



Original Article (Mixed)

Designing a structural model to improve the productivity of higher education managers

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Abstract

The aim of the current research is the structural model of improving the productivity of higher education administrators. The research method is applicable according to its purpose; mixed (qualitative-quantitative) in terms of implementation method; descriptive in terms of nature and method; and in terms of the implementation method, fuzzy Delphi analysis in the qualitative part, and cross-sectional survey in the quantitative part. The statistical population of the research in the qualitative part is 18 people from managers, professors and experts; sampling by snowball and purposeful method, and in the quantitative part, 243 people of the faculty members of government and azad universities, from the field of educational management participation; were chosen by stratified sampling. Data collection was done in the qualitative part by the interview; and in the quantitative part by the questionnaire. Delphi method was used in qualitative data analysis; and SPSS and PLS softwares were used in quantitative part. According to the findings, the 9 main factors identified in the structural model are: the processing of higher education, job and skill needs assessment, development of communication skills, educational planning, promotion of organizational culture, environmental factors, continuous and constant evaluation, development of strategic thinking, and process reengineering. The results of Friedman's ranking test showed that the highest priority among the effective factors is related to educational planning, development of strategic thinking, and process reengineering. The findings indicate that improving the productivity of higher education managers in Iran requires re-engineering in all organizational elements; from executive methods to personal and professional competencies of managers, as well as development based on the processing of higher education.

Keywords:

productivity of managers, processing, reengineering, higher education, organizational culture

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Extended abstract

Introduction

Productivity in higher education, as one of the main and effective organizations in the comprehensive progress and development of the country, is one of the most important challenges facing the educational systems of the world, especially Iran (Malmir et al, 2018). Productivity is considered as one of the management performance indicators of the success of an organization (Sheehan et al, 2019). Also, productivity has been defined as the ratio of outputs to inputs of an institution or organization such as a school or university (Doraszelki, 2018). The main responsibility for productivity in organizations lies upon managers, because managers as leaders of organizations play an important role in productivity, and the productivity of managers has a direct relationship in organizations (Gunner et al, 2018). The educational system in every country, especially the higher education system, needs competent managers who are trained to improve productivity. In recent years, productivity has turned from a measure of organizational performance into an economic-social and cultural concept, and therefore the role of educational units in productivity has become more prominent. And for this reason, the role of educational units in productivity has been highlighted (Haenisch, 2012). Universities play a very important role in the progress or stagnation of a society through direct influence on the flow of production, adaptation, and reproduction of social systems and market mechanisms (Tang, 2013). The results of the research conducted in Iran and the world show that, first of all, studies on how to be productive in organizations, especially higher education and universities, are necessary; and each organization needs different indicators compared to other organizations, depending on its goals and implementation methods, to improve its productivity and organizational development, which must be studied and explored separately. There are also a series of individual and moral factors that can be common in all organizations, because all managers, apart from their job and system positions, have common human characteristics, hence the basic research question is: what is the structural model for improving the productivity of higher education managers?

Theoretical Framework

Efficiency

In the Oxford dictionary, productivity is defined as follows: productivity is the efficiency and effectiveness in production measured by some relationships between headquarters and institutions. The definition of productivity according to the International Labor Organization is the ratio of return on resources consumed; more simply, expression of productivity is the ratio of the amount of goods or services produced to the resources used in production. The European Productivity Agency defines productivity as follows: productivity is the degree of effective use of each of the production factors. Therefore, productivity is an intellectual point of view that always tries to improve what is currently available. Productivity is based on the belief that humans can perform their tasks and jobs better than yesterday (Nikkhah, 2022).

Higher Education

Higher education is considered an important type of investment in human resources that helps in economic development and obtaining more benefits by providing and improving the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by technical, professional and managerial of senior staff, and by resorting to the best optimization and optimized management (Woodhall, 2016). Mollaie & Aslam Raiesi (2024) investigated the purpose of the research to evaluate the teaching of Arabic lessons in higher education based on the Kirkpatrick model in Tehran's higher education institutions. The findings of the research showed that the components of teaching effectiveness evaluation, including reaction, learning and results, are able to predict the effectiveness of teaching Arabic lessons in higher education based on the Kirkpatrick



model. Based on the findings of the research, the teaching of Arabic lessons in Tehran's higher education institutions is at an optimal level in terms of reaction components, learning, and results.

Vedvya & Yogesh (2020) investigated the increasing of the productivity of India's leader-oriented higher education system. It showed that good management increases efficiency in public and private sector organizations; productivity and good management are closely related in terms of time and money and the satisfaction of end users for investment; and increasing productivity and improving the quality of higher education depends on management trends and the effective leadership of higher education institutions.

Research methodology

The research method is applicable according to its purpose; mixed (qualitative-quantitative) in terms of implementation method; descriptive in terms of nature and method; and in terms of the implementation method, fuzzy Delphi analysis in the qualitative part, and cross-sectional survey in the quantitative part. The statistical population of the research in the qualitative part is 18 people from managers, professors and experts; sampling by snowball and purposeful method, and in the quantitative part, 243 people of the faculty members of government and azad universities, from the field of educational management participation; were chosen by stratified sampling. Data collection was done in the qualitative part by the interview; and in the quantitative part by the questionnaire.

Research findings

Delphi method was used in qualitative data analysis; and SPSS and PLS softwares were used in quantitative part. According to the findings, the 9 main factors identified in the structural model are: the processing of higher education, job and skill needs assessment, development of communication skills, educational planning, promotion of organizational culture, environmental factors, continuous and constant evaluation, development of strategic thinking, and process reengineering. The results of Friedman's ranking test showed that the highest priority among the effective factors is related to educational planning, development of strategic thinking, and process reengineering. The findings indicate that improving the productivity of higher education managers in Iran requires re-engineering in all organizational elements; from executive methods to personal and professional competencies of managers, as well as development based on the processing of higher education.

Conclusion

The current research was conducted with the aim of the structural model of improving the productivity of higher education administrators. The results of this research are consistent with the results of Mollaie & Aslam Raiesi (2024), Shafiei Chafi et al, (2023), Naghizadeh (2023), Ashourzadeh et al, (2023), Nikkhah (2022), Wright & Perrell (2019), Henry et al, (2020), Vedvya & Yogesh (2020), Zakiani (2019), Mardani shahr babak & Khaki (2019), and Ghasemi & Jamalzahi (2019). Vedvya, & Yogesh(2020) showed that good management increases efficiency in public and private sector organizations; productivity and good management have a close relationship in terms of time and money and the satisfaction of end users for investment; and increasing productivity and improving the quality of higher education depends on effective management and leadership processes of higher education institutions.

According to the results of this research, the following suggestions are presented:

It is suggested that the senior managers of this field at the level of the higher education ministries provide the basis for stabilizing and improving the performance of the higher



education institutions by developing a comprehensive system of higher education and organizing and re-ranking and validating the higher education institutions of the country, in addition to correcting some existing processes.

It is suggested that the senior managers of this field at the level of the higher education ministries should do better in recruiting and employing as well as the empowerment programs of their employees and the field of improving productivity. Provide higher education managers in the country by reviewing the job description and determining the specialized skills required for different academic fields.