



Original Article (Qualitative)

Analyzing the dimensions and components of professional development of elementary school principals based on an entrepreneurial attitude

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Abstract

The aim of the present study is to analyze the dimensions and components of professional development of elementary school principals based on an entrepreneurial attitude. The research method is applicable in terms of its purpose, and qualitative in terms of its implementation method, using the content analysis method. The statistical population includes 12 specialists; knowledgeable experts in the field of educational management and entrepreneurship, selected through purposive sampling. The data collection tool includes semi-structured interviews. Data analysis was performed using MAXQDA software. The results of the present study indicated that the professional development of elementary school principals based on an entrepreneurial attitude was designed in the form of 6 main categories (leadership and organizational management, personal and career development, innovation and strategic management, learning and education management, sustainability and social interactions, entrepreneurial attitude), 27 subcategories (leadership and management, support and guidance, resource management and planning, policy and program setting, accountability and flexibility, personal and professional development, digital skills development, career development and job opportunities, empowerment and participation, strategic thinking and decision-making, innovation and entrepreneurship, evaluation and feedback, teaching and learning, classroom management and diverse learning, learning and research, sustainable development and the environment, expanding networks and interactions, social and emotional progress, developing culture and communication, individual dimension, opportunity-seeking dimension, risk-taking dimension, innovation-creativity dimension, managerial capabilities dimension, market orientation dimension, communication and networking dimension, flexibility dimension) and 130 indicators.

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Extended abstract

Introduction

“Entrepreneurial attitude” is a key component in empowering educational administrators to face environmental changes, organizational challenges, and the evolving needs of school stakeholders. An entrepreneurial attitude is a combination of characteristics such as innovation, creativity, risk-taking, foresight, opportunism, self-confidence, motivation for progress, and a desire to create positive changes in the workplace (Kuratko, 2017). This attitude allows administrators to better understand complex and multifaceted situations and to find creative solutions to improve school performance. (Sánchez-García et al., 2018) Administrators with an entrepreneurial attitude view schools not as static structures, but as dynamic and learning organizations. They are able to identify opportunities for improvement, stimulate teacher creativity, expand student and parent participation, and turn the school into an active hub for local development (Ahmad et al., 2021). In such a context, professional development based on an entrepreneurial attitude is not only an educational strategy, but also a strategic necessity for empowering human resources in education. However, a review of domestic studies shows that existing professional development programs for primary school principals in Iran are often designed with a traditional, general approach, and out of step with current developments. Rather than focusing on changing attitudes and promoting creative and entrepreneurial capacities, these programs focus on transferring administrative knowledge, rules and regulations, or repetitive management processes (Parste qombwani et al., 2022). On the other hand, existing programs are often one-sided, inflexible, and lack effectiveness evaluation mechanisms, and do not pay attention to the diverse and contextual needs of school principals (Rasouli et al., 2024). In addition, despite the theoretical growth of the concept of entrepreneurship in education, most of the research conducted has either focused on entrepreneurship education for students and teachers, or has dealt with some entrepreneurial characteristics of school principals in a scattered and unsystematic manner, without providing a comprehensive framework or model for the professional development of principals based on an entrepreneurial attitude (Moradian et al., 2021). Therefore, the main research question can be stated as: What are the dimensions and components of the professional development of elementary school principals based on an entrepreneurial attitude?

The theoretical framework

Professional development

Professional development includes any activity designed to improve knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In other words, teacher professional development is a combination of natural learning experiences, conscious and designed direct and indirect activities that are beneficial for individual students, specific groups and even the entire school, and ultimately the activities carried out lead to improved educational quality (Kalantari Khandani & Farrokhi, 2016).

Hasankhani et al. (2024) studied the design of a professional development model for art students in the technical and vocational branches for the purpose of entrepreneurship education in art schools. To validate the findings, the four criteria of “reliability”, “credibility”, “verifiability” and “transferability” of qualitative research were used. In the analysis of the findings, 191 "open codes" were identified, and by classifying them, the components of the model, including the philosophy and why of professional development, approach and orientation, principles, goals, levels, the role of art students, competencies, processes, barriers, and consequences, were identified as the main elements of the model. The results of the present study can be used by the Ministry of Education in policy-making related to the empowerment of art students in order to promote entrepreneurship education in art



schools, and at the levels of general administrations, educational district management, and schools, the recommendations and guidelines provided in the model can be used.

Habibzadeh et al. (2024) investigated the application of fuzzy analytic hierarchy process to identify factors affecting the new professional development of teachers graduated from Farhangian University. The results showed that each of the identified factors had different weights and importance. The first factor is knowledge acquisition and creation (A), the second factor is knowledge organization (B), the third factor is knowledge exchange and sharing (C), the fourth factor is knowledge application (D), the fifth factor is staying up to date (E), the sixth factor is empiricism and thoughtful action (F), the seventh factor is change in the way of doing work (G), the eighth factor is learner and learning (H), the ninth factor is content knowledge (I), the tenth factor is educational practice (J), and the eleventh factor is professional responsibility (K).

Research Methodology

The research method is applicable in terms of its purpose, and qualitative in terms of its implementation method, using the content analysis method. The statistical population consists of 12 specialists: knowledgeable experts in the field of educational management and entrepreneurship, selected through purposive sampling. The data collection tool includes semi-structured interviews.

Research findings

Data analysis was performed using MAXQDA software. The results of the present study indicated that the professional development of elementary school principals based on an entrepreneurial attitude was designed in the form of 6 main categories (leadership and organizational management, personal and career development, innovation and strategic management, learning and education management, sustainability and social interactions, entrepreneurial attitude), 27 subcategories (leadership and management, support and guidance, resource management and planning, policy and program setting, accountability and flexibility, personal and professional development, digital skills development, career development and job opportunities, empowerment and participation, strategic thinking and decision-making, innovation and entrepreneurship, evaluation and feedback, teaching and learning, classroom management and diverse learning, learning and research, sustainable development and environment, expansion of networks and interactions, social and emotional progress, development of culture and communication, individual dimension, opportunity seeking dimension, risk-taking dimension, innovation and creativity dimension, managerial capabilities dimension, market orientation dimension, communication and networking dimension, flexibility dimension) and 130 indicators.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to explore the dimensions and components of professional development of elementary school principals based on an entrepreneurial attitude. These results are also in agreement with the findings of Asad et al. (2021), Yousefi et al. (2020), Wang & Ortiz (2022), Slišāne & Kaulēns (2021), Hosseini, (2020), Abbasi et al. (2023), Akhtar et al. (2022), Oksanen et al. (2023), Toghrayi et al. (2019) (Ghayur et al. (2020), Zangi et al. (2020), Yousefi et al. (2020), Abd-elmonem et al. (2023), Grigg (2025), Mutalimov et al. (2021), and Al-Za'ida et al. (2021). They acknowledged in their research that updating educational styles and having educational supervision, networking and flexibility, creativity-centeredness, and innovative behavior in education provide the basis for improving and developing the entrepreneurial attitude of managers.