

**The Effect of Reflective Leadership on School Effectiveness with mediating of Tendency to Lifelong Learning and Teacher's Academic Optimism**

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of reflective leadership on school effectiveness with mediating of tendency to lifelong learning and teacher's academic optimism. The research method is descriptive-correlation. The statistical population of the study was all teachers in Nookabad city (Sistan and Baluchestan province) in the academic year 2021-2022 (N=307). By stratified-stratified sampling of 171 teachers through questionnaires of reflective leadership, school effectiveness, lifelong learning and teacher's academic optimism were studied. Structural equation modeling was used to analyze the data. The results showed that the direct effect of reflective leadership on school effectiveness is positive and significant. Also, the indirect effect of reflective leadership on school effectiveness through mediation of lifelong learning and teacher's academic optimism is positive and significant. Therefore, school principals who design school programs based on thinking, encourage teachers to participate in In-service training courses, personal studies and exchange experiences with other colleagues, and believe that teachers are influential in the success and learning of students, they can improve the schools effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Reflective Leadership, School Effectiveness, Lifelong Learning, Academic Optimism.

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## **Introduction**

In Iran, despite the many efforts made to increase the effectiveness of schools, the poor performance of schools in this field is still criticized; therefore, educational policy makers should respond to criticisms about the effectiveness of their educational systems. The findings of Thames international studies on the quality of Iran's education show that the status and performance of Iranian students in all Thames courses has always been lower than the international average performance, which is somewhat worrying considering the expectations of Iran's vision document in 1404 (Yousefi et al., 2021). In the meantime, the rate of educational attrition in peripheral areas far from the center, such as Sistan and Baluchestan province, which have a low level of development, is usually reported to be higher due to the lack of access and educational equality compared to other areas, and these issues are in synergy with and they create a vicious circle. In this regard, according to the 2019 report of the Ministry of Cooperation, Labor and Social Welfare, Sistan and Baluchestan province, although it has been the focus of development programs for the past decades; But it still suffers from poverty and deprivation and from the point of view of various development indicators, it is often in the worst condition among the provinces of the country. The educational situation is not favorable due to the lack of development of this province, and this province is in the field of lack of educational space, low grade point average of students, children left out of school, shortage of teaching staff, repetition rate in elementary school and early school dropout. Students rank first in the country (Hosseinbor & Balochzahi, 2021), all of which can reduce the effectiveness of schools. The researcher, as an educational leader, who is working in the city of Nouk Abad (Sistan and Baluchestan province), has encountered the phenomena of drop in grades, repetition of grades, early dropout and low grades of students in schools, all of which indicate the poor performance of schools. And their effectiveness is low; Therefore, this study is important because by studying the relationships between the variables of reflective leadership, academic optimism and desire for lifelong learning among teachers, an important step can be taken to increase the effectiveness of the school; Therefore, the main issue of the current study is whether reflective leadership has a positive and significant effect on the effectiveness of schools with mediating roles of desire for lifelong learning and academic optimism of teachers.

## **Methodology**

The research method is descriptive-correlation. The statistical population of the study was all teachers in Nookabad city (Sistan and Baluchestan province) in the academic year 2021-2022 (N=307). By stratified-stratified sampling of 171 teachers through questionnaires of reflective

leadership, school effectiveness, lifelong learning and teacher's academic optimism were studied. Structural equation modeling was used to analyze the data.

## Results

The first result: reflective leadership has a positive and significant effect on the effectiveness of the teacher's school. Based on the findings, the  $\beta$  coefficient of reflective leadership on the effectiveness of the teacher's school is 0.434. Considering that the obtained t value is equal to 4.30 and is greater than the standard value of 2.58, the research hypothesis is confirmed.

The second result: reflective leadership has a positive and significant effect on the effectiveness of the teacher's school through the mediation of academic optimism. To check this hypothesis, Sobel's test was used, according to the values of indicators: a) the value of the path coefficient of the independent variable on the mediator variable  $a = 0.509$ , b) the value of the path coefficient of the mediator variable on the dependent variable  $b = 0.221$ , c) the standard error independent and mediating variable path  $Sa=0.035$ , d) standard error of mediating and dependent variable path  $Sb=0.055$ , the obtained Z value was equal to 3.87. Since this Z value was greater than the value of 2.58, the indirect effect of reflective leadership on the effectiveness of the teacher's school with the mediation of academic optimism ( $\beta=0.112$ ) is significant.

The third result: reflective leadership has a positive and significant effect on the effectiveness of the teacher's school by mediating lifelong learning. Sobel test was used to check this hypothesis. which according to the value of indicators a) value of path coefficient of independent variable on mediating variable  $a= 0.347$ , b) value of path coefficient of mediating variable on dependent variable  $b= 0.272$ , c) standard error of the path of independent and mediating variable  $Sa= 0.041$ , d) The standard error of the mediator and dependent variable path was  $Sb=0.051$ , the obtained Z value was equal to 4.51. Since this value of Z was greater than the value of 2.58; Therefore, the indirect effect of reflective leadership on the effectiveness of the teacher's school with the mediation of lifelong learning ( $\beta=0.100$ ) is significant.

## Discussion and conclusion

The findings of this study showed that reflective leadership has a positive and significant effect on school effectiveness by mediating the desire for lifelong learning and academic optimism of teachers. The finding is consistent with the results of the studies of Amjadzabardast et al. (2015), Bush & Grotjohann (2020), Hendawy Al-Mahdy et al. (2018). Therefore, it is suggested to the top managers of the education and training organization that in selecting the candidates for the school management position, one of the selection indicators

is the skill and competence of the person in thinking. It is also suggested to the top managers of the Education and Research Organization to hold a training workshop on reflective leadership style and how to use it for school managers; It is also suggested to school administrators to design school programs based on learning to think and not on teaching ideas, and to focus on plans and methods that teach teachers how to learn through intellectual discipline instead of learning. School administrators should organize meetings in such a way. to involve teachers in the problem instead of storing scientific facts, to encourage teachers to pay attention to the method of acquiring scientific facts instead of just acquiring scientific facts, and to learn how to personally think instead of accumulating scientific facts in the mind make decisions and make judgments about various school matters and achieve self-regulation, managers should not be alone in the meetings and use the methods of discussions and debates; Because these methods strengthen thinking skills in teachers. In order to strengthen the academic optimism of teachers, it is suggested that school administrators lead teachers to believe that they can be effective in the success and learning of students. In order to promote teachers' desire for lifelong learning, school administrators should encourage teachers to participate in in-service training classes, personal studies, and exchange experiences with other colleagues. This research has limitations. Since this study was conducted on elementary school teachers in Nook Abad city (Sistan and Baluchestan province); Be careful in generalizing the results to other teachers; Therefore, it is suggested to conduct such a study on the teachers of other cities; Also, since the research method was quantitative, it is suggested to other researchers to conduct such studies in a qualitative or mixed method.

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