A Comparative Study of Professional Development Processes of School Principals in Iran and England

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A R T I C L E I N F O	A B S T R A C T
	The purpose of research was investigating school principals' professional development processes in Iran and England. This is a qualitatively comparative research using strategy of "different social systems, different educational outputs" for selection of selected countries. The method of data collection was documentary (primary and secondary sources) extracted from international databases and the Ministry of Education homepages of the two selected countries. Data analysis was through Bereday and Mill methods. The findings showed that, the policies and general principles of the principals' professional development programs are centralized with direct supervision of the Ministry of Education and its subordinate organizations. Other finding revealed that the implementation of professional development processes of school principals in Iran is mostly based on theoretical discussions, principals' experience and organizational agency, while in England, individual agency is dominant and principals' professional development programs is mostly based on practice, experience and supervision of the primitive competencies of the school's principal. Some programs of the England educational system in principals' professional development programs - such as establishment of the "National College for School Leadership (NCSL)", "National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)" and development of qualifications- can be used to improve the Iran's school principals professional development programs.

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1. Introduction

School leaders have a great influence on shaping school culture, improving teachers' performance, and students' learning and progress (Senol, 2019). "School leaders today require greater leadership skills for guiding teaching and learning. The skills needed for such a role cannot be developed solely in one programme, but rather in a combination of learning, coaching and practicing that develops formally and informally (Brauckmann, Pashiardis & Ärlestig, 2020) Leadership ability is not a fixed matter to be acquired, but rather a variable that is continuously formed through practice and formal & informal preparation and development activities (Woods, Roberts, Jarvis, & Culshaw, 2020). One of the goals of the professional development of school principals is to improve their knowledge, skills and abilities (Shirbagi, Amjad Zabardast, & Amani, 2015). Expanding the role of the principal, increasing complexity of the school environment and different vision of principals are among the reasons for their professional development (Bush, 2016). The logic governing the professional development of school principals is often based on the fact that school leaders believe that they can make changes in teacher performance and student learning (Brown and Militello, 2016).

Professional development is defined as the principal's participation in formal activities - such as training programs, conferences, seminars/workshops, collaborative learning - in networks/teams - or courses at a college or university. However, it is important to note that principals informally manage to improve and grow professionally through discussions with colleagues, independent investigation, research or learning from peers (Mizell, 2010). According to Bizzell (2011), the professional development of school principals includes activities and processes designed to increase the professional knowledge, skills and behavioral attitudes of principals, and to create better conditions for the success and learning of students.

Principal's professional development models show different dimensions and components. Based on this, Kennedy (2005) has identified and categorized a wide range of professional development models for school administrators. These models include: " training " model, which aims to provide an opportunity to update the skills and competencies of teachers and administrators; " deficit " model, which is designed to fix the shortages in the performance of principals; the " cascade " model, which refers to the dissemination of information by principals s to their colleagues, and the " Standard- based " model, which considers the implementation of standards as the real test of professional development activities and actions. The "coaching/mentoring" model considers the importance of a face-to-face relationship between two principals to support professional development. The model of "community of practice " considers

learning to include three essential processes of evolving interaction methods, understanding and setting the participation plan, and developing people's styles and discourses. The "action research" model is based on investigate of a social situation in which the participants are involved as researchers. This model clearly has significant capacity to create transformational performance and professional autonomy of principals. The "transformative" model includes a combination of processes and conditions that support a transformative agenda.

Cardno (2005) presents a "comprehensive professional development model" as an alternative to cross-sectional, curriculum-focused teaching practices. Also, in the framework of this model, he has identified many links between professional development and the degree of improvement and access to strategic goals. The holistic model for planning includes basic components that interact with professional development. These components include instructional leadership as the foundation of the model, effective performance evaluation, strategic management, and review as an overarching leadership activity to guide and evaluate planning. In addition, the mentioned model suggests that at least four basic dimensions of professional development, curriculum development, management development, school development and principal's personal development - should be present in an effective school performance improvement program. Ghanbari and Mohammadi (2015) have classified the professional development model of school principals into six main categories. These include: causal conditions (changes in education and training, financial resources & personal motivations of principals), central phenomenon (required skills, education & knowledge, and psychological & moral characteristics of principals), professional development strategies of principals (individual, group and organizational), Intermediary conditions (structural, organizational, individual and group), intervening conditions (budget, trustees and laws) and consequences of principals' professional development (organizational & environmental).

The importance of "school principals' professional development" concept with regard to its new roles has caused diverse professional growth and development opportunities for principals in different countries. In the United States and in the early years of career, professional learning opportunities are often very intensive for school principals (Lewis & Scott, 2020). School management candidates participate in professional development programs at several stages. Administrative credentialing—or licensure that demonstrates basic competency to lead a school—is required in all fifty two states. Therefore, all states have adopted school leadership standards as part of the licensing system (Donley, Detrich, States, & Keyworth, 2021). National surveys show that most principals participate in professional development.The most prevalent type of professional development activity was participating in workshops or conferences and the least

prevalent activity was taking university courses related to their role as principal. visits to other schools and participating in mentoring and/or peer observation and coaching, are some other activities (Lewis & Scott 2020).

In South Korea, principals' evaluation and promotion policies are based on rules and regulations that require at least 60 hours of participation in professional development per year. Although principals tend to spend more time on their professional development in order to achieve full marks in the evaluation process and payment system. School principals naturally participate in formal professional development activities to acquire qualifications. In addition, they can also have special professional development opportunities - such as research training courses or studying abroad (Kim &Lee, 2020).

In 2021, the French Ministry of Education put four priorities, namely recognition, collobration, flexibility and support, in its agenda for the training of school principals. In this regard, the organization of support activities for school principals was assigned to *Formiris Federation*. Formiris consists of 14 regional associations that represent the support of school principals. The main goal of Formiris is to provide professional development programs and psychological support to principals - through designing, organizing and directing trainings, courses, workshops and individual counseling - (Mallet & Słowik, 2021). In Pakistan, the preparation programs for school principals are one of the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education. The "State Institute of Teacher Education", Districts Training & Support Centers, State Education Commission, and private institutions are among the organizations involved in the professional development of school principals.The most common types of professional development activities that the principals participated in included the, conferences, work shops, short and long training courses, professional networks, self-directed study, collaborative learning, research work, membership in professional organizations and enhanced qualification (Nasreen & Odhiambo, 2018).

In China, the "School Principal Selection Standards" determine the responsibilities of principals and basic foundations for prinicipals' training, evaluating and performance. Currently, four national educational institutions, thirty one provincial educational institutions, more than two hundred educational institutions affiliated with municipalities and two thousand educational institutions for preparing managers have been established in this country. These institutes issue three types of "Training Program for Principals" certificates: First, a 300-hour professional competency training certificate for new managers; Second, a 240-hour supplementary training certificate for principals equipped with certain competencies and third, an advanced training seminar for a selected group of

top principals - who wish to increase their skills and knowledge - (Jiang, Sumintono, Perera, Harris, & Jones, 2017).

In South Africa, although the rules & regulations emphasizes ongoing professional development activities for school principals - under the responsibility of Regional Departments of Education - , but most principals point out that these departments do not attach any importance to principals' ongoing professional development activities, and that the "Workshop Model of Professional Development" is general and usually ineffective and does not consider the needs of the participants. Therefore, principals seek to find other agencies (such as universities & non-governmental organizations) for better access to professional development programs to increase their skills and knowledge for effective school leadership and management (Mestry, 2017).

Several researches have been conducted in the field of professional development of school administrators. Thaher (2020) studied "Professional requirements for secondary school principals in the light of 21st century competencies" with the aim of identifying the professional needs of principals. He came to the conclusion that the professional requirements of secondary school principals should be according to the competencies of the 21st century - such as digital literacy skills, innovative thinking skills, effective communication & high/level productivity skills - keep pace with the evolution of the educational process. Brauckmann, Pashiardis & Ärlestig (2020) in a study entitled "Educational Leadership Fields & Professional Development of School Principals in the United States of America" and in a critical process stated that school principals who have poor knowledge should be trained and the main programs for preparing and empowering managers should be guided by a more detailed investigation. Gumus, & Bellibas (2020) concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between the professional development of school principals and leadership practices. Ndiritu, Mwaura Mbugua, & Njoki Ndiritu (2019) concluded that there is a positive correlation between transformational leadership and professional development of school principals.

Wong and Liu (2018) found that five domains in school principal leadership development - as key dimensions - need further improvement. These domains include the job motivations of assistant principals, effect of social culture on the professional development of principals, professional development needs of new principals, the cooperation between university & educational leader, and effect of principals on school performance & professional development of teachers. McCracken, (2017) also found that the professional development of managers includes five main features of content, active learning, collective participation, duration and coherence, which directly affects the knowledge, attitude and professional performance of principals and

students' success (McCracken, 2017 as cited at Yousefi, Melki Avarsin, & Talebi, 2019). Aravena (2016) in an article entitled "Preparation of school leaders in the Chilean scenario: Lessons from Australia, England and the United States of America", analyzed the experiences, dilemmas, problems and solutions of the process of training educational leaders in three different cultural environments. The main finding was that when principals do not have the power to make decisions - such as selecting staff and managing finances - professional development is useless. In this context, the legal and administrative structures of Chile – such as less attention to the independence , autonomy and freedom of school administrators in decision-making processes, financial resources and choosing appropriate staff- act as serious obstacles to the consolidation and implementation of new ideas and recommendations.

Supovitz (2015) in the article " Building a Lattice for School Leadership: Lessons from England", while referring to the stages of school leadership development in this country during the years 2000 to 2015, considers the school leadership development system as an instructive case for American policy makers reminds them it is worth considering the main components of this leadership system such as the formalization of multiple leadership positions in the school, identification of a well-recognized set of leadership competencies, and Creation of the formal and Latticed learning opportunities in the educational policy. Hilliard (2015) also receives the available opportunities to improve teaching, learning, research and leadership skills development, has the greatest impact on the professional development of the school principals.

Ng and Chan (2014) found that in the professional development program of school principals, things such as interpersonal skills, crisis management, proper management of resources and knowledge of educational regulations should be prioritized. Naicker and Naidoo (2014) found that creating learning opportunities, teamwork, social communication, and improving collaborative leadership skills are affected in the professional development of school principals. According to Cardno and Youngs (2013), the implementation of programs that create opportunities to learn personal and professional skills of principals has a great impact on their performance.

In Iran, according to the research conducted, Abbaspour, Elzami, Khorsandi Taskoh, Pourkarimi &Rahimian (2020) concluded that the professional development framework of primary school principals has three dimensions: professional development content, professional development process, and organizational requirements. Kamarei, Khorshidi, Hamidifar, Mahmoodi & Shariatmadari (2019) consider the dimensions of principals' professional development as follow: knowledge, attitude, intellectual & mental abilities, managerial abilities, functional managerial skills, interpersonal skills, management skills for excellence & improvement, transformational

leadership skills, professional & job skills, and psychological & personality characteristics. Naderi Bani, Khanifar, Rahmati& Abeditorab (2019) summarized the components of professional development in eleven categories: strengthening scientific skills, diversifying the school atmosphere, assessing need for communication development, empowering employees, internal & external visits, planning, re-energizing, lifelong learning, conflict management and work-life balance. Esfahani, Soleimani, Torani & Sabahi (2018) consider the factors affecting the professional development of principals to include technological, religious, cultural, individual, social, economic, political and organizational factors. According to Farah Bakhsh, Jafari Sarabi, Siah Kemari, Gholami & Moradi (2016), the professional qualifications of school principals include eight main components of managerial expertise, teaching experience, human relations skills, artistic skill, technical skill, moral-social, motivational and appearance. Also, Nurad Sadiq, Novh Ebrahim, Arasteh & Zainabadi (2016) found that the dimensions of professional development of school principals include three components: Creating opportunities for career development, creating opportunities for personal development, and encouraging principals to improve themselves. The findings of Pourkarimi, Farzaneh & Nowrozi (2016) also showed that the professional competence of school principals includes psychological, skills (technical, human and perceptual), and knowledge & attitude characteristics.

A review of the above studies shows that most of the researchers have focused on instrumental role of professional development of school principals'concept and sought dimensions, components, designing models, and determining the frameworks of development and competence of principals. Also, while comparative studies emphasize the importance of attention to the issue of professional development of school principals, this emphasis shows the similarity of these studies with the present research. Among them, we can refer to the Mohammadi, Sadat Fadavi & Farhadi (2017) who investigated the concept, dimensions and analysis of the competence components of primary school principals in Iran, USA, England, Australia, South Africa and Japan. The findings showed that there is little similarity between the empowerment components of primary school principals in Iran and selected countries. In Iran, there is a gap in important components such as the specialized and technical dimension, and draw the mission & vision in the empowerment of school principals.

Nowadays, contrary to the traditional views that limit the role of school principals only to managing and performing the usual and daily executive tasks of management, paying attention to the importance of the role of principals and educational leadership has been defined and explained for them (Sahlabadi, 2016). In such a vision, the role of school administrators is very decisive, special and different competencies and responsibilities are expected from them. As an effective

factor, principals should influence their work and professional identity, choose, take a position, alone or in a group, in a given situation, make decisions and act proactively instead of reactively (Imants & Van der wal, 2019). In other words, at the same time with the decisions and prescriptions of organizational authorities (organizational agency), they should act actively regarding the actions and processes of professional development highlighting individual agency.

The current situation of Iran's schools shows that one of the common problems at the executive level is the inappropriate quality of decision-making and action by school principals. The majority of principals do not have necessary professional qualifications; which is caused by the lack of sufficient proficiency, up-to-date knowledge and skills (Nowrozi, 2014). Schools are traditionally run by people who have a teaching background but lack expertise in educational management (Ghurchian & Mahmoudi, 2004). Regarding the appointment of school principals, the necessity of pre-service and in-service training courses and acquisition of special skills and expertise has not been provided (Piryaei & Niknami, 2016). School administrators are selected without professional and scientific criteria, and there are no coherent standards for their professional preparation and development. Also, experts believe that determining the criteria for selecting and appointing managers and approving it in the Supreme Council of Education relies more on the personal opinions and experiences of experts and members of this council than on research and comparative studies (Safi, 2005).In addition, most of the training programs that are held for school principals do not have a special goal for those involved, executives and managers. Many programs are based solely on the speculation of the presenters and without assessing the needs of the participants. Indeed, there is a difference between participants' perception and perceptions of the executives about educational needs (Izad Bakhsh, 2009).

The results of these researches have shown the ineffectiveness of principals' professional development programs. In many cases, holding and participating in professional development courses is merely a ceremonial, routine matter for obtaining points and certificates or solving administrative tasks, and therefore not much attention is paid to the nature of these programs (Izad Bakhsh, 2009; Nasiri Valikboni, Ghanbari, & Sarchahani, 2015; Piryaei, & Niknami, 2016; Pourshafei, Ayubi, Akbari, & Hosseini, 2014). Base of this, principals are in an educational poverty. They repeatedly state that even training courses provided by the universities does not prepare them for the management and leadership of schools. Therefore, researchers have found that principals need more professional development to face the new expectations of their role (Hayat, Abdullahi, Zainabadi & Arasteh, 2014). Accordingly, the main goal of the present research was to compare the

professional development process of school principals in Iran and England. The sub-goals of research are:

- Identifying the similarities between Iran and England in the processes of needs assessment, design, implementation and evaluation of the school principals' professional development activities.

- Identifying the differences between Iran and England in the processes of needs assessment, design, implementation and evaluation of the school principals' professional development activities.

2. Research Method

The research method was of comparative qualitative type. The observation unit was at the macro level (countries) using "different social systems, different educational outputs" strategy for selection of the sample. In this strategy, it is assumed that the two selected educational systems are culturally, socially, politically and economically different from each other and also have different performance and outputs in the professional development processes of school principals (Bray, Adamson & Mason, 2007). To method of collect data was documentary using primary and secondary sources - such as documents, reports, books, articles and comparative studies (n=75). These sources were obtained by searching international (Google Scholar ،Find Articles ،Eric) and Iranian (SID ،Elm Net ،ISC ،Magiran) databases. The most important documents and reports were collected from England government institutions and organizations (www.gov.uk / Department of Education) and the Iran Ministry of Education and "Center for Public Administration Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran". To determine the credibility of documents, attention has been paid to external and internal criticism. Data analysis was based on Bereday's model and John Stuart Mill's agreement and difference approach (Madandar Arani, 2015).

3. Findings

a) Description
Iran

In 1969, the "Governmental Management Training Center" affiliated to the "Administrative and Recruitment Affairs Organization of Iran (ARAO) " was established and started to operate for the training of managers of government organizations - including managers of the Ministry of Education. This center with a 53-year background in Iran's administrative system; plays a central role in promoting the management of public affairs through education, training and development of

competencies of managers and employees of the public sector at the national and regional levels. The most important missions of this center are policy making for the implementation of training and development programs for managers and employees in the administrative system; training of managers, experts and government employees and management of scientific networks for the production and transfer of knowledge in the field of administrative system and public affairs. In 1972, the license for the first long-term training course at the postgraduate level was issued for this center. Later, long-term courses - at associate to doctorate levels - were also held in various fields of management - including educational administration (https://lms.smtc.ac.ir/).

In the early 2000s, the Supreme Council of Education emphasized in Resolution 673 that candidates of school management must participate in administrative training courses or qualification assessment (Abdollahi, 2012). In 2007, the "Civil Service Management Law" was promulgated. In its Chapter 9 entitled "Employment of Employees and Managers"; all executive bodies were required to compile training programs for employees (Attarian, 2019). In 2013, the training program for future principals of executive bodies was approved in the 165th session of the "Supreme Administrative Council". In line with the global developments in education and following the importance of the role and position of the school principal, development-oriented programs were introduced or implemented in Iran's educational system in accordance with the upstream documents such as "Principal Selection and Appointment Project", "Professional Competency Assessment System Program for School Managers", "Human Resources Rating System Plan", "School Management Excellence Program" and "Primary School Planning Program" (Mard, Zainabadi, & Arasteh, 2016).The main goal of these programs is to improve the scientific level and management knowledge of school administrators. "*Tadbir Plan*" - which has been implemented since 2014 with the aim of annual planning of schools in the framework of upstream documents - also tries to help managers in continuous improvement of processes and human resources participation. Also, according to the law approved by the Ministry of Education, all school principals are required to participate in training courses while serving in educational management. The titles of the courses are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. In-service training courses for school principals according to subject and time (Ministry of Education, 2017)

No.	subject	Hours
1	Educational leadership	24
2	Operational planning in education	16

3	Principles of teaching and evaluation strategies	12
4	Collaborative management at the school level	24
5	Educational supervision and guidance	24
6	Innovation and entrepreneurship at school	24
7	Principles of happiness at school	12
8	School communication management	16

England

In England and before the 1980s, school management training and development was very sparse and fragmented. Currently, the Ministry of Education determines educational policies at the national level. Principal preparation programs are provided centrally and 52 institutions in 10 geographical areas offer professional development programs for school principals (Aravena, 2016). The establishment of the "Teacher Training Association" (TTA) later renamed as a "Teacher Development Association" (TDA), was a major development that led to leadership development as well as pre-service and in-service training for teachers. In 1997, the association adopted the "National Professional Qualification for Headship" (NPQH) program as the first national qualification for principals at all levels (Bush, 2013). This relatively comprehensive program includes measures and activities related to pre-service competencies, preparation and familiarization to support new leaders and in-service training for experienced school leaders. Also, this program was applied to those who wanted to become a school principal in order to acquire professional skills. The content of this program includes such things as "shaping the future", "educational leadership", "self-development & working with a group", "management & organization" and "necessity of accounting", which are important topics for school management. Also, principals are trained in in-service training courses - which aim to understand the relationship between focusing on personal development and effective leadership roles and school performance. Later, with the establishment of the "National College of School Leadership (NCSL)" in 2000, measures related to the development programs of managers were expanded, and continuous professional development programs have replaced in-service training (Turabik. Atanur Baskan, & Kocak, 2014).

b) Interpretation

At this stage, according to the purpose of the research, along with a brief reference to the selection and appointment of principals, the professional development programs of school principals in the two countries are interpreted with emphasize on the development processes.

Iran

The history of modern education system in Iran is more than a century. In the first decades, the educational system of countries such as France had attracted the attention of Iranian politicians. The victory of the Islamic Revolution in the late 1970s changed various aspects of the educational system, including the method of selecting managers of the educational system and schools. In Iran, the minimum education and experience required for the appointment of school principals varies according to the type of course and level of schools. According to the latest regulation entitled "Selecting and Appointing School Principals" - approved by the 997th meeting of the Supreme Council of Education (2021) under equal special conditions, holders of educational degrees in various fields of educational sciences (preferably in educational management) are in priority to assume the management of elementary and secondary schools. Also, for the management of technical and vocational schools, it is necessary to have a degree in one of the technical and vocational fields. The members of this committee include the directors and vice-presidents of education, training & planning of the regional education department, officials of administrative affairs & performance evaluation, two experts in the field of educational management, and two representatives of directors. The Ministry of Education has recently designed and launched an internet system under the name of "Selection" (http://entekhab.medu.ir). Candidates of school management must declare their desire to hold the position through this system. Candidates must meet the necessary general and specific conditions and in addition to passing the written test, they must also participate in the interview (Sadat Razavi, Imani & Sharifi, 2022).

Surveys show that a few researches have been done in Iran regarding the appointment and promotion of school principals (Piryaei & Niknami, 2016). The findings of some studies show that the lack of a professional qualification criteria for school management , priority for educational qualifications and higher scientific degrees (master's and doctorate) and criteria for activities such as authoring or translating books, articles, researches, etc. paved the way for attracting and selecting managers through unprofessional and unfair methods - such as organizational or consanguinity relationships, and political activities - (Kohinejad & Hosseini, 2016; Zarei & Salehi, 2013) indicated that there is a big gap between the current and desired situation of the appointment of principals. Ebrahimpour, Asgharpour Alamdari & Hejiri, (2017) also show that the selection and appointment of school principals is not based on scientific and ethical criteria and has been influenced by factors outside the educational system - such as the influence of governor or members of the parliament. Although the Supreme Council of Education in the 602nd meeting dated 17 October 1996 set the

conditions for the election of the heads of educational centers to have general conditions, political piety and non-participation in political conflicts contrary to the interests of education, but the personal experiences of the present researchers shows that these conditions have not been met in the selection of managers in all organizational levels - schools, districts, provinces and even the ministry.

However, regardless of the general conditions required for the position of educational management, the applicant must have educational and managerial records in the official employment of the Ministry of Education. In the next stage, she/he must complete training courses and professional development programs before being appointed and starting work (Kohinejad & Hosseini, 2016). Also, in order to assess the needs of professional development programs, Iran's executive bodies are required to conduct educational needs assessments based on organizational analysis, competencies and job standards, and review the content of the "Employee Educational Information Bank", and identify the annual training courses required by employees and managers (Governmental Management Training Center, 2013). In the training system, needs assessment is compiled based on the requirements and priority of the development needs of the organization and employees through the selection of "approved training courses" whose titles and specifications are available in a system called "LTMS" (Ministry of Education, 2015). This system has been launched by the Ministry of Education with the aim of increasing the knowledge of teachers, managers and assistants during their service and improving their scientific level.

The principals' trainings are designed and implemented in line with the two basic parts of "spiritual excellence" and "professional excellence" within the framework of the managers' training program. Also, the method of implementation is based on the nature of the course and educational goals are attendance and absenteeism (Governmental Management Training Center, 2011). Short-term training courses are designed and approved based on "organization analysis" and "job analysis". The special courses are designed and developed by the "Planning Center of the Ministry of Education" and the cultural and general courses of common administrative jobs are designed and compiled by the "Management & Planning Organization" (Ministry of Education, 2015). The content of the general courses of in-service programs includes topics such as information and communication technology, moral and ideological issues, executive and administrative skills, while the specialized content includes topics such as improving management skills, managing the teaching & learning process, behavior & relationships in school based on transformational plan documents (Yazdani, 2018). The implementation of development programs is based on the ISO10015 standard and three types of support before training, during training and after training

are necessary in the executive management process (Governmental Management Training Center, 2013). The emphasized approach in the implementation of courses is face-to-face training approach(with priority to active training methods) and training based on information and communication technology - such as virtual training, training through social networks, mobile training, web training, e-learning, internet protocol television , etc. Training courses should be held as much as possible at the level of districts, regions, provinces and polar-regionally. Implementation of training courses in human resources training centers, *Farhangian University* (Teachers University) and provincial campuses of this university is a priority (Ministry of Education, 2015).

To evaluate the professional development programs, the organizational training evaluation criteria of the educational system of the government employees are taken into consideration. These criteria are: learning transfer (supporting management and creating motivation in learners to transfer and apply their learning in the work environment), educational evaluation (evaluation to determine the reaction and learning of learners; effect of education on individual performance and effectiveness in the realization of organizational goals), quantitative evaluation of education (the amount of investment in education per capita) and monitoring and improvement of the education process (supervision of executives, teachers, rules and regulations, and educational resources & facilities). In Ministry of education, the evaluation of the implementation of educational courses (including learners, instructors, executive management, effectiveness of educational programs, etc.) is the responsibility of the "Center for Human Resources Planning & Administrative Affairs" of the Ministry of Education. The education and training departments of the provinces are obliged to evaluate the quality of planning and implementation of training courses on a continuous and program-oriented basis by forming and activating specialized work groups. Also, in the final exam of the training courses, the criterion of success is to obtain at least 60% of the total score of the exam (Ministry of Education, 2015).

England

In England, the Ministry of Education determines the policies for the provision of education at the national level. At the regional level, educational institutions have a governing body in which all stakeholders are represented. In general, the England education system shows a decentralized structure. The central government, local authorities, churches and other voluntary organizations, boards of directors of educational institutions and educational staff have joint responsibilities in various fields (Akin 2012). To get a school management position, it is necessary to be a teacher and have a master or doctorate degree. Valid certificates are also accepted by the government. In

addition, experience and competence for management are among the desired conditions. The NPQH program is applied to acquire the professional skills of school management candidates. Using this program, a practical and professional training - based on school improvement- is targeted for teachers who want to become principals (Turabik, et al, 2014).

The recruitment and selection of school principals is determined by a council composed of related groups (administrators, teachers, parents' representatives, student representatives, local government representatives). Next, applications for appointment are sent to local authorities. The performance of the candidates - in terms of teaching and management- is observed during one session. Also, several other activities (including working with an experienced manager and participating in school development projects) are also carried out during the training period (Balc, Basri, Ilgan, &Erden, 2013). In addition, methods such as interviews with applicants, psychological tests and parents' opinions are also used. The successful candidate at the end of the process will be appointed as the principal of the school. For the selected manager, a budget is allocated to be spent in the next two years for training such as research courses, coaching or consulting in line with her/his professional development (Turabik et al. 2014).

In England, the needs assessment of professional development programs is prepared with the opinion of teachers, experienced and successful school administrators, professional associations, local education authorities and universities, and some stakeholders - such as mentors and experts of the in-service training unit - (Balls et al., 2013). Also, as one of the sources of needs assessment, school boards evaluate the professional development needs of school principals and the necessary action to meet these needs (England Department of Education, 2020a).Other sources of needs assessment are the results of the annual performance evaluation and the professional standards of school principals, which are considered as guidelines, and are as: school culture, teaching, curriculum and assessment, behavior, Additional and special educational needs and disabilities, Professional development, organizational management, Continuous school improvement, Working in partnership and Governance and accountability (Department of Education, 2020b).

The design of development programs as part of the "National Professional Qualification for Headship" (NPQH), prepare for managers in accordance with the content assessment framework and determine all knowledge and skills related to content areas. For each NPQH, there are six content are as: strategy & development, teaching & curriculum excellence, effective leadership, collaborative working, resource & risk management, and capacity building. In addition to these areas, there are seven leadership behaviors common to each NPQH level. These behaviors are:

commitment, collaboration, personal drive, resilience, awareness, integrity, and respect (England Department of Education, 2019a).

NPQH programs provide robust methods for professional design and development, based on evidence and expert guidance - already established in the Early Career Framework and Initial Teacher Training content. These programs also reflect standards and practical guidance on the skills of school teachers and leaders (Department for Education, 2020c). The providers of these programs believe that there is a wide range of different types of training - such as face-to-face, peer-to-peer, online, individual and work-based training. Preparing the necessary preparations for these trainings includes the following: On-the-job leadership training, challenge and support through a coach or mentor, access to high-quality resources, access to up-to-date research and evidence, professional development from credible peers, and provision of opportunities for structured reflection (Department for Education, 2017).

The implementation of professional development programs is the responsibility of professional organizations in England - such as the "Teachers' Professional Development Association". Also, the use of contemporary management and leadership applications - which includes various methods and techniques - is emphasized. School management candidates are observed conducting or managing a meeting. In addition, several other activities - such as working under an experienced manager, brainstorming session, participating in school development projects - are also carried out during the course. Many stakeholders (educators, academics, experienced managers, inspectors and managers of different fields) may participate in the educational activities of school principals (Balc, et al, 2013).

The evaluation of principals' professional development programs is such that the participants of NPQH courses are committed to two important tasks. They should be placed in their school for task number 1 and in placement school for task number 2. In Assignment #1, participants must lead a school-wide change program lasting at least two academic semesters, addressing the content areas of strategy & development, teaching & curriculum excellence, effective leadership, and collaborative working to lead to the progress of the school and improve the students' performance. They should also submit a written project report to their superiors for evaluation. This report should cover the design, implementation and evaluation of the program. In assignment number 2, the participants should design an action plan to meet the resource needs and capabilities of the alternative school, considering the content areas of resource and risk management and increasing capabilities and capabilities. They also undertake to settle in this alternative school (according to criteria such as performance, student characteristics, geographical location, etc.) for at least 9 days. They should

research the challenges of the school's current or anticipated resources and capabilities and design an action plan to solve these challenges and present it to the school's board of directors (Department for Education, 2019a). Therefore, evaluation is a supportive process that is used to determine decisions and inform the continuous professional development of managers. Performance and professional development priorities are reviewed and addressed regularly throughout the year at ad hoc meetings (once per term) (Department for Education, 2019b).

c) Juxtaposition

According to the description and interpretation stages, in this section the data are put together and compared at the same time. According to the goals of the research, the available data can be explained as follows:

The first issue is related to the main actors of professional development programs. In both countries, the dominance of the centralization approach is evident in professional development programs and the Ministry of Education and subordinate organizations are the main implementers. However, in England, for the two processes of implementation and evaluation, the agency of the school principals is also worthy of attention and has a relatively equal share with the organizational agency.

Another issue refers to the sub-components of the four processes (other than the agency component). For example, the source of needs assessment in Iran is mostly classical and taken from the educational information bank and approved educational courses; but in England, effective and experienced school managers and universities & professional associations also play a role in determining the professional development needs of school principals. Designing professional development in each country - regardless of some minor and formal differences - relies on organizational and job analysis. Designing content in both general and specialized ways is common in both countries. However, the design of the methods considered for implementation in Iran - due to the extreme centralism - is mostly intended as classroom and workshop activities and generally in a group manner; but in England, along with the preparation of group programs, the design of individual development programs is also considered.

Another important issue is related to the views governing the evaluation process of the professional development of the managers of the two countries. In Iran, the theoretical foundations and the test and grade system are the undisputed point of view in evaluation which is most likely related to the structure of Iran's centralized educational system, while in England, practice and

managerial work - in the form of work projects related to school subjects, challenges and issues-has the first position in the evaluation process. Given that the main goal of professional development programs is to pay attention to the new roles of school principals - changing from the role of supervisor and administrative affairs to roles such as effective, learning, decision-making and collaborative leadership -, it seems that the English education system has worked more successfully. Table 2 shows the juxtaposition of different components related to the professional development programs of school principals in Iran and England.

Table 2.Juxtaposition of different components of professional development of school principals in Iran and England

Process	Component	Iran	England
Needs assessment	Agency	Organizational	Organizational
	Source of needs assessment	- Occupational and professional standards -educational information bank -approved educational courses by the LTMS database	-Occupational-professional standards - Effective and experienced principals - Universities and professional associations - performance evaluation
Design	Agency	Organizational	Organizational
	Approaches	Organizational and job analysis	Organizational and job analysis
	content	General-specialized	General-specialized
	Method	Group	Group-individual
Implement ation	Agency	Organizational	Individual-organizational
	Methods	Group (class activities, workshops , and educational meeting	- Individual (observing principal work activity, internship, and self-development activities) - Group (workshop, workshop meeting - school development project)
Evaluation	Agency	Organizational	Individual-organizational
	Approach	Theoretical (Kirkpatrick's approach)	Practical (leadership of the change program at their own school, design of the program to solve the challenges of the Placement school)

According to Table 2, a more accurate picture of the professional development processes of school principals in the two selected countries can be presented. These data showed that out of ten components related to professional development processes, there are similarities between the two countries in only four components and obvious differences exist in other components (Table 3).

Table 3: Comparison of different components of professional development of school principals in Iran and England

Process	component	Iran	England
Needs assessment	Agency	*	*
	Source of needs assessment	✓	×
Design	Agency	*	*
	Approaches	*	*
	content	*	*
	Method	✓	×
Implementation	Agency	✓	×
	Methods	✓	×
evaluation	Agency	✓	×
	Approach	✓	×

The data in Table 3 shows that there are similarities between the two countries in four components (agency in the two processes of needs assessment and design, approaches and content in the design process). This table also shows that there are deep differences between Iran and England in several other components - regardless of some very minor similarities. These differences are:

❖ Attention to the opinions of experienced managers, professional associations, universities and the results of performance evaluation of principals as a source of needs assessment in England.

❖ Attention to educational information bank& approved educational courses by the LTMS database as a source of needs assessment in Iran

❖ Emphasis on ministerial plans and programs, including planning plan and school management excellence plan and group approach in designing programs in Iran.

❖ Emphasis on work-based methods & mentoring and consulting methods ; especially individual methods in designing programs in England

❖ Unity of organizational officials as executive agents in all processes of professional development of principals in Iran

❖ Lack of attention to individual-based programs such as internships and self-development activities in the implementation of the professional development activities of school principals in Iran.

❖ Governance of fundamentals and theoretical approaches.

❖ Attention to practical activities and projects in evaluating the professional development of principals in England

4. Conclusion

The present study was conducted to determine the actions and activities of professional development of school principals in Iran and England. The research literature showed that few comparative studies have been conducted on the professional development of school principals in selected countries. The findings of the research showed that there are similarities between the two countries of Iran and England in four of the ten components of the professional development processes of school principals. The Ministry of Education has a central role in formulating policies and programs related to the professional development of school principals, and along with some organizations, it is the main factor in the process of assessing needs and designing development programs. The approaches to designing the programs in the selected countries are based on organization and job analysis, and the content of the programs in both countries - regardless of very minor differences - is designed in a general and specialized way.

Other important finding of the research is determining some differences in the professional development system of Iran and England school principals. The first difference is related to needs assessment resources of professional development measures of school principals between the two countries. Regardless of attention to occupational and professional standards in both countries, it can be said that the needs assessment in Iran is based on the requirements and compliance with the priorities of the development needs of the organization and employees. In England, a deeper professional view prevails, and the opinions of managers with experience in schools, faculty members of universities, professional associations and the results of annual performance evaluations of managers also play a role in formulating needs assessments.

Another difference between the two educational systems is in the "design" of the professional development activities of school principals, so that in Iran, more attention is paid to the plans and programs of the Ministry of Education in a group way, while in England, in addition to the group method, the individual design method - such as Work-based and mentor or advisor support is also emphasized.

Other difference is that in the process of implementing professional development programs for school principals in Iran, only organizational agency (Ministry of Education and Governmental Management Training Center) are considered important, but in England, in addition to organizational agency to individual agency and the implementation of individual-based programs has also received a lot of attention.

Another difference between the two countries is that in the process of evaluating the professional development of Iranian school principals, only organizational factors (Ministry of Education and Public Management Training Center) are considered important; while in England, organizational agency is weak and individual agency is more prominent. In addition, the evaluation approach in Iran mainly has a theoretical basis, while in England; the evaluation process is done in a practical way. School principals should carry out two executive - transformation programs in their school and the Placement school.

In general, it can be said that the professional development processes of school principals in Iran are mostly based on theoretical issues and rely to a very small extent on the experience and performance of principals, and school principals do not have a major influence on the development processes. In other words, organizational agency is very effectively involved in the four processes. While in England, in addition to the theoretical method, the professional development processes of school managers have more practical and practical aspects and monitor the competencies and activities before entering the school management position. Also, the activities with the in-service approach are more complementary to the measures based on the development of competences, and in addition to organizational agency, individual school managers are beneficial and influential in the four processes. These findings are in line with the research results of Mohammadi, Sadat Fadavi and Farhadi (2017).

The findings of this research are in line with the research of Supovitz (2015) and Aravena (2016). In general, it can be said that the professional development processes of school principals in Iran are mostly based on theoretical issues and rely to a very small extent on the experience and performance of principals. In other words, organizational agency is effectively involved in the four processes. While in England, the professional development processes of school managers have more practical aspects and monitor the competencies and activities before entering the school management position. Also, the activities with the in-service approach are more complementary to the measures based on the development of competences, and in addition to organizational agency, individual school managers are beneficial and influential. These findings are in line with the research results of Mohammadi, Sadat Fadavi & Farhadi (2017). According to the findings of the

research, the following optimal measures are suggested to the planners of the educational management system of Iran:

- Designing, compiling and politicizing the national program of professional development of school principals.
- Establishing and setting up centers for the development of professional qualifications of school administrators.
- Decentralization of professional development programs for school administrators and delegation of more powers to provinces and regions.
- Strengthening the performance evaluation system of school principals.
- Developing constructive and comprehensive communication with universities and other scientific centers to use their experiences
- Using the experiences of top school managers in policy making, designing and compiling professional development programs.
- Using international monitoring and consulting organizations in professional development programs for school principals.
- Strengthening the attitude and use of practical and applied approaches in the basics, content and implementation methods of professional development programs.

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