
Prioritization of Qualified Teachers` Selection in Zanjan, Iran

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ABSTRACT

Teachers have a prominent role in education and learning of students and their actions and behaviors are effective in motivating learning, they should be respected and it is necessary to recognize their efforts. However, this study aimed to prioritize of the qualified teachers` selection in Zanjan in 2015- 2016 academic year. This was descriptive-applied cross-sectional survey study. The questionnaire was used for collecting the data. The population consisted of all teachers in Zanjan (N=3293). Using Cochran formula, the sample size was determined to be 342 participants. The sample was selected using systematic stratified random sampling method. Using SPSS 21, the collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (Friedman test). The findings showed that the highest ranking of selection criteria was for education degree, IT skills, ranking in festivals, and work experience; the lowest ranking was for veterans, activity in Basij, and number of children. On the other hand, the prioritization of qualified teacher selection criteria changed. Therefore, it was recommended that these areas would be revised.

Keywords: Qualified Teacher, Qualified Teacher Selection Criteria.

INTRODUCTION

The teachers are key elements of training and education system. Since they have a prominent role in education and learning of students and their actions and behaviors are effective in motivating learning, they should be respected and it is necessary to recognize their efforts (Hedayati, 2004; p 8).

The question is: Who are qualified teachers? How they should be appreciated? The features of a qualified teacher should be defined to define the criteria of qualified teacher. Unfortunately, however, there is no clear and convincing answer to this question. From their own perspective, the individuals consider different features and define certain criteria for qualified teachers (Seif, 2000, p. 68).

In this regard, for favorable appreciation of qualified teachers, the Ministry of Education in Iran (1984) established a department whose task was honoring competent teachers. In 1985, a number of competent teachers were selected. Since then, this has been conducted with little changes in the form of competent teacher selection; many qualified teachers have been selected (Yeghane, 2006, p. 29).

The studies show that teachers are dissatisfied of criteria which are defined for selecting qualified teachers (Marzban, 2001; Ebadi, 1997). Considering the importance of this issue and its impact on education process, however, this study aims to investigate the attitudes of teachers toward qualified teacher selection criteria in Zanjan to provide strategies to overcome its shortcomings. Therefore, the questions are: What are the teachers' attitudes towards qualified teacher selection criteria in Zanjan? What are the necessary solutions to improve current criteria?

All people are interested in endorsement of others. They have desire to be encouraged and this impacts on their personality (Ghaemi, 1997, p. 18).

The teachers also need to be considered highly; in this situation, they will have appropriate behaviors. If they will be encouraged, recognized, and respected for their works and performance, they will more likely improve their activities and performance. The more the performance is rewarded, the more the good behaviors will increase (Niknami, 1998, p. 65).

The level of achieving to objectives of qualified teachers selection plan should be examined every year. However, the history has shown that any man-made system cannot continue to work for a long time without supervision and evaluation. Therefore, the evaluation of plan from the perspective of teachers may help managers to maintain manpower. The identification of defects, deficiencies, and functions of plan may provide detailed information. This information can be used to improve

organization's decision-making process, determine appropriate indicators to identify individuals, create good relations, and identify diligent and hardworking employees. Considering the importance of teachers' tasks, therefore, the evaluation of their attitude toward qualified teacher selection plan may help managers to achieve the following objectives: 1) Find out the strengths and weaknesses of plan and take actions, 2) Determine the level of success of plan in reaching its objectives, 3) Determine the teachers' satisfaction of this plan, 4) Achieve overall view about how to achieve the objectives of this plan (Magsool Gare Bag, 1998, p. 56).

Conditions, Characteristics, Behaviors, and Success Factors of Qualified Teacher

In education, it is not important what is taught, but what is learned. The teacher should bear in mind that his/her task is not only teaching skills to students; however, his/her task is much deeper and more important. The teachers should train competent individuals who actively try to develop and promote their countries. The teachers play an important role that first of all requires perseverance, patience, sacrifice, and faith. They play a spiritual and informative role. If necessary, they should both educate and train their students (Hajari, 1993, p. 127).

Dewey states that as long as the children are not faced with facts of life and daily issues and their educational environment does not adapt well to social environment, the teaching principles will have unstable basis. The teachers should never forget that they are role models in most cases. The history has shown that the effective and friendly behavior of teachers not only does not lessen their authority, but also has great impact on their influence and leads to better coordination and understanding in the classroom. The effective teachers are kind, patient, calm, fair, understandable, encouraging, and stable. In addition, the teachers should be excellent in thoroughness, punctuality, effort, accuracy, and speaking (Izadi, 1958, p. 167).

Importance of Evaluating Performance of Teachers

Among the education factors in schools, the human resources and especially the teachers have a sensitive and crucial role. If the necessary facilities will be provided, the planning will be conducted precisely, the resources will be allocated adequately, and the equipment will be provided properly, but the teachers fail to fulfill their duties, cannot perform their jobs, and will not be willing to do their works, this will neutralize the effect of all those factors. Therefore, it is said that the teacher is the key factor in prosperity of society.

The necessity and importance of evaluation is so clear that the organization will fail without implementing it. Today, the main objective of evaluation is to gather essential information about workforces to increase the quantity and quality of their works. It is clear that the educational organizations and schools conduct the evaluation to improve the performance and professional development of teachers (Niknami, 2003, p. 98).

The evaluation of employees and selection of qualified individuals are among the most sensitive and most difficult tasks of human resources management. The qualified teacher selection criteria must be such that can be trusted; in other words, the measurement at different times give the same results. Other feature of appropriate criteria is that they should be acceptable for those who are evaluated. The employees should be ensured that their performance is evaluated based on true and fair criteria.

Since the meeting of needs and providing opportunities for development of people are among the major objectives of educational organizations, the evaluation includes estimating level of achievement, investigating the changes in an individual, group, or organization, evaluating the methods, facilities, resources, and goals, and examining to what extent the development has been consistent with objectives (Amraei & Asgari, 2003, p. 93).

The evaluation of teachers' performance in relation to how they do things has been always questionable and problematic; it has led to many negative reactions in teachers. The teachers always have complained their evaluation scores and have considered it unfair. It is more than half a century that the research on evaluation of teachers has not yet provided credible measurable criteria. There is no regulations which entirely be agreed on its effectiveness in teacher evaluation (Bazargan, 2007, p. 105).

METHODOLOGY

This was descriptive-applied cross-sectional survey study. The population consisted of all teachers in Zanjan in 2014-2015 (N=3293). Using Cochran formula, the sample size was determined to be 342 participants. The sample was selected using systematic stratified random sampling method. The

questionnaire was used for collecting the data (Cronbach's alpha=0.82). Using SPSS 21, the collected data were analyzed using descriptive (frequency, mean) and inferential (Kolmogorov – Smirnov test and Friedman) statistics.

Findings

Question 1: How teachers prioritize the qualified teacher selection criteria?

Table1. *Prioritization of criteria from the perspective of teachers based on Friedman test*

No.	Questions	Frequency	Mean
1	Education degree	340	26.94
2	IT skills (ICDL)	340	25.30
3	Achieving rank in teaching festivals	340	23.91
4	Years of service	340	23.74
5	Participation in short-term training courses	340	23.43
6	Educational content production	340	23.30
7	Annual evaluation	340	22.88
8	Related certificates	340	22.42
9	Teaching in disadvantaged areas	340	22.41
10	Reports of action research and lesson research	340	22.05
11	Scientific recommendations at provincial level	340	21.79
12	Scientific recommendations at country level	340	21.58
13	Presenting article in prestigious scientific conferences	340	20.09
14	Achieving rank and judging scientific competitions	340	19.81
15	Inventions and discoveries	340	19.61
16	Writing book	340	18.82
17	Points of students	340	18.77
18	(Teaching short-term courses	340	18.53
19	Being a member of school council	340	18.36
20	Membership in research groups	340	17.96
21	Activity in educational groups	340	17.89
22	Achieving rank and judging artistic and cultural events	340	17.14
23	Translating book	340	16.96
24	Management experience	340	16.47
25	Proficiency in foreign languages	340	16.33
26	Quranic teachings (memorization)	340	15.69
27	Achieving rank and judging sports event	340	15.62
28	Marital status	340	14.63
29	Judging research and being top researcher	340	14.58
30	Unrelated certificates	340	14.38
31	Quranic teachings (judgment, teaching, servant)	340	14.25
32	Quranic teachings (Qari, competitions)	340	13.81
33	Qualified teacher in previous years	340	13.20
34	Number of children	340	12.81
35	Veterans (activity in Basij)	340	10.51
36	eterans (son or daughter of a martyr, veteran, or freed soldier)	340	10.01

According to table 1, the highest priorities are for degree (mean= 26.94), IT skills (mean= 25.30), achieving to ranks in festivals (mean= 23.91), and work experience (mean= 23.74), respectively. The lowest priorities are for veteran (mean= 10.01), activity in Basij (mean= 10.51), number of children (mean= 12.81), and experience years ago (mean= 13.20), respectively. Other items are shown in table above.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings showed that the highest ranking of selection criteria was for education degree, IT skills, ranking in festivals, and work experience; the lowest ranking was for veterans, activity in Basij, and number of children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Considering that the highest ranking of selection criteria was for education degree, IT skills, ranking in festivals, and work experience and the lowest ranking was for veterans, activity in Basij, and number of children, therefore, it is recommended that the low priority items will be modified.

2. It is recommended that the opinion of parents and students will be used as one of the criteria.
3. It is recommended, if possible, to increase the number of qualified teachers to provide the opportunity to more teachers.

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