THE EFFECT OF DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY, REDUCTION OF CENTRALIZATION AND PARTICIPATION IN ESTABLISHING SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT (CASE STUDY: SCHOOLS OF CITY OF ILAM)

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ABSTRACT

School-orientation can be considered as a reforming move to change the education systems, based on which the authority transfers from top levels of organization to the lower levels which happen to be the most fundamental level: schools. The main objective of this research is examining the effect of factors involved in delegation of authority, reduction of centralization and participation in establishing school-based management. The population is consisted of all school managers of Ilam city (180 people), out of which 130 managers have been selected as the sample population using Kokran formula. The research method is descriptive survey and SPSS software is used to analyze the obtained data. The results indicate that the managers of schools in Ilam are well acquainted with the concept of school-based management. The reduction of centralization and delegation of authority by Ministry of Education result in establishment of school-based management. The frequent participation of agents (staff, parents and students) in school affairs will contribute to school-based management.

Keywords: school-based management, centralization, delegation of authority, educational planning, financial issues, employees' affairs, participation of agents

INTRODUCTION

In the late of 20th century, the political, economic and social pressures made governments consider delegating the power from the capital to local communities. One of the apparent examples of this fact in the last three decades in education systems of countries, especially developed ones, is moving from centralized administrative system to decentralization. The issues of centralized administrative structure, Ministry of Education governing , lack of participation form community in addition, and lack of motivation in teachers due to their inactivity in decision making process, consolidated the belief to produce essential changes in executive systems. One of the most significant methods of reform in education was moving toward "school-orientation" in education systems, based on which power (authority) is transferred from higher levels of organization to lower levels (Schools) (educational research journal, 1999). Factors such as participation, cooperation, and collective thinking are of vital importance in school-based thinking. School-orientation or delegating many of decision making and executive fields to schools is one of the most discussed topics in educational levels. The focal point of this thought in education system structure is changing the centralization to decentralization in decision making and execution domain (same source). The history of school-oriented management based on participation, decentralization and strengthening school staff dates back to 1960s. This innovation was accepted as a doctrinal approach for realization of democracy in schools (David, 1998; Maleon, Ogawa & Krans, 1990; Quoted by Khorshidi, 2004).

Regulations of school-orientation were notified by Ministry of Education to country schools. This was a step toward decentralization in education system and schools administration. But any kind of actions to represent and imply this reflection was not done in schools due to the nature of school-based management pattern, since the essential features of school-orientation requires changes in four basic factors of education system: participation, decentralization, delegation of authority and competition.

Implementing school-oriented approach in Iran with its long-standing centralized and non-competitive education system is predicted to be a difficult task. For moving toward the fundamental principles of school-oriented management, current barriers and

problems should be thoroughly examined and analyzed.

Theoretical background

School-based management or school-orientation, which is known as a kind of interference and reform in education and learning process, has a brief history in our country. In the years after war and concurrently with creating the economic, social and cultural development plans, the demands of community from education system increased. The expectations from education system to play its role in the social reform procedures heightened. Perhaps the financial concerns and shortage of credits were concerned as the main cause for bringing up school-orientation idea at that time, but all the same, the approach to school-oriented management were appreciably focusing on decentralization and delegation of authority. Some further actions such as generating schools board of trustees, notifying and passing schools executive regulations, etc. were the next steps of establishing school-based management in Iran education system.

School-based management concept

Since 1980s and regeneration of education management throughout the world, the most visible change was delegating new responsibilities to managers. Although the role of a manager used to seem complicated beforehand as anyone could admit, but the recent transformations of duties which have diverse natures has added to the complexity of this role. Now, self-managing the schools has become an international process. It is emphasized in almost all cases that authority should be delegated to small levels of education system as much as possible (Ahanchian, 1995, page 104). Countries like United States, England, Australia, Canada and New Zealand has gradually transformed their education system to school-oriented management. This type of management believes that the current problems of schools are rooted in the current centralized system.

With the generation of school-based management (SBM), the participation among school staff and parents in policy-making process augments and the main philosophy of school management is two major rules:" independence in school level and participative decision-making" (David, quoted by Razagh Marandi, 2001, page 4).

Clun & White (1985) state that school-based management is introduced as a perfect combination of independence and responsiveness and is distinguished from other management styles by decentralization, flexibility and participative decision-making (quoted by Jafari Moghadam, 2002, page 13).

American Research Educational Association (AREA) (1996) sees school-orientation as an educational curriculum transformation. This can be useful other organizations actively cooperate with schools; that is, stable decentralization rules education systems and authority of decision making are delegated to schools, so that central administration is responsible to determine the objectives and priorities in national or regional level and then any active school in the domain is able to hold the authority of decision making about issues such as knowledge (decisions on curriculum), skills required for students, information, rewards, technology, needed human resources, materials and facilities and allocating the time and place for education (quoted by Khorshidi, 2004, page 114).

Maleon, Ogawa & Krans (1990) believe that school-orientation or participative decision-making in school is a revision in school, especially state schools, which is followed by transferring the monopoly of decision making from a central area to a school in order to improve the performance of that school (quoted by Khorshidi, 2004, page 115).

Herman (1990) describes school-based management a structure that includes representatives from employees, parents, citizen and sometimes students in the form of a local committee and authority is delegated to it for making decision about the following items:

1. Education
2. Budget
3. Employees
4. Any other field of authority that is delegated to school (quoted by Alagheband, 2005, page 100).

Calon and White (1998) states that the territory of school management covers: 1. Budget 2.Staff, and 3.Designing the curriculum (quoted by Razagh Marandi, 2001, page 5). Niknami (2004) defines school-based management as: "revision the structure of education system in order to augment the flexibility, decentralization and delegation of authority to schools in order to approach the location of making decision to the one of implementing them, and deciding collectively and cooperatively by the ones who are most informed on school requirements, and most affected by the education outcome (parents, students, teachers, employees, staff, beneficiary groups of society such as industry owners, local organizations, etc.). This causes the improvement of independence, responsibility and responsiveness along with the quality and efficiency of education process."

Murphy remarks that autonomy in school level, associated with participative decision-making and delegation of authority is the fundamental characteristic of school-based management (quoted by Halajian, 2008, page 55).

Wagstaff (1993) states that the core of school-based management is decision-making process which include: the process of delegation of decision making authority to the people who have the major roles in schools (quoted by Halajian, 2008, page 55).

Walstter (1999) expresses making and giving authority to school council is often the most significant change in school-based management (quoted by Halajian, 2008, page 55).

According to Pardakhtchi (2002), the essence of school-orientation is participative decision-making and handling the school affairs through participation of experts and professional employees.

He also sees the school-based management as a strategy to improve the education by delegation of authority to school and empowering its agents to realize the efficient and effective process of teaching-learning (quoted by Davoodipour, 2008, page 38).

In Dornsif's view, school-based management is understood as a factor for maximizing the efficiency of education in schools, but what are the contributing factors for implementing this type of management? Several experts mention high managers' support, sufficient resources, apparent commitment, responsibilities, participants' skills and abilities, precise programs, responsibilities and responsiveness (quoted by Jafari Moghadam, 2004).

Walstter & Eden defines school-based management as a reforming strategy for applying decentralized control and providing opportunities for schools participation in decision-making process (Crawford, 2001. Quoted by Davoudipour, 2008, page 44).

SBM is a method for creating the sense of responsibility in staff of schools about what happens to the children in the units under their authority. This indicates that when school is responsible for planning the educational programs to meet children's requirements, the acquaintance of school staff with students and their needs leads to providing more reasonable plans (Candolli, 1995. Quoted by Abuzoha, 2006, page 25).

Conceptually speaking, SBM is a kind of official alternative management structures and a decentralization method which considers schools as the main unit of reform with focus on re-distributing the decision-making responsibility as the main tool of having constant reformation (Karens, Ogawa,

and Malen, 1990 quoted by Abuzoha, 2006, page 25).

Marsh (1992) defines school-based management as the process of decentralizing the authority, knowledge, information, and reward in schools (A'laee, 2009, page 154).

Hallinger, Murphy and Hausman (1992) believe that SBM is an effort for: decentralizing the organization, management and the school management methods, delegation of authority to students' companions (parents, teachers and school managers), defining new roles and responsibilities for all education system agents and altering the prevalent teaching-learning process in the classroom. This pattern includes a certain type of school management program in which the responsibilities and authority of specific schools are divided among central office (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Educations Administrations and local administrations), school agents (teachers, managers, school council, school association, etc.) and all who cooperate professionally in this domain (quoted by Abuzoha, 2006, page 26).

Murphy (1997) defines school-based management as a method in which the authorities of central and regional offices are vested in local schools. Teachers, parents and

other associations, and even students are participant in the process of enhancing the school authority. Thus, participative decision making among rightful people in local levels is a known attributes in SBM (quoted by Abuzoha, 2006, page 25).

Carol Midly and Stewart Wood define school-based management as decentralization in authority and power. Although this decentralization is generally defined as a move from region surface toward the school, they opine, but many variables affect school-based management (quoted by Fani, 2002, page 3).

Adam (2006) considers school-based management as school flexibility in preparing educational plans, authority of manager before the staff, parents' participation in school management and its financial power (quoted by A'laee, 2009, page 149).

Marborgur sees school-based management as a form of decentralization in an organization so that the ones make decisions are the most familiar and concerned with quality of education (quoted by A'laee, 2009, page 154).

Dohenly (2003) defines it as an activity performed by a beneficiary group to provide school with services and facilities in order to make decisions in topics related to education,

parents, financial independence and employees. The beneficiary group refers to teachers, managers, school employees and parents (quoted by A'laee, page 154).

By studying the various definitions presented on school-based management, we can state that SBM is a strategy which works for the purposes of decentralization, reforming education system, delegation of authority, preparing the ground for participative decision-making, etc.

Applying school-based management leads to collective participation of manager, teachers, students, parents, etc. in school affairs. Improvement and development are considered the major processes in such schools. Central administration or Ministry of Education determine the objectives and priorities, define the results and provide the resources and delegate the authority of policies, strategies and principle objective and education system to schools.

Delegating these fields of authority from national or provincial level to regional level contribute to proper decision making according to school situation, resources and requirements. Through this process, the school accepts more responsibilities and any of the beneficiaries feel responsive for duties, goals and results. The schools will enjoy relative financial independence in addition to

using national resources which are provided in a centralized way.

The assumptions of school-based management

1. Delegating the responsibility of school management to decision-makers: transferring the responsibility of school management to decision-makers results in making better decisions and it augments the feeling of responsibility for made decisions. The pillar of school-based management is delegating the authority from educational area to schools (Rahimikia, 2007).

2. Structural changes: the main objective of school-based management is to improve the quality of curriculum of schools. Therefore, alteration in school structure and generating a flexible framework is an essential assumption.

3. Participative administration: managing school affairs in a participative way leads to school integration and consolidation. Also, participation results in sympathy, unity, confidence improvement, quality improvement, creativity, reduction of conflicts and creation of psychological ownership in managers, teachers, students, and parents.

School-based management approach requires creating official structures, consisting of

school managers, teachers, students, and students' parents.

4- Using combinative method (centralization and decentralization): the results of several researches and examining the educational situation of other countries indicate that many of them utilize centralized and decentralized methods synchronously. Wishes, values and general educational objectives are fulfilled in a centralized manner and realization objectives will be achieved in a decentralized way.

5- Allocating relevant resources to acquires: David (1995) defines resources as: educational programs, curriculum, teacher's experiences of learning, teaching patterns, education tools and facilities and education services (quoted by Khorshidi, 2004, page 119).

In school-based management, it is emphasized that specific resources should be provided for each student and personal differences should be noticed in specifying these resources.

6- Generating Total Quality Management: Total quality Management is another assumption of school-based management. It is a management method which does its best to consider the clients' expectations. The purpose of total quality management is constant improvement of affairs, efficiency

and providing the ground for new talents, and aims at mobilizing all possibilities and facilities in order to achieve optimum results. It also examines the feedback of processes and results constantly.

7. Financial independence: the ability to provide the required budget of school for repair charges, staff salary and rewards, staff training, providing educational resources and materials, etc. is gained by receiving the tuition from parents, benefitting from charity institutions in various fields, using educational spaces after working hours or in holidays for performing useful cultural and educational activities. (Mohseninia, 1999, page 72).

8- Localization and flexibility of programs: "Logical acceptance of global emerging methods of education and avoiding fanatic resistance against these transformations" (Soltani, 1996, page 45).

Lindguist (1995) has expressed some of school-based management assumptions as follows: decentralized management, local management of schools, self-responsibility, participative decision-making, school empowerment, considering the role of schools as the first origin of probable changes, decision-making in schools, centralized authority, joint leadership in schools, enhancing the capability of fulfilling

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

One of the vital factors for gaining success in the research process is choosing a proper research method and having complete awareness of it. Considering that these research aims at studying school-based management establishment from the view of managers of Ilam schools, the type of research is applied research in terms of purposes.

The present research is a survey-descriptive one in collecting the required data. Descriptive research includes all methods which attempt to describe the conditions or phenomena (Sarmad, Bazargan and Hejazi, 2010, page 81). The research population is all school managers of Ilam city in 2010-2011 regardless of the grade. For selecting the sample population, stratified random sampling method is used. In order to observe the ratio of population attributes in studied sample population, the sample size is selected from each class according to its number.

In this sampling method, the population is divided to different groups considering their intergroup characteristics and the members of a population are selected from all groups proportionally. Education grade and gender is the basic measure for dividing the sample to various groups.

Data analysis

SPSS statistical software was used to analyze the statistical data. First, the population variables of participants including: gender, academic document, educational major, history of service, etc. was described using the tables of frequency distribution and column chart. Then, the answers to the questions of questionnaire were studied.

DESCRIPTIVE FINDINGS

Describing the school type in terms of gender

Table 1: frequency distribution and school type percentage in terms of gender

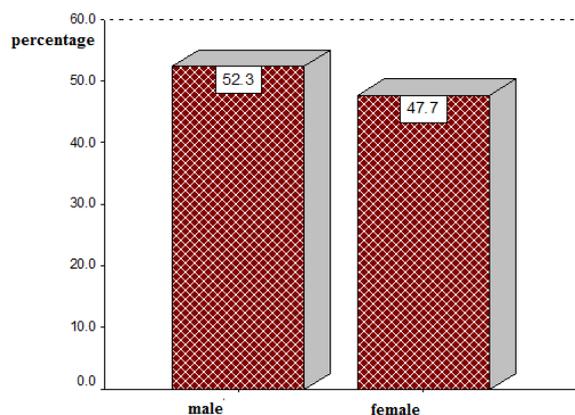| Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Collective percentage
Male	68	52.3	52.3
Female	62	47.7	47.7
Total	130	100	100

Diagram 1: percent distribution of school types in terms of gender

Based on obtained data from table and diagram above, 52.3% of selected schools are male-student schools and 47.7% are female-student schools.

Describing the respondents in terms of academic document

Table 2: frequency distribution and percentage of respondents in terms of academic document

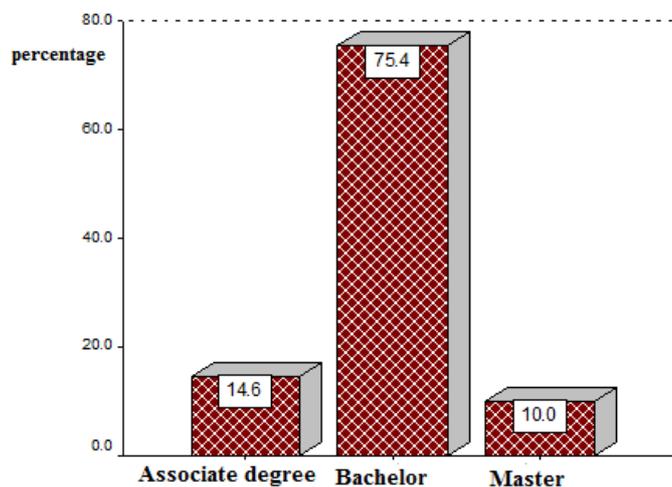| Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Collective percentage
Associate Diploma	19	14.6	14.6
B.A or B.S	98	75.4	90.0
M.A or M.S	13	10	10
Total	130	100	100

Diagram 2: percent distribution of respondents in terms of academic document

Based on obtained data from table and diagram above, 14.6% of respondents have Associate degree, 74.5 % have Bachelor degree and 10% have Master degree.

Describing the respondents in terms of job experience

Table 3: frequency distribution and the percentage of respondents in terms of job experience

Job experience	Frequency	Percentage	Collective percentage

Fewer than 15 years	2	1.5	1.5
15 to 20 years	32	24.6	26.2
21 to 25 years	46	35.4	61.5
26 to 30 years	48	36.9	98.5
Not answered	2	1.5	100.0
Total	130	100	

According to information of table and diagram 6-4, 1.5% of respondents have fewer than 15 years of service. 24.6% have between 15 to 20 years of job experience, 35.4% have between 21 to 25 years of job experience, and 36.9% have between 26 to 30 years of job experience. 1.5% of respondent did not state their service experience.
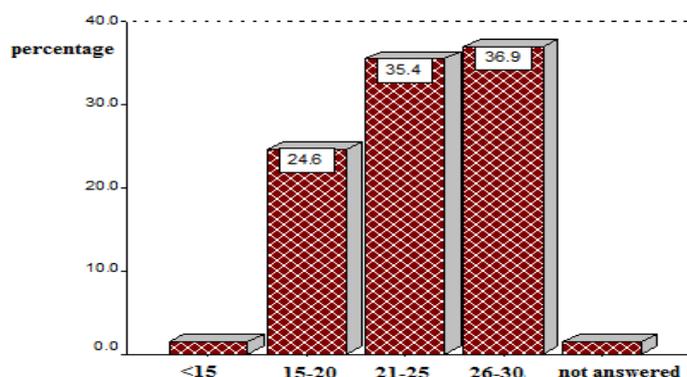

Diagram 3: percent distribution of respondents based on job experience

Describing the respondents based on education grade

Table 4: frequency distribution and percentage of respondents based on education grade

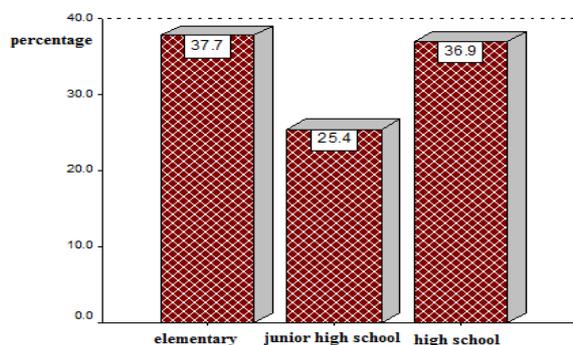| Education grade	Frequency	Percentage	Collective percentage
Elementary	49	37.7	37.7
Junior high school	33	25.4	63.1
High school	48	36.9	100.0
Total	130	100.0	

Diagram 4: percent distribution of respondents based on their education grade

According to information of table and diagram 4-6, 37.7% of respondents are

elementary grade staff, 25.4% are junior high school staff and 36.9% are high school staff.

Describing the respondents based on school type

Table 5: Percent distribution of respondents based on school type

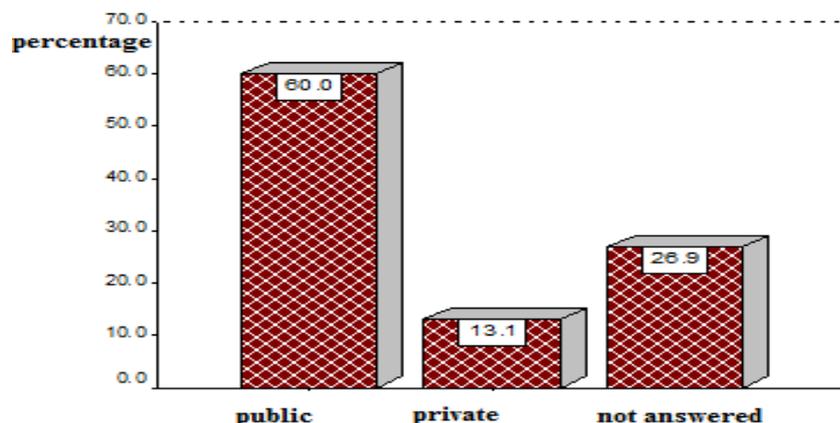| School type	Frequency	Percentage	Collective percentage
Public	78	60.0	60.0
Private	17	13.1	73.1
Not answered	35	26.9	100.0
Total	130	100	

Diagram 5: percent distribution of respondents based on school type

Based on information of table and diagram 4-7, 60% of respondents are working in public schools and 13.1% are working in private schools. 26.9% of respondents did not answer the question.

Describing the relevant questions of effect of centralization reduction and delegation of authority by Ministry of Education on establishing school-based management

Table 6: frequency distribution and the percentage of answers to the questions about the effect of decentralization reduction and delegation of authority by Ministry of Education in establishing school-based management

Question	Frequency/per centage	Very little	Little	Average	High	Very high
To what extent does the Ministry of Education allows change in programs and activities considering the situations of schools?	Frequency	8	20	52	37	13
	Percentage	6.15	15.38	40.00	28.46	10.00
How much does the Ministry of Education impose supervision and control over performing the school tasks according to issued regulations?	Frequency	5	9	48	46	22
	Percentage	3.85	6.92	36.92	35.38	16.92
To what extent is Education organizations (Ministry, provincial and regional organizations) determined and resolute in delegating the authority to schools?	Frequency	13	24	53	26	14
	Percentage	10.00	18.46	40.77	20.00	10.77
In your opinion, how much does the reduction of centralization by Ministry of Education contribute to	Frequency	0	3	31	64	32
	Percentage	0.0	2.31	23.85	49.23	24.62

establishing school-based management?						
Total	**Frequency**	0	15	52	50	13
	Percentage	0.0	11.54	40.00	38.46	10.00

According to the information of table 4-8, 21% of the respondents to the first question have selected "little" and "very little", 40% selected "average" and about 39% have selected "high" and "very high". In answer to the second question, 11% of the respondents have answered "little" and "very little", 37% of them have answered "average" and approximately 52% have answered "high" or "very high". On third question, 28% of the respondents have answered "little" or "very little", about 41% have answered "average" and 31% have answered "high" or "very high". For the last question, 2% of the respondents have selected "little", about 24% have selected "average" and 74% have selected "high" and "very high".

Describing the relevant questions of effect of individuals' participation (staff, parents and students) on school affairs on establishing school-based management

Table 7: frequency distribution and the percentage of answers to the questions about the effect individuals' participation in school affairs on establishing school-based management

Question	Frequency/per centage	Very little	Little	Average	High	Very high
To what extent are the students' parents prepared for participating in educational programs?	Frequency	9	30	50	28	13
	Percentage	6.92	23.08	23.46	21.54	10.00
How much does the spirit of collective activities, cooperation and participation exist in schools?	Frequency	2	7	25	54	42
	Percentage	1.54	5.38	19.23	41.54	32.31
To what extent are the schools prepared for consultative management?	Frequency	2	8	40	57	23
	Percentage	1.54	6.15	30.77	43.85	17.69
In your opinion, how good can the students perform the delegated tasks (holding ceremonies, school activities)?	Frequency	0	6	37	58	29
	Percentage	0.0	4.62	28.46	44.62	22.31
To what extent do the members of school council and parent-teacher association participate in school activities and programs?	Frequency	7	14	41	43	25
	Percentage	5.38	10.77	31.54	33.08	19.23
Total	**Frequency**	0	8	48	52	22
	Percentage	0.0	6.15	36.92	40.00	16.92

According to the information of table 4-9, 30% of the respondents to the first question have selected "little" and "very little", 38% have selected "average" and approximately 22% have selected "high" and "very high". For the second question, about 7% of the respondents have answered "little" or "very little", 19% have selected "average" and about 74% have selected "high" or "very high". For answering the third question, 8% of the respondents selected "little" and "very little", about 31% have selected "average" and approximately 61% have selected "high" and "very high". For the fourth question,

about 5% of the respondents have selected "little", 28% have answered "average" and 67% of the respondents have selected "high" and "very high". About 16% of the respondents have selected "little" and "very little", about 24% have selected "average" and approximately 52% have selected "high" and "very high".

CONCLUSION

The aim to conducting this research was studying the methods of establishing school-based management in schools of Ilam city in education year of 2011-2012. After the confirmation of the subject by educational management group and choosing the supervisor and advisor, the research process started. Chapters 1 to 3 were completed and corrected after examining the history of previous researches, library studies, using different resources and visiting scientific centers in Ilam province or in Tehran with the guidance of my esteemed supervisor and advisor.

A researcher-made questionnaire was used for collecting the required data. Validity of questionnaire was confirmed by esteemed professors of management group. Sample size, which consisted of 130 people, was selected from the managers of schools in Ilam with the guidance of statistic advisor based on Cochran formula. The questionnaire was applied with the assistance of Education Chief Office and Education Administration of Ilam city and the managers of schools in Ilam.

The data analysis was performed using SPSS software and the following results were obtained. The results indicated that school managers' acquaintance with the concept of school-based management in Ilam is well over the average.

Also, the effects of each of the features in establishing school-based management in schools of Ilam city are explained as follows:

a) The effect of reduction of centralization and delegation of authority was perceived to be average to high.

b) The effect of individuals' participation (staff, parents and students) in school affairs was perceived to be average to high.

c) The effect of delegating the authority of educational programming to school was average to high.

d) The effect of delegating the financial affairs to school was average.

e) The effect of delegating the authority of creating policies and managing the affairs was high.

f) The effect of delegating the authority of staff affairs to schools was high.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Considering the lack of similar research works in province of Ilam, it is suggested to conduct similar researches in other cities in order to provide the appropriate ground for generating school-based management in schools.

2. It is suggested that other researchers conduct studies with related or similar subjects such as: evaluating the readiness rate of schools for implementing school-based management.

3. Considering the fundamental changes which have taken place in education system of our country and alteration of education system structure, and defining new roles for schools and managers and the predicted role of schools in 1404 prospect in enjoying the authority of decision making, participation, cooperation, and the effective interaction with staff, it is suggested to activate the education councils of the province and enhance the efficiency of interschool councils(teacher council, parent-

teacher association, student council, etc.).

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