Educational needs assessment of Mashad University of Medical Sciences' managers in management and leadership

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ABSTRACT

Background: *The first step in human resource development is educational need assessment. A sound knowledge of managerial roles and skills is vital for a successful management in the educational system.*

Purpose: *To determine the educational needs of managers and directors of Mashad Medical University in filed of educational management and leadership.*

Method: *A survey of a 40-person sample of the university managers including deans and vice deans for education of the faculties and the heads of educational groups the data were analyzed with SPSS.*

Results: *The mean age of the sample was 47.2($\pm$7.5) and the mean duration of serving in managerial positions were 5.4($\pm$3.6).The most needed items to be taught were identified as strategic planning in management, setting educational goals, deciding whether the ability to be a manager is inborn or must be acquired, main problems in educational planning and surveillance techniques, educational guidance, system analysis and educational evaluation. Characteristics of educational advisors were also of great importance.*

Conclusion: *Our study showed that educational managers were aware of their need for further development of a sound basis of managerial knowledge.*

Key words: *Need assessment, educational needs, educational managers.*

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Introduction

Managers' knowledge of the basic principles of management is vital for the betterment of education. Considering the complexity of the educational system, those management styles should be adopted that help in meeting the requirements of this system (1,2). Knowing about managers' roles such as problem solving, interpersonal communication, motivating the staff, gathering information and decision making as well as attaining relevant skills such as cognitive and technical skills in part of managers are of great importance for successful management of educational system(3).

It is clear that managers must spend their time doing their main job as a doctor or a teacher along with being a manager.

Human Resource Development (HRD) as a means to develop quality human resources and a way to constructive adaptation to change which are considered two major competitive advantages for any organization is of vital significance. It is clear that it needs to be carefully planned (4,5,6,).

The first step in educational planning is finding out the educational needs and also to set priority.

If this is done correctly, the educational development will be easier to implement (7,8,9).

Education would be effective, only if it is planned and implemented to respond to a certain need and to reach a specific goal. Implementing the plan shows its effectiveness and is, therefore, very important(6).

Our study is an effort to assess educational needs of educational managers in field of management and leadership.

Materials & Methods

In this survey we identify the managers' expressed and perceived needs regarding the managerial issues. Using resources in the library and on the web, we developed a questionnaire with 56 managerial concepts under 8 main topics. The 8 topics were: Principles of management, management and educational leadership, skills and abilities of managers and educational leaders, main activities in educational management, educational guidance, motivating staff, system analysis and educational evaluation. The population of the study consisted of 40 university managers, deans, educational vice deans and heads of educational groups. In order to be sure about the reliability of questionnaire, a pilot study was undertaken and to assure its validity a number of experts reviewed the questionnaire.

The managers were personally visited by the researcher and asked to fill the questionnaires. If asked for, needed explanations were given to them. The gathered data was given to the computer and was analysed by SPSS version11.

Findings

There were 40 managers in this study, 77.8% male and 22.2% female. The other characteristics are listed in table1.

TABLE1. Demographic features of participants

Features	Mean	SD	Mode	Min (years)	Max (years)
Age	47.17	7.5	39	32	65
Years in managerial position	5.40	3.61	3	0.5	16

According to figure 1, planning and strategic planning are considered the most needed and principle of management and theories of management are considered the least important by the respondents. However, the topic itself considered to be important by the managers.

Figure 2 shows that under educational management and leadership topics deciding on goals of educational institutions are considered the most important, while the necessity and importance of educational management and its difference with educational leadership were regarded least important. All the items were included as mangers educational needs.

Figure 3 indicates that the first priority in skills and abilities of managers and educational leaders is both deciding whether the ability to be a

manager is inborn or must be acquired and also in general abilities and skills in management and leadership.

In essential responsibilities of educational management, as shown in figure 4, educational planning and surveillance techniques are recognized a the most important. The least, however, is related to their education they received before starting their job. No items is excluded from the needs.

Figure 5 shows that the respondents consider motivation in higher education a more important topic than the concept of motivation in general.

Figure 6 shows that the characteristic of the guiding faculty members was the most important in educational guidance, while studying and analysing his/her behaviours was not so important. Again, all the items were included in the list of the needs.

Figure 7 shows that Management Information System (MIS) is of great importance in systemic analysis in management, while network analysis' techniques were considered the least important. All the items were needed from the point of view of the managers.

Figure 8 indicates that rules and methods of evaluation are the most important issues in educational evaluation, while evaluation principle and methods were the least important.

Discussion

This study shows that managers consider the goals of educational institutions, rules and techniques of evaluation, educational planning, supervision and surveillance as their educational priority while leadership ability, management theories and network analysis techniques are of less importance to them. However no item was excluded from the list of educational needs by the managers.

Studying the gathered information shows that none of the managers have studied to be manager, but have some other specialties. The need for a programme targeting improvement of the educational manager's knowledge is therefore evident. Establishing the true educational needs is a pre requisite of any educational program with predetermined outcomes.

Another advantage of identification of these outcomes as Kaufman (10) said is that identification of educational needs of an occupation help to emphasize the missions and goals and objectives in routine activities and consequently leads to the improvement of the services provided.
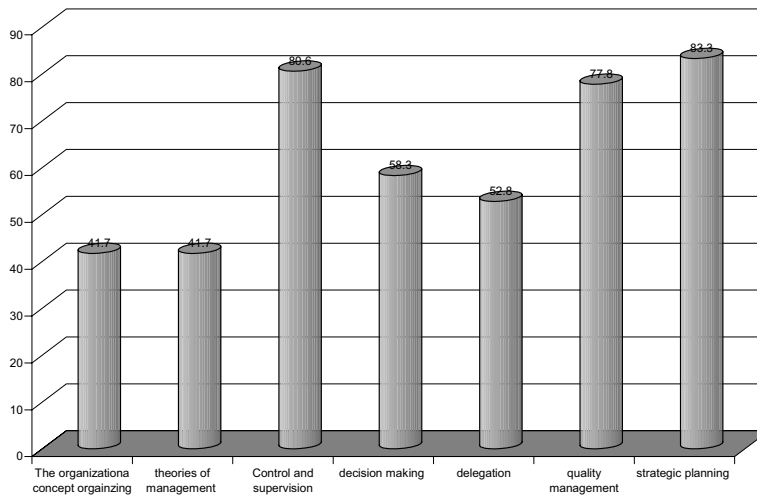
FIGURE 1. Managers' educational need in general

FIGURE 2. Managers' educational need in educational management and leardership
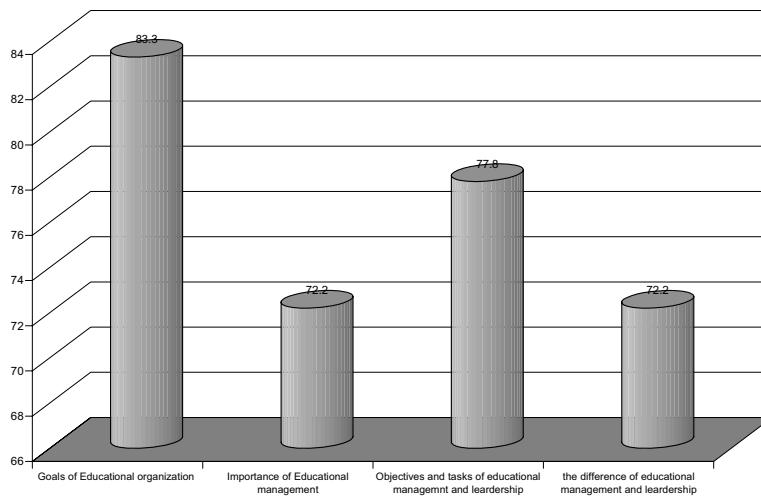

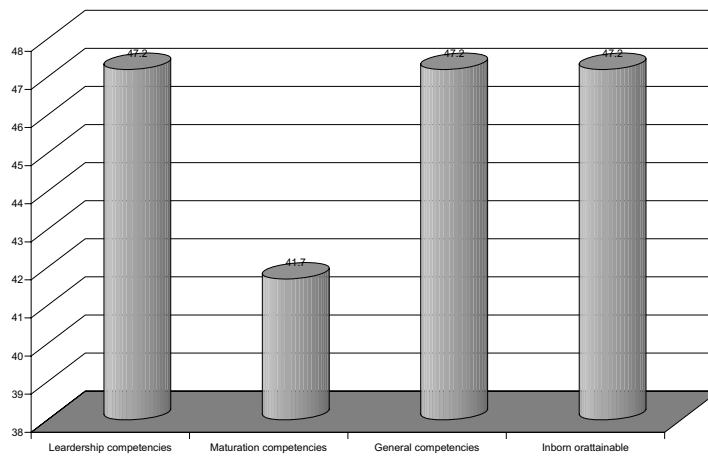**FIGURE 3.** Managers' educational needs in competency and specification of educational management and leardership

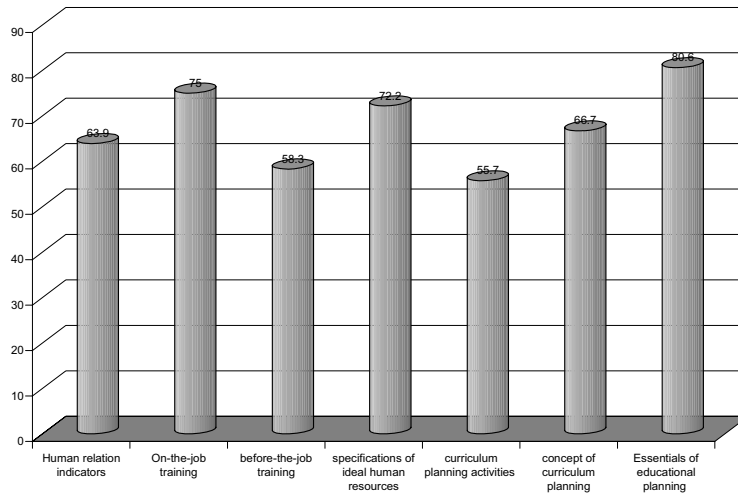**FIGURE 4.** Managers' educational needs in area of essential tasks of educational

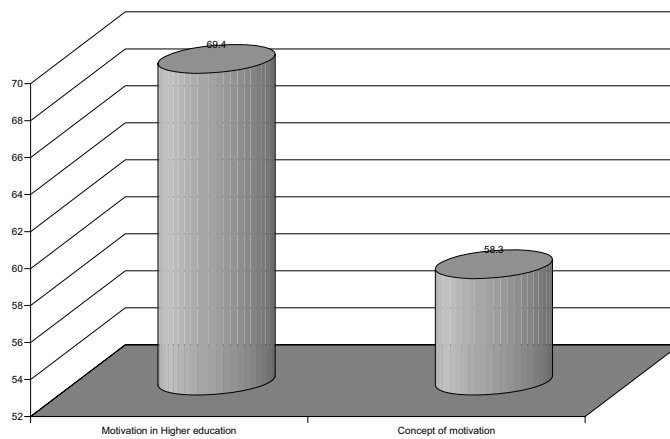**FIGURE 5.** Managers' educational needs in area of motivation

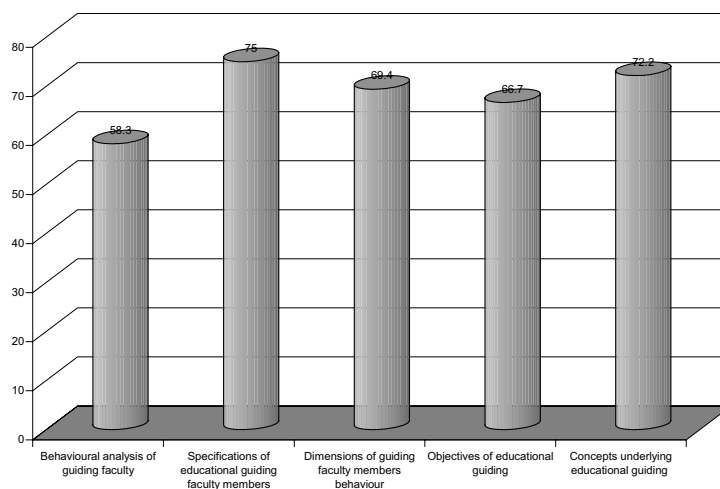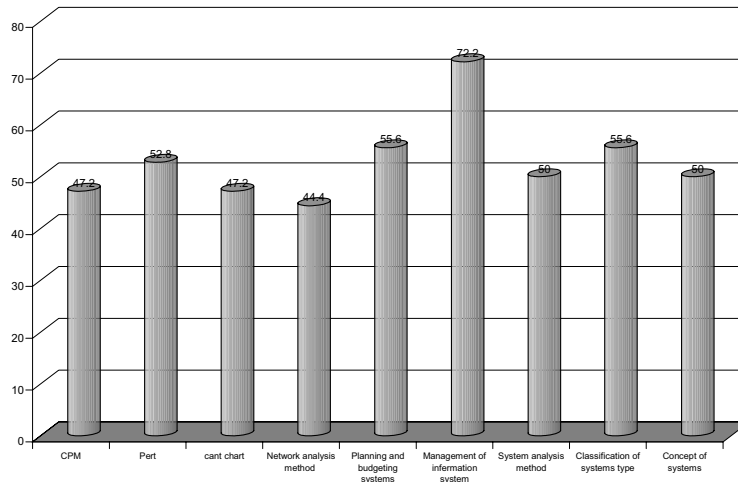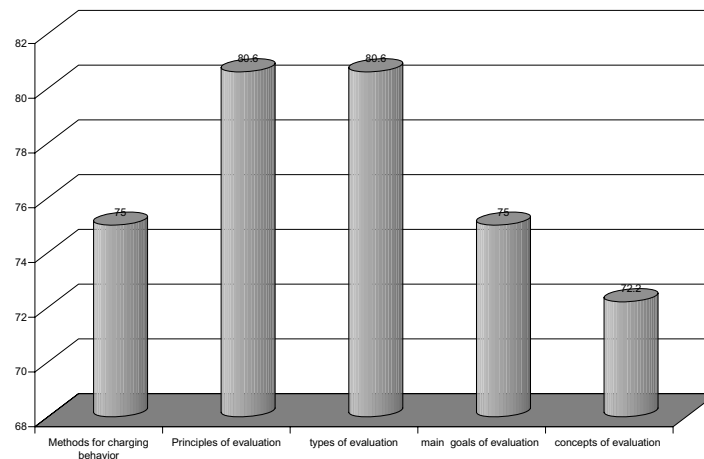**FIGURE 6.** Managers' educational need in educational guidance

FIGURE 7. Managers educational needs in system analysis

FIGURE 8. Managers' educational needs in area of educational evaluation

This study identified the needs and their priorities of managerial education from the managers' point of view. It seems that a reasonable next step is to confirm the list of needs and their priorities through other approaches such as task analysis which can be the subject of further studies.

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