

## “Presentation a Model of Effective Culture of School in High schools” (Case study: High schools in Ilam Province)

Omid vandad<sup>\*1</sup>, Mostafa nikhani<sup>2</sup>, Ali delavar<sup>3</sup> and Parivash jaafari<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Educational Administration, Science and Research branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran. PhD student, Correspondence Author\*

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Allameh Tabatbaee, Tehran, Iran

<sup>3</sup> Faculty of Allameh Tabatbaee, Tehran, Iran

<sup>4</sup> Faculty of Science and Research Branch

### Abstract:

The ongoing research has been implemented bearing the purpose to present an effective School- Culture paradigm. To achieve the abovementioned objective, Iran & the whole world's literature was studied as a 1<sup>st</sup> step. Then, to determine the final components, a questionnaire containing 126 items was compiled & after confirming its validity (elites' confirmation) & longevity (Computing Alpha Kronbakh) was distributed among a 30-people- sample consisting of Management & educational administration experts & scholars. The outcomes of which were analyzed using illustrative statistics of people (like frequency & percentage) & factorial statistical analysis & that the other tests of the basic components were offered to establish the proposed paradigm. The results revealed that schooling effective culture enjoys 10 basic components as the followings: Samples & norms, history of the school, norms & behaviors, customs, reinforces, celebrations, objective & missions, events, ceremonies & norms. Afterwards, thru factor analysis, the effective school-culture model along with all its relative components has been compiled. In the end, the proposed model of the research was compiled in five sections i.e. philosophy & objectives, theoretical principles, the model's components, execution stages & reengineering. The results of the statistical techniques showed that the proposed model has a good fit.

**Key words:** *School culture, effective culture model, culture components*

### Introduction

The schools may play very essential role in education and training of students as one of the basic subsystems from total educational system. The importance of schools in educational system has caused its various aspects to be investigated and revised in order to make this system efficient and effective more than ever. Hence, during recent decades, each of the researchers, experts, and officials of educational system, and critiques for educational system has typically emphasized in one and or more cases of items in educational system in order to make it effective more than ever. For instance, some researchers have assumed educational curricula, learning-teaching methods, educational sources, human resources and the like as some of the essential effective

### Literature and history of research

Searching for the research literature may signify that the research and theoretical history regarding the effective school culture has been limited generally to study on some of cultural features,

factors in educational achievement of students while the other basic factor that has affected all of the above factors, is the infrastructure titled as school culture. The importance of school culture is too high to the extent that some relevant topics are mentioned about the school as a culture. Christopher Wagner as one of the researchers and experts in the field of school culture implies about importance of school culture that the school culture affects on any event that occurs in the school (including students' educational achievement)[14]. Therefore, dealing with subject of school culture and purposing a model for effective school culture in this way may be heuristic and effective.

which have been affected totally by organizational culture per se. But, during recent decades the experts throughout the world have emphasized directly and indirectly in importance of school culture. Nevertheless, no integrated and

widespread model has been purposed for effective school culture in high schools.

In 1930s, sociologists have identified the importance of school culture. The origins of employing term culture to describe intra-school life were started with investigation of Waller (1932). He highlighted that with their specific identity, the schools include complex ceremonies from personal relations and a group of ideas from folkways, mores, irrational sanctions, and moral codes[10]. But at the end of 1970s, the educational researchers started purposing the relationship among quality of school climate and educational consequences. The evidences signify that principals in successful schools suggest that focus on developing a culture under title of learning climate may be necessary for improvement of spirit in teachers and educational achievement for students. When the complex models of existing beliefs, values, attitudes, expectations, ideas, and behaviors are inappropriate or heterogeneous in fact the culture causes anything to progress unsuitably. The principals of successful schools perceive the vital role that organizational culture may play in development of successful school [4].

For a long time, theorists in organizations have focused their attention in culture as the foremost measure that can be taken by the leader. Educational theorists have reported that the school principals affected on learning that has been equalized and adjusted by school climate and culture (and of course, this effect is not a direct impact) (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). Watson (2001) implies that if the culture is not appropriate and apt toward learning then students' educational achievement will be also problematic. Fink and Resnick (2001) have remarked that school principals are responsible for creating widespread culture for teaching and learning in any school. Other experts also declare that school culture and climate affect on educational achievement for students (Maslowski, 2001; Hoy et al, 1990, 2006)[7].

The paradigm of 'culture' (which is borrowed from anthropology) has been ever-increasingly studied both as an independent variable in organizational researches and employed as fundamental allusion regarding the organization. Similarly, Mearson and Martin (1998) have expressed that we could mention the organizations

under title of culture. In other words, we assume the culture as an organizational allusion; namely, it is considered as a distinctive variable that should be manipulated. Under this condition, educational research tends to identify this point that the schools are some complex identities, which possess distinguished organizational cultures. This attitude leads to codification and purposing some operational definitions, which clarify the origin and basis for school institutional culture and they are used in school related studies.

Deal and Peterson (1999) declare that there is no unanimous agreement over the best definition for school culture. Most frequently accepted definitions, which are presented generally, include as follows:

- (School) culture comprises of common beliefs and values, which closely link a community together (Deal and Kennedy, 1982, 1983).
- It (school culture) is a lens through which the participants may see them and the world (Hargeaves, 1994).
- Deal and Peterson (1999) have defined school culture that the school culture includes unwritten rules and customs and traditions, norms, and expectations, which penetrate into anything i.e. into the method based on which the individuals act; how they wear clothes; what they are talking about; and or whether they seek for helping others or not; and how the teachers' feeling and emotion can affect on their work and students[10].
- Barth (2002) defines school culture as a complex model of norms, attitudes, behavior, values, ceremonies, traditions, and myths, which have been deeply embedded in every aspect of school.
- Hinde (2004) looks at school culture as norms, beliefs, traditions, and customs, which are developed and created in school over the time. According to his view, culture is a group of expectations and assumptions, which directly affect on the activities done by educational workers and learners. Moreover, school culture is not static, but it is a dynamic and independent cycle that reflects collective beliefs, assumptions,

and ideas and this in turn reflects the identity of school and standard of behavioral consequences.

According to viewpoint of Robbins and Alvy, school culture reflects some aspects, which the school community notices them for example some aspects including how they hold festival and about what subject they may discuss. These aspects take place in their daily activities. The school culture may affect on productivity of learners, professional development, execution of leadership and traditions. In addition, Reams and Spencer (1998) argue that the internal structures and processes may be effective determinant in school performance. For example, collegiality, cooperation, processes of common decision making, constant improvement in educational activities, and involvement and long-term commitment and obligation have been assumed as the methods for strengthening the positive culture in a school [1].

It has been implied in another point that the concept of schools as having the distinguished cultures is not deemed as a new topic. In 1932, Willard Waller stated that the schools possess a culture that is clearly specified to them. The parents and students always tend to identify a certain spirit in the schools of course the spirit of such schools may be discovered and examined with difficulty.

The students, who have been present in several schools, may select the culture in which they intend to work in as a part of a composition. They know that the affairs are different in terms of positive or negative method (something more than rules and procedures). The educational members may walk in a new school and at same time impress it directly. They attentively or intuitively start interpretation of unwritten rules, unexpressed expectations, and the existing games. In general, profile of school culture may be described especially through seven norms as follows:

1. customs
2. expectations
3. relationships
4. center of curriculum
5. extracurricular activities

6. decision making processes
7. graduation requirements

Likewise, it has been expressed that school culture is significantly related to teacher's occupational burnout (Friedman, 19910 and recently there is also relationship among this variable with collective and general efficiency of teacher, school climate, and teacher's job satisfaction, and rate of quitting their job (Mattingly, 2007). The school culture has been described as 'Hidden Curriculum' (Hidden curriculum, 1999) that differs from school climate and it has been illustrated as a psychological element in school arrangement while the school culture is described as an anthropological component that means as a culture [10]. Deal and Peterson declare that several studies show the culture and its outcome should support from correction and improvement in the school otherwise the improvement will not occur. Improvement in student's educational achievement occurs in the schools with positive and professional culture that reflect school positive climate [7].

Many studies have been carried out about organizational culture and it has been implied in this regard that the culture refers to existential philosophy, dimensions, and or characteristics, which closely interrelated and mutually dependent together. But most of researchers have not made any effort to identify these dimensions and features. They assume the culture as a social abstract phenomenon. If there is a culture and we can discuss about it then it should have certain dimensions, which could be defined and measured (Robbins, 2006:381) and here the school effective culture has been examined. Similarly, this point has been taken into consideration; in other words, developing a model that can remove the problems in this course. Deal and Peterson (2002) explain about culture and its importance that all organization, particularly schools, train their performance through a common system of public norms and emotions, values, and traditions. These factors induce sense of enthusiasm, purposefulness, and a common spirit to the organization. The schools may be subjected to error and destroyed without a positive strong culture. The school and or regional culture may play essential role in excellent performance. They argue that school culture consists of several

complex elements like values, traditions, language, intent, and a combination of special customs and rites, physical symbols and artifacts, and language and phrases, which are used by educational workers and students and they are followed by change and learning in school world[3]

The aforesaid variables in this investigation are influenced by the studied works from some researchers like Deal and Peterson (2002, 2009), who have mentioned some elements such as symbols, physical objects, architecture, traditions and rites, biography and narratives[3].

Cavana and Dollar (1997) have implied several features like 1) Improved educational outcomes; 2) Focus on learning; 3) Empowerment and mutual care; 4) Cooperation; 5) Participation; 6) Social processes; and 7) Collective and individual knowledge and at the same time they have mentioned six elements for effective culture as follows (which refer to professional values and they assume the importance of social institute of training and education and requirement for growth in school arisen from pedagogic principles.

1) The emphasis in creating learning as learning community in which there is a commitment to professional growth and improvement of students' achievements.

2) Collective cooperation that empowers teachers in exertion of professional judgment through development of supportive interpersonal relationships.

3) The cooperation denotes the interaction among teachers where the information about important operational issues about the school like curriculum is shared.

4) The shared planning is a collective process thereby the common attitude toward school is realized through logical planning.

5) Transformational leaders share the power and facilitate process of development and improvement of school that causes involvement of potential power of individual and teachers' commitment[15].

Sophier and King (1985) also purposed 12 relevant norms to effective school culture, which have been employed by various researchers within

various times and for several times to measure strong and effective culture so these norms are as follows:

Teamwork, experiment, high expectations, reliability and confidence, objective and tangible support, acquisition of basic knowledge, recognition and acknowledgement, attention, ceremonies and praising, good ties (well-treatment), involvement in decision making, supporting from what it is important, traditions, and honest open communication [9].

According to Stoll, these parameters can be also mentioned for school culture: ceremonies, stories, common words and advices, taboos, rewarding technique, rites and rewards, communications and behaviors, rules of arrival and departure, and events[5]. Based on attitude of Phillips, there are three basic behaviors, which may be examined in evaluation of school culture. These behaviors, which have been implied as parameters of school healthy and effective culture, are as follows: Professional cooperation, friendly and or collegiality relations, and efficiency and or self-determination[13].

McGill Christ et al (1995) state that the school culture can be interpreted through three general and interrelated dimensions including: Professional relationships, organizational arrangements, and opportunities for learning[11].

Stoll and Fink (1996) have identified 10 cultural norms, which affect on school improvement. These norms are as follows:

1-Common goals: We know where we intend to go.

2- Accountability for achievement: We should succeed.

3- Professional collective cooperation: We work together here.

4- Constant improvement: We can be better than what we are now.

5- Lifetime learning: Learning is addressed for all in long run.

6- Riskability: We learn new items through experience.

7- Support: Always there is someone to help us.

8- Mutual respect: Everyone has something to purpose.

9- Openness: We discuss about our differences.

10- Acknowledgement and satisfaction: We feel good sense toward each other [11].

The leadership center at middle level has purposed six elements to express school culture as follows:

1-Interactive leadership; 2- Teacher's cooperation and participation; 3-Professional development; 4-Supporting comprehensively by colleagues; 5-The unity of goal; and 6- History of organization [12]

The investigation done by (Lambert, 1996; Newman & Associates, 1996; Kruse, 2007; Du Four, 2002) on communities of professional

### Methodology

This study is of applied type in terms of goal and it is descriptive- survey research in terms of way of execution and manipulation of variables.

**Testees:** They include statistical population for determination of validity within primary framework and proportional to the suggested model comprising of 50 experts in educational administration. To examine rate of importance of the variables, 444 female and male principals and teachers from high schools were considered as sample by means of Krejcie and Morgan sample size table in this investigation and there were chosen by cluster sampling technique.

**Tool:** The standard questionnaire with 126 questions was employed as measurement tool in

**Research findings about first question:** *1-First question: What are the parameters of effective school culture in high schools?*

Initially, 124 variables were extracted by review on research literature and history in Iran and world. The statistical analysis on the given data from polling with experts indicated that 116 variables within format of 10 main parameters

**Research findings about the second question:**

learning may strengthen the centrality of cultural elements in school achievement and these elements are as follows:

- A shared sense of purpose
- Teacher involvement in decision making
- Collaborative work around instruction
- Norms of improvement
- Professional learning by staff
- A sense of joint responsibility for student learning [2].

Similarly, Deal and Peterson have purposed the following elements as the components of school culture: symbols, ceremonies and rites, norms and behaviors, traditions and customs, goal and mission, biography and stories, rewards and derives, festivals and formalities [2].

With concluding the given literature and history, the main question of the present investigation is that what model could be purposed for effective school culture in high schools?

this study, which was based on various components of efficient school culture and thereby the variables of effective school culture have been examined in high schools. Face validity and content validity of questionnaire were calculated by judgment from experts and its reliability was computed through calculation of Cronbach alpha coefficient (97%) after trial execution it among 50 teachers and principals, who had been randomly elected.

**Method of data analysis:** To analyze data, descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) was employed and inferential statistics (factor analysis) were used via SPSS and Amos software.

express the variables and parameters of effective school culture. These parameters include symbols, biography and history of school, behaviors, ceremonies and rites, derives (enablers), festivals, goals and mission, events, formalities, and norms (Their parameters and variables are shown in the case model).

*1-What is the rate of importance of parameters from viewpoint of principals and teachers?*

**Table 1:** The rate of importance of parameters from viewpoint of principals and teachers

Row	Rate of importance of parameters	Very high		high		average		low		Very low	
		Frequen cy	percent								
1	Symbols	227	53	111	26	70	17	8	2	8	2
2	Biography and history	126	30	153	36	92	22	46	11	5	1
3	Behaviors	123	29	154	36	83	20	51	12	10	2
4	Ceremonies and rites	155	37	144	34	69	16	41	10	15	3
5	reinforcement	157	37	154	36	69	16	27	6	17	4
6	rituals	178	42	110	26	91	21	26	6	19	5
7	Goals of mission	171	40	136	32	92	22	21	5	4	1
8	Events	177	42	150	35	57	13	15	3	25	6
9	ceremonial	180	42	109	26	55	13	40	9	38	9
10	Norms	252	59	96	23	42	10	17	4	15	3

According to Table 1, one could express the rate of importance for culture-related parameters as follows. Given the choices of very high and high, these parameters have very high importance from views of teachers and principals in such a way that 79% of symbols have been considered

#### Data analysis regarding the research third question

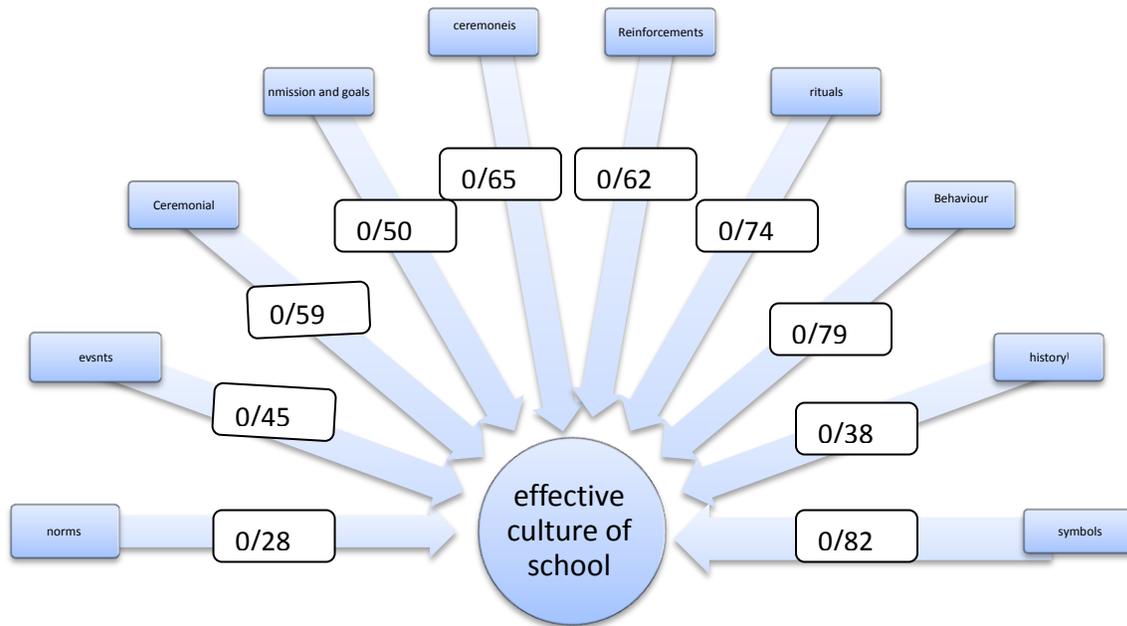
*Third question -What kind of model is the effective school culture model?*

Also to give answer to this question, with respect to main fields and the derived parameters from study on texts and conducting analysis and qualitative classification and determination of main markers in the questionnaire, target group with given data from the questionnaire along with parameters of effective school culture were analyzed.

The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFI) was executed about the hidden factors before

important at high and very high levels. Variables of biography and history (66%), behaviors (65%), ceremonies and rites (71%), derives (enablers) (71%), festivals (68%), goals of mission (72%), events (77%), formalities (68%), and norms (82%) have been important and very important parameters.

evaluation of the assumed structural model in order to create fitted and reasonable measurement model and to determine this point that if the markers may measure the infrastructural component well. The evaluated assuming model in this study about effective school culture includes ten variables comprising of symbols, biography and history, behaviors, ceremonies, derives (enablers), festivals, goals, events, formalities, and norms. This hidden factor (effective school culture), which was measured with the marker variables, was also verified with this construct validity approach for questionnaire as well. The factor loadings in measurement variables are the hidden factor in effective school culture that ranged from 0.28 to 0.82.



**Fig (8-4):** Model of factor analysis for hidden variable of effective school culture(sunrise model)  
**Research findings about fourth question:**

*Fourth question: What is the rate of fitness of the suggested model for effective school culture?*

To determine fitness rate of model, fitness of model is calculated. In order to measure fitness of model, several statistics and parameters are utilized. These parameters have been calculated and explained as follows.

**CMIN**

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	30	163.882	35	.000	4.682
Saturated model	65	.000	0		
Independence model	10	1409.696	55	.000	25.631

CMIN is similar to Chi-Square and it is significant and shows that the given model is not fitted to data. Whereas chi-square is robust (sensitive) to sample size thus as sample size is added its power is also increased. Thus, by chi-square the little difference among the observed and predicted covariance can be identified and it

Table 13-4 **Baseline Comparisons**

is concluded that this model is not fitted to data. Therefore, a model with good fitness is rejected sue to existing partial but statistically significant differences among observed and predicted values. For this reason, other parameters are employed for fitness of model.

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	.884	.817	.906	.850	.905
Saturated model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence model	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Norm Fit Index (NFI) are two parameters, which are purposed in Table (13-4), measure fitness of the suggested model compared to independent model. The values > 0.05 may indicate the fitness of model with data.

Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is another parameter that is given in

Table (14-4). In fact, mean residue (remainder) among covariance/ observed correlation is related to the sample and estimated and expected model in the population. The values among 0.08-0.10 represent mean fitness where the given value is 0.093 in Table 14-4 and it indicates mean fitness of data with the model.

Table 14-4RMSEA

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	.093	.079	.108	.000
Independence model	.241	.230	.252	.000

Therefore, it can be implied that questionnaire of effective school culture possess high interpretive potential with respect to confirmatory factor analysis with 116 questions and based on these values, the given variables measure the variable with relatively good potential. Finally, with respect to the given fitness parameters, it can be mentioned that the employed questionnaire has high potential for determination of dimensions and parameters of effective school culture.

**Model fitness from experts' view**

After confirmation of the relationship between variables and way of their effect on each other and based on the derived results from factor analysis on elements of effective school culture, 70 experts in the field of educational administration were asked to express that in collection of the related data for polling, they have confirmed model fitness based on their viewpoint.

**Discussion, interpretation, and conclusion**

As it mentioned, the suggested model was completely identified as fitted and appropriate from experts' view in the field of educational (DOI: dx.doi.org/14.9831/1444-8939.2014/2-4/MAGNT.104)

administration. Similarly, according to fitness parameters the fitness of model was confirmed. Among various parameters of suggested model, the highest mean score belonged to reengineering process and executive stages of model and then variables of philosophy and goals of the suggested model have acquired the higher scores.

Thus, it can be concluded that among variables of the model, process of evaluation and reengineering and executive stages and then philosophy of goals of suggested model were more transparent and reasonable; additionally, other variables did not acquire scores lesser than 80%.

Overall, with respect to the acquired results, the suggested model possessed fitness at high degree (87%). But the fitness degree can be increased by some adjustments in some variables.

The main finding of this study consists of a model that contributes the principals to identify parameters of effective school culture and prepare the ground to promote school culture and also it assists the principals and teachers to spread effective school culture.

### The applied suggestions and recommendations

- 1- With respect to importance of variables and confirmation of the suggested model by the statistical population, it is suggested to establish a specialized committee in Ministry of Education and to internalize its position and stand legally and transparently.
- 2- Given the confirmation of main components by statistical population including philosophy and goals, theoretical bases, the parameters of effective school culture, executive stages, and evaluation system and reengineering, it is recommended to try to prepare the ground for its implementation in the course of educational and training fundamental development plan.
- 3- With respect to importance of major elements in this investigation, it necessitates for Education Supreme Council to pay due attention to subject of codification of parameters of

effective school culture by the aid of Ministry of Sciences, Researches, and Technology and Islamic Azad University and to contribute to improvement of quality in schools by notification of them to all high schools.

4- Given that such parameters are required paying attention and being supported by principals and teachers, so it is suggested to principals and teachers to become familiar with importance, objectives, and parameters of effective school culture and its execution through participation in educational workshops.

5- It is suggested the purposed model to be revised by educational experts including in the field of educational administration and organizational culture and to be executed in schools at wider level and to exert scientific and executive adjustments and reforms in them.

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