (Safi, 2006).

The requirements for the position of school principal are set out in the Higher Education Council Resolution set in two sections: General Conditions and Specific Conditions. In the specific sector, the minimum

education and experience for school principals were detected. In the public sector, general criteria such as having successful empirical backgrounds, ability to manage, communication and human skills, creativity and ability to provide solutions to school problems are considered. A review of the scientific and experimental resources of the country after the Islamic Revolution reveals that the method of selecting school principals in education is often such that the education authorities choose from a limited number of applicants or, if necessary, from teachers. This method of selecting a principal is more subjective and without any scientific logic (Parsa and Heydari, 2014).

Research findings of Ghasemi Aghdami (2006) indicate that inaccurate performance of managers such as inability to solve educational and administrative problems, inability to motivate and cooperate among colleagues, inability to establish a friendly environment based on human relationships, failure to properly coordinate, supervise and evaluate is due to mismanagement and is caused by a relationship rather than a norm of appointment. The results of Ronaghitasdighi research (2012) also indicate that the minimum level of school management experience, prioritization of higher education (postgraduate and doctoral) degrees, lack of qualification for research activities and lack of competency tests. It is a profession in Iran that paves the way for recruiting managers through communications, kinship and political activism, etc., who may lack managerial competence. This problem has always plagued our education system and has made school principals unable to perform effectively and effectively. Researches by Siavashizangiani, Azimi and Hosseini (2015), Kakoui (2014), Sabet Motlagh, Esmaeilzadeh, Abedininaeini and Heidarzadeh (2014), Parsa and Heidarieh (2014) are some of the researches that seek to study such topics as: The process of selecting principals, the terms and conditions of principal positions and providing appropriate solutions for the appointment of principal. The research highlights the importance of the way principal are selected and assigned, but none of them has been able to fully address the terms and conditions of principal assignments

Khuzestan is one of the provinces that has ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity and has strong tribal and nomadic culture. An examination of the educational rank of the province and its towns shows that the educational rank of the province is not in the right place, and in recent years, some cities have declined. For example, the education center in this study was ranked 27th out of 41 districts in Khuzestan province, while it was 39th last year. There are many reasons for this organization to be placed at such a level, one of which is the weakness in the selection and appointment of school principals. It seems that the appointment of school principals by the education authorities is not based on professional competencies. Therefore, the present study investigates the manner and conditions of selecting and appointing school principals in education in one of the Khuzestan towns.

### **Literature Review**

Studying management theories shows that from the outset of management science, the selection of efficient individuals (both manager and employee) has always been a concern of experts. As Taylor's scientific selection principle, or Weber's principle of competence and expertise, including the principles of scientific management and bureaucracy (Mehrali Zadeh, 2009), which emphasizes the certain competencies in individuals in order to occupy an organizational position. Fayol refers to different levels of management capabilities across different layers of the organization, by classifying managerial capabilities into technical, general, and specific capabilities. Katz and Kahn later changed this classification to technical, human and cognitive skills (Cited in Ronaghitasdighi, 2012). It is still the basis of much organizational research and analysis. With the advent of the human relations movement, the ability of managers to communicate humanly and to motivate and morale employees was particularly important. Systems theory also calls for capabilities and competencies such as having a systematic and holistic view of management and focusing on intra-organizational and inter-organizational variables.

In later theories, the theory of ecology or ecology of organizations, the modern expression

of Darwin's theory of evolution and social Darwinism, introduced in the 1970s, emphasizes the survival of the competent. Proponents of this theory argue that rather than managing organizations, the environment dictates the shape of organizations (Gholipour, 2014). According to ecologists, organizations are heavily dependent on the environment to access the resources they need for their operations. However, the resource constraints and competitiveness of organizations cause the environment to exert a great deal of power on the organizations, and ultimately, this theory leads to the survival of the competent (Kiaakjori, 2003).

Chaos theory refers to systems that exhibit disorder, which contain some sort of hidden order within themselves, expressing irregular, nonlinear, unpredictable and complex behaviors. In other words, chaos theory assumes a pattern of ultimate order in all these anomalies (Ekwani and Mousavi Nejad, 2014). The emergence and spread of chaos theory, whose most important features are butterfly effect, dynamic adaptation, self-similarity and strange attractions, have led to fundamental changes in theoretical and scientific areas of science including management (Mirzazadeh, Goodarzi, Sajjadi et al., 2014). By virtue of the butterfly nature, productive managers are the ones who recognize these inputs and use them timely and appropriately as a particle, that generates a great deal of energy. According to the principle of dynamic adaptation, the system needs internal changes to maintain the dynamics, which, instead of being adapted to the environment, results in dynamic adaptation that leads to the transformation of stable relationships between individuals, behavior patterns, attitudes, and cultures (Ghorbani , Hafizi, Ahmadi Bani et al., 2014). An important feature of such systems is their flexible expertise, meaning that organizations need a variety of expertise in order to adapt to their changing environment (Mubarak & Vazileh, 2014).

According to the principle of self-similarity, every element of the pattern is the same as the whole. The self-similarity nature of organizational members' behavior can also create a kind of unity, so that all individuals have the same goal in mind (Ayinmehr, Sadeghi,

and Nikkhah, 2015). Strange attractions allow managers to come up with patterns that regulate disorder and explain chaos in an orderly fashion. Having a systematic attitude, considering the high horizons and thinking broadly, helps managers find patterns in seemingly irregular phenomena that give rise to extreme disorder. Future management needs to find strange attractions that reveal this ultimate order. Without knowing this order, no accurate explanation or prediction of today's complex events can be achieved (Mehrabi & Hoveyda, 2014).

The resource dependency perspective views the environment as a place to access scarce resources for technical practices and processes. Environmental resources typically include finance, staff, information, products and services. Organizations share and compete with each other in environmental resources. Because all organizations are dependent on their environment and external control of organizational behavior is inevitable. If they do not respond to the demands of the environment, they cannot thrive. Thus, the resource dependency model emphasizes that organizations must adapt to their environment in order to improve their chances of survival. However, demands are often in conflict, so organizations cannot grow by simply responding to any environmental demand. The challenge for school decision makers is to determine the extent to which their schools can respond to the multiple demands of the environment and the effects of those reactions on their organizations. Therefore, principals must also manage the environment of their organizations (Hoy & Miskel, translated by Seyed Abbaszadeh, 2013).

The study of the above theories shows that management in this society has many complexities and difficulties. Therefore, it needs to be prepared to acquire the knowledge and skills to take this position. Ghasemi Aghdami (2006) describes the attributes, dimensions, competencies and skills required of school principals in seven dimensions of subjective, personality, knowledge, management skills, outcome and communication skills. Each dimension has the characteristics and competencies required of principals. According to Hassanzadeh Foroughi (2013), the skills

required for today's school principals include: 1. Time management skills 2. Communication skills 3. Skills in applying guiding principles 4. Teaching classroom observation skills 5. Skills in managing students' high-risk behaviors 6. Skills in setting weekly class schedules.

Jaj and Kozalaka (2009, cited in Hoy and Miskel, translation by Soleimani et al., 2015) believe that personality traits (self-esteem, stress tolerance, emotional maturity, etc.), motivational (self-efficacy, success orientation, expectations, etc.) and skills (technical, interpersonal, and conceptual) are associated with effective leadership. Yukel (2002) argues that technical skills are important to low - level managers, especially educational assistants who deal with teachers. Middle-level managers such as school principal; require specialized knowledge in all three technical, interpersonal and conceptual skills. Thus high-level managers in the education department, having conceptual skills, especially in framing and problem solving (cited in Hoy & Miskel, 2015, translated by Soleimani).

According to the guidelines outlined in the Basic Education Transformation Document (2012), a principal should have 1. The ability of decision-making in action planning 2. The competency, commitment, capability, experience, responsibility, collective morale and physical health. Baker (2001) believes that the selection of principals is of particular importance for improving the performance of school programs. Because principals play an important role in school effectiveness. It is not possible or difficult to use the tools and methods to make the best choice until the conditions and qualifications become clear. Normor (2004) also believes that the process of selecting the competent principals requires a competitive plan for selecting the most qualified candidates.

The results of Parsa and Heydariyeh (2014) research, designing a model for selecting principals of education with fuzzy multi-criteria decision-making approach, showed that among the main criteria, managerial skills criteria, knowledge and expertise, professional and general credibility, characteristics Personality, attitude and insight are in the first to fifth priorities, respectively.

Mousazadeh and Abdoli (2009) examined the criteria for selecting and appointing principals based on competent approach in Nahj al-Balagha. In this study, the criteria for selecting and appointing competent principals were gathered according to Nahj al-Balagha. These include ideological, contextual, and specialized criteria.

Siavash Zangiani, Azimi, and Hosseini (2015) analyzed the indicators of the appointment of elementary school principals in Mazandaran province. The results showed that the applied technical indices did not differ significantly during the six periods, and the perceptual and human indices did not differ significantly, too. It means that during this period each indicator of the manager's appointment has not changed significantly. Among the principals with different experience, each indicator is far from desirable situation.

Binaeyan Sefid (2011) conducted a study on determining the selection criteria for high school principals in Mazandaran province from the viewpoint of the high school teachers in the academic year 2011-12. The results of the research were that all the indicators mentioned in the questions from the point of view of the teachers were respectively: administrative skills, emotional intelligence, creativity, personality traits, and beliefs aspects.

According to a study by Sadeghian et al. (2015), focusing on a new way to choose successful educational administration in future schools, administration experience is not only a success factor for a principal, but also features such as creativity, performance, skills, communication and talent are important.

### **Purpose of the research**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the way and conditions of selecting and appointing school principals in the education of one of the Khuzestan towns.

### **Research method**

This is a qualitative research based on grounded theory. Grounded Theory is an

inductive and exploring method that allows researchers in various subject areas to formulate theory through comparative analysis of observations rather than relying on existing theories (Giesler & Strauss, 1967, cited in Mehralizadeh et al., 2013). Therefore, in order to gather information and answer the research questions, interviewing and document review tools including Higher Education Council approvals and upstream documents such as the Fundamental Transformation Document were used. Participants in this study were education authorities (managers, assistants and supervisors), teachers and school principals in one of Khuzestan province- Lali, who were selected through purposeful sampling. At least 10 years of experience was the criteria to select the teachers and principals. Therefore, 30 unstructured interviews were conducted to reach theoretical saturation. The average time for each interview was 20 to 35 minutes. Interviews were recorded. Then, Open, axial and selective coding were used in the analysis process. Therefore, through open coding, the codes are extracted from the content of the interviews and concepts are constructed. Then the common concepts form a category. In axial coding, one of the categories is selected as the main category and the other is linked to it. Then in selective coding, the categories are refined and the basic framework of the theory is formed by linking the concepts and categories produced to each other. All of these steps have taken place simultaneously with data gathering.

### **Findings**

After recording the interviews, the content was analyzed and coded. Open coding is a process in which data are broken down into meaningful units and can be used at the beginning of the study. The main purpose of open coding is to conceptualize and label data. In the next step, each of the code derived from open coding is categorized and conceptualized, and then categories are formed from concepts. In Table 1, the concepts and categories formed from the interviews are outlined.

**Table 1.open coding and concepts**

<b>category</b>	<b>concepts</b>	<b>Code No.</b>	<b>total</b>
General qualifications	Believe undertaking to Islam and jurisconsult province	1-3-4-8-12-22	6
	Non publicity to corruption	4- 14	2
	Married life	13-14-22	3
	Piety, work commitment, executive guarantee	4-5-6-8-9-13-19	7
	mindedness	4-6-15-19-20	5
	Psychical, emotional and physical health	4-22-27	3
	Outward and prestige of manager	10	4
	Boldness and bravery	3-11-24	3
	ethics	4-5-6-8-9-10-13-17-18-19-22-24-30	13
	Reputation	4-5-6-7-8-10-13-17-19-20-21-25	12
	Acceptance and popularity between colleagues and people	4-5-6-7-8-10-13-17-19-20-26	11
	Responsibility sense	5-6-17-18-20-23	6
	Good personality and behavior	2-16-21-22-25	5
	Specialized qualifications	Domination in IT and computer systems for doing school tasks	5-8-10-16-19
Domination in execute rules and discipline		8-10-20	3
Having educational management certification		1-6-8-11-13-14-26-29	8
Having at least licentiate`s degree		1-2-3-6-7-8-11-13-14-17-19-20-22-25-26-27-28-29-30	19
Managerial and educational experience		1-3-5-6-7-8-9-11-13-15-16-17-18-19-22-24- 25- 26-27-28-29-30	22
Domination in educational affairs in related section such as teaching method, regulating weekly schedule		9- 13-14-15-16-22-25	7
Researches and science articles		6	1
Scientific, cultural and training ability		4	1
Motivated factors	Motive and interesting to management position	7-8-9-11	4
	Increase salary	7- 27-29	3
	Calculating mean of 3 <sup>th</sup> latest salary for retired	4-27	2
	Facilitating in truck to university for educating	7	1
	Transfer from the city and village to tribes for increasing salary and receipt to management position	7- 28	2
Communicative skills	Ability to organizing parents meeting sessions	28-29-30	3
	Ability to interaction and public communication	2-6-8-9-10-16-17-18-21-24-25-28-29-30	14
	Enabling decision- making and leadership	17-20-23	3
	Verbal and explanation ability	9-10-16-20-23	5
Individual factors	Acquaintance with subordinates and superiors characteristics	8-9	2
	Awareness of viewpoints and attitudes of education authorities	5-7-11	3
	Inability to teaching and learning	7-20	2
	Demonstration to inability to teaching	5-7-20	3
Need to new manager	Retired or transferred previous manager	1-3-6-8-28-29-30	7
	Transferring previous manager from one session to another	1-3-6-8-29-30	6

	Deposal manager because of disabling or not obtaining job	1-3-6-8-29-30	6
	Disinclination to continue by previous manager	1-3-6-8-30	5
Ethnic attitude	Ethnic oriented	1-2-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-23-24-25-26	23
	Ownership sense to region and school locality	7	1
Political factors	Pressure of political, informal groups and influential persons	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-13-14-15-16-20-29	14
	Interference of city politicians: governership, sheriff ...	2-5	2
	Ordered by administration staffs	5-16	2
Legal and control actions	Guardian actions: behavioral and ethical characteristic control	1-3-4-6-9-11-29-30	8
	Continues evaluating of managers functions per year	1-3-6-9-11-16-29-30	8
	Disposing the start- service, in- servise training, workshops	6-13-15-16	4
	Disposing the face to face sessions with authorities	15	1
	Disposing the conferencies about qualitifing and elevation of principals	15	1
	Invitation from successful principals to using their experiences	15-16	2
Inefficiency	Reactiveness of education against pressure factores	2-5	2
	Put the week persons on management position	6	1
	Decreaseing the instruction quality, academic failure	3-4-5-7-8-9-10-11-13-20	10
	Decreaseing the motivation of competent people	2-5	2
	Disinteresting and discouragement of teachers and students in instruction	5-13-14	3
	Non- using of axotic competent people	3-5-9	3
	Non participating of teachers and parents to choose managers	2-5-7-15-16-17-18-19-20-22-23-24-25	13
	Sequesting educated and authentically people	2-5-7-19-20-25	6

At the axial coding step, by comparing the basic concepts and categories created in open coding, the same codes were grouped into one axis. Then they link to the other categories and underpin the paradigm model.

The analysis of the interviews revealed that the central issue in the inappropriate assignment of principals is ethnicity. The formal education system of each country embodies the social, cultural subsystem of that community, and the formal socialization agent of society with a set of different cultures that can each perform different functions at the level of the education system. The Iranian population is a diverse mix of ethnic groups. These ethnic groups differ in culture, customs, language, religion or religion. Kelly (1994, cited in Hutchison, 1996) believes

that the performance of people of different ethnicities and cultures is not the same, and some of them have greatly influenced in scientific advancements and have been able to gain significant technological advances in the world. Sociologists believe that ethnicity is a shared cultural heritage. The concept of ethnicity refers to people who share common roots and ancestry, common ancestors, and culturally and identifiable traits and characteristics such as religion, habits and behavior, language, manner of dressing, marriage, worship, music, literature, history, hometown and race (Hutchison, 1996). Extreme ethnicism leads to objections and rejection of cultural richness and knowledge of other cultures. This prevents communication and exchange of views and skills between people. Since, ethnicism does not consider other perspectives, as well as, its tendency is

restrictive and exclusive (Jandet, 1995). In addition to being "restrictive and monopolistic" about ethnicism, its extreme type will result in the creation of individualistic schools. If people believe that their culture is the only real culture, they will discriminate against people who have cultural standards incompatible with their values and behavior. Ethnicism is the starting point for most fanatical beliefs (Edraki, 2011).

However, the issue of selecting and appointing principals for students' academic achievement, guiding the education process, and motivating staff with a variety of methods, such as participation in decision making, mutual trust between members of an educational unit, create a sense of commitment to all employees are so important to the educational unit and paves the way for achieving the goals of the education system (Sohrabzadeh, 2010). In the administration literature, any kind of illegal recruitment or appointment of relatives and friends in a bureaucratic system is considered negativ. Accordingly, one of the disadvantages of current organizations is the inappropriate selection and assignment of principals. According to the studies of principals and employees' selection, specific criteria, such as family affiliation, recommendations, social and class status, language, ethnicity, race, etc., are prevented from functioning properly. Instead, taking into account universal and decentralized criteria such as commitment, expertise, skill and experience in selecting principals and employees improves the performance of the organization. Whereas, in the logic of the Holy Qur'an, the positions and responsibilities are credits that must be given to the competent people (Tabatabai, 1995).

In this study, the issue of ethnicity has become such a challenge that it is thought to be one of the official goals of education. In these circumstances, individuals who are not affiliated with any party shall not hold any managerial position. "There are individuals in the education area who are professional and experts, but they aren't seen unfortunately. Because they are not affiliated with a particular party to take the position" (Teacher, Code 17).

Another factor in this area is tribal balance. Ethnicity has so much overwhelmed the selection and appointment of principals that

education officials are trying to use all the categories and groups in the school principalship system to balance appointments. Therefore, the direction of appointing principals involves ethnicism. "Given that this town is made up of three important tribes, all three tribes should be appointed to school principal positions and education officials. However, Individuals from different clans are pushing for a position." (Assistant, Code 8).

Another notion of ethnicity is the sense of ownership of the school district and location. In this town, the majority of the forces are domestic. Therefore, in principals' appointment process, there are individuals claiming ownership of a particular area and its principalship. According to one official (Code 7): "Due to the sense of ownership of the area and the school where the principalship applicants live, they want to be the principals. They claim that they are sympathetic to the students, and that is a kind of attitude deficiency."

Given that the majority of the residents are principals' relatives, they do not object to the status quo and ignore any deficiency in education. However, there is the lack of supervision leads to a drop in students' education.

Finally, by analyzing the content of the interviews and extracting the causal, contextual, and disturbing factors as well as reaching the central categories, strategies and outcomes, the paradigm model is presented in Figure 1.

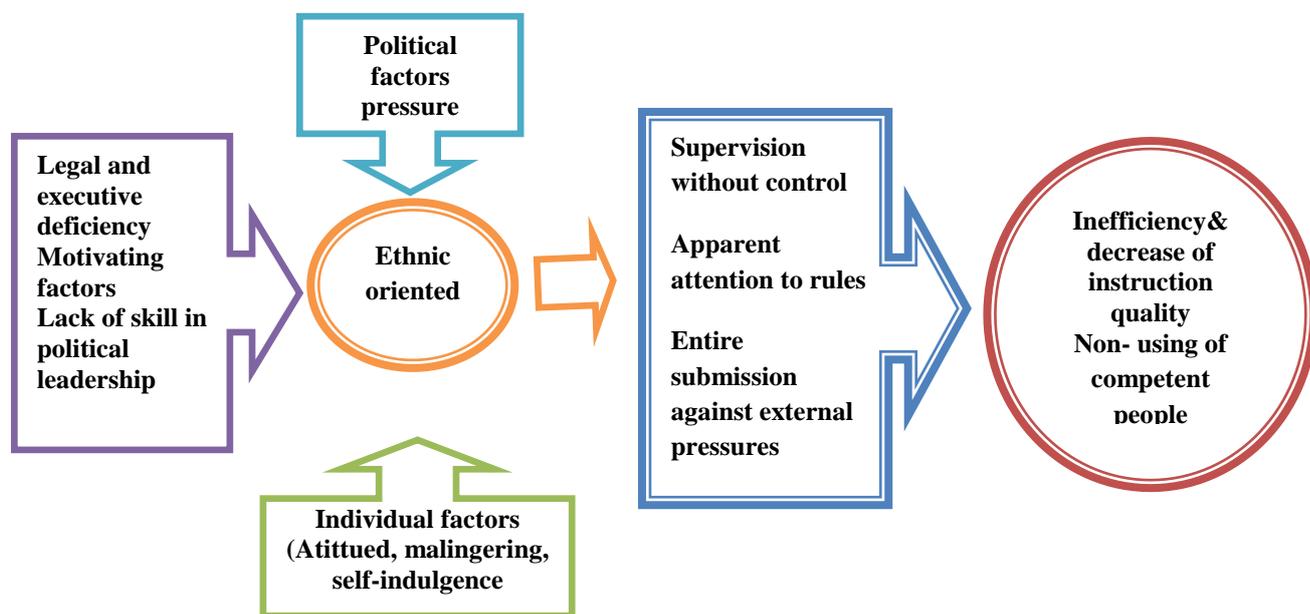


Figure 1. Paradigm pattern of how managers appointment

**Question1:**

**What are the causal factors of the current school principals' appointment?**

Before considering the causal categories, it is necessary to consider why the appointment of a new principal is necessary. The process of selecting and appointing school principals begins where schools need principals to administrate their affairs. "One of the key issues in selecting principals is the need for a new or alternate administrator," said one official at the Department of Education (Code 3). "And that need may be reflected by the retirement, resignation, and dismissal of former principals or the establishment of a new school, then the Department of Education plans to assign a new principal."

Based on the interviews conducted in the present study, three categories were identified as causal categories: legal and executive deficiencies in the selection of applicants, motivational factors of applicants, and lack of political leadership skills.

A: Legal and executive deficiencies: Based on the Fundamental Evolutionary Document of Education, the selection of principals at different levels based on competency and commitment to

human values and scientific criteria, efficiency and belief in the goals of formal education system, operationalization of strategies, promotion of school principalship and quality assurance in schools should be established. However, a system of evaluation of teachers and principals' competencies including ethical, belief, revolutionary, professional and professional competencies and evaluation appropriate to the fundamentals and goals of the strategic transformation document should be established. In addition, the Higher Education Council Resolution (Session 637 - dated 22/1/1992) sets out the following general and specific requirements for principalship appointments in the Appointment of Principals and Officials Directoin.

General conditions: Belief in Islam and practical commitment to the Islamic jurisprudence, adherence to Islamic ethics (such as Hassan Khalq, Sa'ad Sadr, fairness, morals and trust in colleagues), having good empirical backgrounds, having good reputation, acceptance among colleagues, ability to manage, team morale, ability to communicate with others, and the co-operation of staff, students

and their parents to accomplish the goals of education, married, having the physical and mental health necessary to perform management duties and being an formal employee in education.

**Specific Conditions:** the type of degree and the grade of the school determine the minimum education and experience required for school administrators. Accordingly, people with a bachelor's degree and above are given priority. Another set of requirements is success in passing school principalship qualifications or attending principalship training courses.

Considering these conditions, one can see that there are no significant principalship requirements. The most important specific requirements are to have a bachelor's degree. "... but unfortunately there are still administrators who hold postgraduate degrees in traditional ways in urban schools and no one can dismiss them" (Code 11). More interestingly, according to one expert (code 15): "Some secondary schools are managed by elementary teachers and they lack the necessary expertise to do so, and this is a problem for the school and students. This is an unprofessional assignment.

"There are 72 schools in this study, including 35 primary schools, 22 guidance and 15 secondary schools. Elementary school principals have all B.A of Education. However, 6 out of 22 guidance school principals and 2 out of 15 secondary school principals have B.A of Education, and the rest of the secondary school principals have other degrees related to their profession. Also among the school principals of this town, only four of them have M.A degree including two Educational Administration.

Improvement the quality of principalship in education requires principals who have completed training principalship courses to provide principals with the insight, knowledge and skills needed to educate and achieve the educational goals. Specialization has become one of the most powerful sources of influence (Dessler, translated by Parsaian & Arabi, 2014). Studies show that there are very few training courses for principals that usually take place after assignment.

Consideration the above competency criteria indicate that the main policy makers in the Iranian education system have completely a non-

professional views of school principalship. For example, according to the decisions of the Higher Education Council (six hundred and ninety-one sessions) the conditions for school principalship assignment in Iran are even easier than obtaining a driver's license and coaching a football team, while international studies confirm a fully professional position for school principalship. In Germany, for example, school principals are selected from teachers with at least 23 years of experience in teaching, educational counseling, educational supervision and principal consulting and have passed a principalship qualification course. Alternatively, in Japan, well-known postgraduate teachers with acceptable academic and educational backgrounds and qualifications are selected as school administrators by passing a professional qualification test and receiving approval from some civic institutions. Experiences of successful educational systems in the world such as Finland and Singapore also indicate the existence of special conditions for selecting school principals (Khalkhali, 2015).

"Principalship work in schools is more stressful than personal and daily work and activities" (principal, Code 27). Two-thirds of the district's schools are in countryside area and principals have to travel about 30 km each day. As well as, school principals and applicants are generally old and at the age of retiring. They have physical weakness and emotional disinterest to do their job. Therefore, it is necessary to select and appoint individuals who have the mental, physical and emotional health to accomplish determined goals by implementing education strategies and policies.

Educational principalship is dealt with educational facilities and equipment, so it is up to educational principalship to identify educational tools, facilities, etc (Mirkamali, 2000). Nowadays, each school administrator must be able in IT in order to facilitate student, client and staff performance, as well as regulations and administrative correspondence. It reduce education costs when the per capita of schools is very small. "Some school principals have been in this position for many years, but unfortunately still cannot work on computers. They spend money to deploy student and school affairs such as enrollment, registration and

printing of directions etc in cafes” (Assistant, Code 5). Doing current affairs at school with computer through internet is one of the issues that has been updated in the farthest reaches of the country, but some school principals do this by waste the little school capita.

In the new management system, there are important factors in the success of a complex, including the presence of a manager and a leader at the top as the manager and coordinator of affairs. The wider a system, the greater the proportion of managers' responsibilities. "Managers in rural areas should respect the people and serve the people and pay attention to various issues and matters of fairness, honesty, responsibility and trustworthiness, but some managers find that they are not punctual, delay and return early and do not adhere to their commitments. Also, they do not report the educational weakness of the students to their parents in order to maintain their position” (principal, Code 17).

Therefore, it can be concluded that, first, the existing laws and regulations are not up-to-date and the conditions required for assignment are not based on the needs of today's society. Second, the same rules are not implemented properly and there is little supervision of the implementation of the rules. The results of the interviews also showed that the school principal should have two categories of general and specialized conditions:

**General Conditions:** Due to the centralized system based on the political, religious, cultural, social and biological conditions, general goals of the education system in Iran are determined. Since the principals guides others, they must have the following general conditions and characteristics: Belief in and commitment to the jurisprudence and Islamic religion, piety and commitment, Sa'ad Sadr, mental-emotional-physical health , Appearance and prestige of management, ability to communicate with the outside environment, ethics, reputation, popularity among staffs, accountability, character and good behavior, boldness and courage.

**Specialized Qualifications:** Elementary, guidance and secondary principals must have the necessary expertise on relevant educational issues such as scheduling, planing, and engaging

with students, colleagues, and parents, conducting educational, cultural, artistic and sports activities at school as well as ability ti work with computer. Specialized qualifications are therefore: IT system proficiency, educational administration or related academic qualifications, principalship experience, mastery of educational matters, rules and guidelines, as well as, research background

Interviews with principals suggest that individuals should be selected and appointed to school principalship positions with at least 5 years of educational experience or teaching to become familiar with the organization's culture and dealing with existing problems and challenges. If they have sufficient educational experience, they should be assigned as assistant, trainee or administrator in low-level schools to pass the trial and error process, and Able to make decisive and complex decisions in high-level schools. Therefore, one of the factors that influences in principal assignment is the specialized knowledge that the officials of the Department of Education must pay attention to in the implementation of guidelines and directions for the appointmentof principals. At last, the new appointed principals with any specific criteria (qualifications, educational or principalship experience, competency, information technology, etc.) must have training courses before the beginning of the academic year, including educational, administrative, cultural and financial issues, ae well as, organizational theory-based management practices and implementation of official directions. Then the workplace must be introduced formally to perform their task.

**B: Motivational Factors:** Motivation is generally described as an internal state that stimulates, directs, and stabilizes behaviors. A set of energetic forces that originate both within and beyond the individual to establish work-related behaviors and determine their shape, direction, intensity, and continuity. The motivation is the desire to move and start the activity to achieve a certain goal (Hoy& Miskle, translated by Seyed Abbaszadeh, 2013). Behavior is a complex phenomenon that is driven primarily by motivation. Decisions and choices are influenced by the complex system of human needs, and some are common to all human

beings, but others are different, such as 4. emotional needs, social reputation, self-esteem, self-fulfillment, which are higher than the individual needs. Biological differences, cultures, environments, and life experiences generally influence and shape their motivation (Hassanzadeh Foroughi, 2013). However, whether material or non-material, motivation is one of the most important criteria in selecting 5. principals. Social reputation and self-esteem are the needs that motivate some applicants for management positions to work hard to achieve this post. What emerges from the interviews is that individuals have different motivations for the school principalship, as follow:

1. **Material Motivation (Increase Salary):** Many applicants are motivated to increase their salaries, gain more benefits, and thus endure the hardships of working long distances. According to one of the administrators (Code 28): "One of the teachers who was teaching in the city wanted to make a transition and go to the countryside education." "If I go to a distance region, I get more pay and benefits, and I also easily administrate one of the schools and get extra salary," he said. Therefore, the countryside education section covers many schools, with many applicants being transferred to the distance area every year for various reasons. While the principal may be attended just two days a week at school, there is little supervision on principals due to the long distance.
2. **Political motivation:** Political motivation is the reason for some applicants to seek principalship positions in urban schools. "Individuals' motivation to take school principalship is different. Some individuals are trying to take the school principalship in order to run a city council election campaign so that they can reach their goals through direct communication with parents." (Responsible, Code 7).
3. **Success .Motivation:** There are applicants who are really looking to improve their position and want to achieve more success and to be effective for their urban community. Therefore, these individuals will be nominated with positive intentions and will succeed in their work after being appointed. "But some who are not affiliated with any party are unfortunately frustrated and isolated in their pursuit of their goals" (Expert, Code 7).

**Transition Motivation:** There are teachers who want to move from the town to the capital, cities, or other provinces, but they do not agree because of the lack of staffs. Since officials make it easier for principals transition in their political party, the teachers are looking for a principalship position to transfer at the beginning the academic year.

**Graduate Motivation:** Some individuals are thinking about managing a school in order to graduate at public universities easily to gain legal authority and become free and independent to participate in university courses without any problem.

According to Alderfer (1972) and McKelland (1976) (cited in Abbaszadeh, 2013), one can justify some of the motives such as the motivation for success. McClelland argues that high-achieving individuals have a strong tendency to accept personal responsibility for doing or solving problems; tend to set more or less difficult goals and accept moderate levels of risk; and they want information about the results of their work. If these incentives are properly managed, it will lead to both individual success and growth, as well as organization growth. But as Ronaqitasdighi (2012) has stated, in Iran the minimum level of school principalship experience, lack of higher education (masters and PhD) priority, lack of research activities, and lack of qualifications test, all pave the way for principals to be appointed through communications, kinship, and political activism, etc without principalship competency.

**C: Lack of political leadership skills:** Organizations are political arenas. Policies at work are a fact that grows at the highest levels of the organizational hierarchy. For executives, political skill is not only to success and effectiveness, but also essential. A successful executive learns when to simulate passion, compassion, interest, humility, confidence, and domination, when to laugh, with whom to laugh, and how to be intimate with others. If this is successful, he has become a person in harmony with his environment. Successful executives also learn to use all the right masks, learn all the right words for the conversation, get to know all the right individuals, and spread the insight and skills of self-promotion art. Social consciousness and the interpersonal influence of political skill

play a key role here. None of this, of course, works unless it is convincingly done. Networking capability is also critical to management effectiveness. Leadership involves the achievement of purpose by and with others, and the social capital that is given to those who are politically skilled is what enables leaders to be effective (Fani, 2013). Therefore, those who are politically skilled and able to control their emotions with respect to their tribe, as well as, deploy political skill components such as self-promotion, self-esteem, and confidence can be seen as competent principals. They can administrate with parents cooperation. However, there is no such ability and skill in officials to select the principals. On the other hand, because of the politicization of society and the pressure of political factors, officials inevitably appoint managers who do not have the necessary competence.

**Question 2: What are the contextual factors in the current method of assigning school principals?**

The most important factor that underpins the current conditions for the assignment of principals is interpersonal factors. In today's organizations, as a complex subsystem, human has a fundamental role that operates according to its own attitude and knowledge. Interpersonal factors can include attitude, personality, and perception that each affect one's behavior in some way. Accordingly, principals' attitudes toward individuals or phenomena influence their behavior and decisions. One principal (Code 5) stated, "Education Officials are usually politically appointed, so as soon as they enter the managerial system, they dismiss several administrative staff or employees. They resign because of inconsistent political attitude".

From the analysis of the interviews, it is concluded that education officials are mainly appointed based on political factors. Thus, their attitude and management are not scientific, but they are more committed to the factors of power than to their organizational goals and mission. Therefore, based on their unscientific, self-interest and factionalism seek to transition their workforce to consolidate their position, while another part of the system may need to be changed. Therefore, political, tribalism and

bandit attitude, leading to the appearance of change and sometimes the change results in disefficiency.

"In this town, there are authoritarians, because of their pride, high education, prominence in their tribe, and so on, want to take the management position and do not consider themselves subordinate to others. According to the interviewee (code 7): "Some applicants have a sense of pride and selfish in the tribal assignment, because his ancestors were once the regional governor. Therefore, they can no longer serve as a teacher and under the supervision of another. "

The interpersonal category includes concepts such as the attitude of the education authorities, the sense of ownership of the region and the inability to educate. According to the above explanations, personality traits such as attitude and motivation influence the type of perception and judgment of education officials. Inability to educate refers to the individuals over 25 years of experience that must be appointed to principalship positions because of their inability. There are also individuals who pretend inability for many years. The stability of his behavior is revealed to all, and officials become influenced and persuaded to appoint him to the principalship positions. Some individuals do not see reality as it is, but interpret what they see and call it reality. For example, because some teachers have at the end of working years and want to retire, so they should be appointed to principalship positions to receive more benefits in their salaries. From their point of view, it is a fact that everyone sees, while the reality is the appointment of the competent applicants in principalship positions and those who qualify for principalship should be appropriately appointed to principalship positions. Indeed, educated and knowledgeable individuals have been forgotten which is a kind of low-level attitude.

**Question 3: What are the factors that interfere with the current way of assignment of school principals?**

The most important interfering factors in the process of selecting and appointing principals are political factors. Mintzberg (1983) argues that politics is the behavior of an individual or group that is informally, usually divisive and

unlawful. it is neither endorsed by official authority nor accepted by ideology. March acknowledges that although there are powerful individuals, the political arena of organizations consists of individual-group unions that negotiate the distribution of power among themselves. Bolman and Dell (1997, cited in Sayyid Abbaszadeh, 2013) believe that despite all efforts to integrate the needs of individuals to serve the goals of organizations, individuals themselves have personal needs that must be met. Out-of-school influencers are organized into thousands of groups such as teachers' associations, coalitions, parent and teacher associations, provincial departments of education, colleges and universities, the media, and other stakeholders. Most of these influential outside groups try to exert their external interests and power over school activities. Their problem, of course, because they operate outside the bureaucratic structure of the school, is to determine how to achieve their desired results.

In small towns with tribal and ethnic culture and different tribes, usually tribes form parties and coalitions. One of the interviewees (code 2) states, "Usually the well-known of each tribe who share the same goals and interests form a party. Therefore, his coalites with one of the candidate the Majlis slection who have more influence. They are negotiating and pledging to support him and, if he wins, the applicants of this tribe should be appointed in principalship positions. "

Mintzberg believes that just as an organization can be influenced by an external coalition, influential internal groups that come together for one purpose, that is, the internal coalition, can also influence it. The external coalition forms a kind of internal coalition that has emerged. The dominant external coalition tends to weaken internal coalitions, but despite this external coalition, the organization operates through internal coalition efforts (cited in Abbaszadeh, 2013).

The town in this study consists of different tribes. Each tribe has different well-known and famous individuals form the tribal party, in fact a coalition outside organizations. These tribal groups constantly ask organizations and departments to assign from their own. External groups and coalitions that are closely linked to

the town's political actors will consult as needed to use their nominees in management positions. In sum, it can be said that in the education department of the town, the dominant external coalitions influence the internal coalitions with shared ideals and play an interventionist role in selecting and appointing school principals to achieve their goals and objectives. Ecologists believe that "organizations are heavily dependent on the environment for the resources they need to operate, but resource constraints and competitiveness cause the environment to exert enormous power over organizations" (Kiakjuri. 2003) ", has been well established in this town. The interesting thing is that in this town, politics is practically overshadowed by ethnic interests, not vice versa. In other words, the tribes form a political group for the sake of ethnicity, not because they believe in a political approach.

#### **Question 4: What are the strategic measures that influence the causal and contextual factors in the school principals?**

The Department of Education has used strategies against contextual and intervention factors that can be divided into two categories:

1) Positive strategies include: a) Supervision and control b) In-service and on-service courses and workshops.

2) Negative strategies include: (c) formal attention to rules (documentation): (d) pure submission to contextual and interfering factors such as political groups, informal groups, and others that were involved in the selection of principals.

Supervision and Control: Supervision means monitoring the progress of operations compared to the status quo, modifying, and correcting operations to prevent deviations from achieving the goals of the training organization. The first part of this definition is about acquiring information by observing the status quo and determining the progress of the work by comparing the optimal situation called supervision. The second part is to restore the educational system to its correct and desirable form through corrective actions, which is an operational and executive process called control (Mirkamali, 2000). According to Scott (2016), the system-logical approach emphasizes explicit

goal setting and formalization, as these elements play an important role in the wisdom and efficiency of organizations. Formalization leads to standardization and regularization of work implementation. Rules establish to control behavior precisely and clearly. One of the factors are mentioned by administrative interviewees is supervision and control, which is commonly used in most organizations to increase efficiency and achieve organizational goals. "During the school year, repeated supervision is performed, poorly performing principals are given verbal reminder strategies if they do not improve their performance in the subsequent supervision and written reminder will be recorded in their portfolio. Therefore, after three times of written warnings, they will be dismissed during the legal process" (Manager, Code 7).

B) In-Service Courses and Workshops: The basic strategy that most interviewees consider a factor in empowering principals and employees is in-service courses and workshops. In Implementing Civil Service Law, Chapter 9 (Empowering Personnel), Article 58- In order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of executive agencies, the organization is required to design an executive staff training system that fits in with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of employees and provide the necessary incentives for the employee to participate regularly in the training process. Therefore, the relationship between employee and principal can be established and the minimum per-hour training is met according to relevant regulations each year (Civil Service Law, 2007).

Accordingly, courses and workshops are held for principals, especially new principals. According to one expert (code 16): "The Department of Education organizes workshops for school principals and invites experienced principals to share their experiences with colleagues. These workshops are very useful because they use each other ».

(C) Artificial attention to rules: Scott (2016) states that the system-logical view of organizations is regarded as formal tools designed to achieve specific organizational goals. The rationale is the amount of organizing and actions taken to achieve the goals that are most effective in advance. Scott also argues that

this view emphasizes the limitations of individual decision makers in the context of organizations;. Education as a formal and logical organization has set goals and developed guidelines for achieving them. However, the analysis of the interviews reveals "Artificial attention to the rules" and it can be said that education rules and guidelines govern the selection and appointment of school principals, apparently based on documentation, but in practice, ethnic issues takes into consideration. Artificial attention has covered various aspects of activities. Therefore, the above strategies are more Artificial and practically out of reach. Supervision by education authorities is not real with virtually no feedback. Unfortunately, there is no follow-up, and school administrators know that these inspections and monitoring are artificial. Courses are also more ceremonial. Because most executives spend their time collecting documentation and taking photos and submitting them to the provincial education directorate rather than regularly and deliberately holding these courses. These meetings do not have significant benefits.

D) Another negative strategy that the education has taken against ethnic, contextual and intervention factors is the simple obedient. The Department of Education has the important responsibility of educating students and must employ strategies that address the political, ethnical issues, traditional cultures, tribal competitions that are obstacles to achieving educational goals. While education officials have not only taken action in this regard, they have also given in to environmental demands and in some cases, consciously or unconsciously, promoted it. It seems that the Department of Education has not provided a meaningful solution to the underlying and interference factors and has acted passively. Thus, it seems to ecologists, rather than the management of organizations, is the environment that dictates the form of organizations and emphasizes the survival of the fittest (Gholipour, 2014). However, due to lack of political leadership, education authorities failed to manage and control the external environment of education and instead succumbed to interaction.

**Question 5: What are the consequences of the strategies employed in the school principals' assignment?**

The strategy followed by education has been the consequence of inefficiencies that have led to poor education and poor quality, lack of motivation in teachers and students, lack of usage of appropriate applicants, and the isolation of literate individuals.

A) Inefficiency and Decrease in the Quality of Education: The set of causal, contextual and interventional factors has been the cause of the inefficiency of the education system in this town and its quality decline. According to the analysis of the interviews, the above explanations and the passivity of education against the influence of contextual and interventional conditions are the results such as academic failure and poor education.

When students fail the final exams, they have to go to adult high school to part-time study, which takes a long time for the students to graduate. "Students' admission to adult high school is a result of some administrators' inattention to the education and training of students who have been poorly attained" (Correspondent, Code 5).

Yearly education plans provide students with a variety of topics at different levels and teachers and administrators can guide and mentor their students to evaluate these projects at regional, provincial, and national levels.

B) Lack of Motivation: The crisis of motivation is a major threat to our education system. Several factors influence the lack of motivation in teachers and students. However, what this study is looking at is the kind of management and system that governs the education system, which has sometimes led to the disengagement of teachers and students. According to interviews, principals who assigned based on relationships are usually inadequate and lacking programmatic and managerial knowledge that cannot coordinate and interact well with school system members. In addition, does not engage teachers, students, and parents in school decision-making and problem solving.

C) Lack of Competent applicants' usage: There are many well-educated and competent applicants in this town. According to one of the

administrators (code 25): "The town has a large number of literate individuals that do not accept the school principalship system for various reasons. It is expected that the education authorities will identify these individuals and use their comments and suggestions in making decisions and in selecting principals. "

**Discussion**

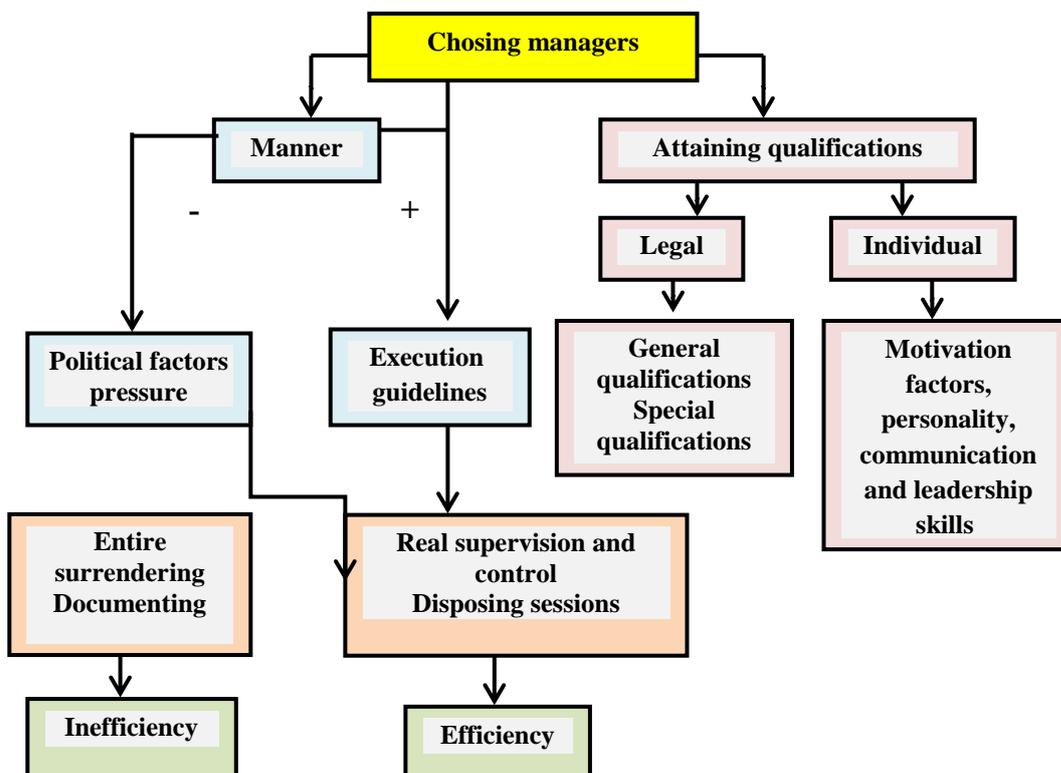
Administration in any system involves accepting heavy organizational and social responsibilities. School principalship plays a more important role, as the young generation is guided by their ideas and plans. Hence, taking such responsibility to individuals must be carefully done. Most countries have set up relatively difficult laws and conditions in order to qualify for the position. The study of the existing laws and directions showed that the conditions and criteria set for the assignment of school principalship are less. Therefore, most teachers can apply for such a post. However, in many cases these few rules are not followed. This situation indicates deficiencies in current education laws as well as deficiencies in pension laws. Pressure from political forces, on the other hand, has nurtured this law deficiency and allowed unskilled applicants to take the responsibility. Due to the social conditions of the town and the dominance of tribal cultures and traditions, the selection of principals has been influenced and the lack of political leadership in Department of education has led to greater ethnocentrism and overcome academic and scientific insights. In this situation, the laws are artificial and it tries to preserve the surface of the laws. According to ecology theory and resource dependency, one can say that applicants' ecosystems play a significant role in applicants' thinking and behavior, and organizations, including schools, rely on locally available resources to survive. It makes them more dependent on the environment. Lack of control and follow up the problems in the principals' performance leads to ethnic issues having higher preference and ultimately leading to system failure and perceived quality decline.

Overall, the kind of principalship that administrate schools and the workplace has led to the disengagement and lack of motivation in teachers. Although other factors such as the low level of salaries and benefits, the dominate

atmosphere in Iranian society in the last decade, changes in the lives of other employees, and the increase in salaries of other employees, etc. have had a significant impact on reducing this incentive, but poor principalship has also contributed to the decline the motivation. Principals who have not completed pre-appointment training courses and do not pay attention to in-service training courses and have no background in educational principalship are certainly not able to incorporate new managerial approaches, theories and management theories.

Applying some of the short and long-term solutions can change the current situation. Short-

term actions include holding principalship courses for applicants or principalship candidates. Education administrators in the province also need to be trained in political leadership, bargaining and negotiation skills so that they can effectively defend the education system and the future of youth community. Long-term measures include action to revise existing laws and to set stronger, more scientific and up-to-date indicators to provide a more favorable context for the appointment of more qualified principals. Finally, the principal's selection process can be summarized in the following model:



Modle 1. Proposed pattern of manager assignment

**Acknowledgment**

We would like to appreciate all the participants in this research who helped us in accurent implementation of our project.

**Ethical considerations**

During the implementation of this research and the preparation of the article, all national laws and principles of professional ethics related to the subject of research, including the

rights of statistical community, organizations and institutions, as well as authors and writers have been observed. Adherence to the principles of research ethics in the present study was observed and consent forms were consciously completed by all statistical community.

### **Sponsorship**

The present study was funded by the authors of the article.

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### **Conflict of interest**

According to the authors of the present article, there was no conflict of interest. This article has not been previously published in any journal, whether domestic or foreign, and has been sent to the School Administration Quarterly for review and publication only.

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**Author 1 Name: Morad Mehdipour**

**Email: mehdipour.morad7531@gmail.com**

Morad Mehdipour was MA. Student in educational administration in Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz. His research interests are educational management, education.



**Author 2 Name: Sakineh Shahi**

**Email: sshahi@scu.ac.ir**

Sakineh Shahi got her PHD in educational administration from Tarbiat Moalem university (now named Kharazmi) and currently is an Assistant professor in Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz. Also, she is the member of lifelong learning excellence center. She has published several papers in national and international journals. Her research interests are educational management, higher education, educational evaluation, lifelong learning etc.



**Author 3 Name: Yadollah Mehralizadeh**

**Email: Mehralizadeh\_Y@scu.ac.ir**

Yadollah Mehralizadeh has PHD in human resource planning at England and currently is Professor in Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz. He also is Member of lifelong learning excellence center. He has published several papers in national and international journals. Her research interests are empowerment of human resource, educational management, higher education, Technical and professional education, lifelong learning etc.