

## Research Article

# Competency Model of Educational Leaders in the university

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### Abstract

Today, educational leadership is one of the necessities of the country's universities. The goal is to design an educational leadership model for the university. The present study was conducted to provide a model of educational leadership for universities and qualitatively in the form of content analysis. The participants in the interview are 12 members of the board of trustees of the Azad universities in Iran. They were also the president of the university at the time of the research. These people are the policymakers of the education system of the Azad university. The sampling method in this research is snowball. We use the semi-structured interview and the theme network method. The validity and reliability of the study were evaluated and confirmed using the method of Goba and Lincoln (1985). In this study, we extracted 107 basic themes, including Twenty organizer themes. By reviewing and analyzing related themes, eight comprehensive themes called Constructive themes, included individual characteristics, psychological skills, professional skills, charismatic traits, intuitive features, managerial features, social skills, and environmental skills, have been extracted.

**Keywords:** *Leadership Skills, Key Skills, Leadership, Educational management*

### Introduction

Recently, managers' interest in educational leadership has increased because of the transformation of university leadership in the face of global challenges (Black, 2015).

Browsing any university's website based on a global approach shows that a large and complex organization needs significant leadership. Leadership affects everything in an organization. There are even opinions stating that leadership is a mirror to the organization it leads. In determining the success or failure of an organization, leadership is also one of the critical factors. (Bin Abdullah, 2021).

The management and leadership of the university are more critical than other organizations. Qualitative changes of the university management system lead to educational planning (quantitative and qualitative characteristics of applicants, improving the quality of teaching, competition of university programs, etc.) (Gevorkian, et al., 2020). Universities are places where students' career prospects are portrayed according to their goals. (Peña-Ayala & Villegas-Berumen, 2020). Universities can be described by indicators such as a global perspective, geographical dispersion, cultural factors, international reputation, national index and the amount of research globally. (Liu, et al., 2020). Among these, educational leadership is one of the most complex and sensitive types of leadership in government organizations. Educational leadership has serious responsibilities at the academic and social levels. The primary duties mentioned are accomplished by playing two roles of supervision and leadership. Managers need a tool called leadership in the face of new challenges. Effective leadership is essential for the success of education systems. Successful

universities have successful leaders. (Bush, 2008). The problem is that managerial roles are not enough to meet these challenges. (Hersey et al., 2007). In other words, educational mismanagement is the source of many shortcomings in educational systems. (Shahrabi Farahani et al., 2020). Also, the transfer of leadership concepts as a framework of tasks and functions of university management has been almost ignored (Davis, et al., 2009).

The lack of leadership in educational settings has reduced academic achievement. One of the essential measures is that leaders should be completely away from daily and tedious tasks and always ensure the future of the education system and the country through planning, policy-making, and planning. Unfortunately, in the education system, staffing and queuing are not separate and methodical, and there is overlap in the formulation of priorities, strategies, plans, and programs (Trope et al., 2011). Undoubtedly, the country's universities will not improve their performance and fulfill their increasing responsibilities without effective and successful educational leadership. (Wilkey, 2013). Practical evaluation of development programs requires a description of the competencies of educational leaders (Barnard, et al., 2020). Another problem is that many university leaders spend most of their time on organizational operations, logistics, discipline, and physical space rather than anticipating the future and drawing the ideal for the university. (Camborn et al., 2010).

The current affairs of the educational organization's managers have made it impossible to draw a vision for the future. Therefore, they cannot mobilize organizational resources to gain a clear understanding of improving the state of education (Archbald, 2013). One of the aspects of the necessity of conducting this research is the lack of research on the competency model of educational

leaders in universities in the country. Despite the growing importance of educational leadership and its role in the university's development, that has not been studied. It has been paid to the general concept of leadership. In other words, research has shown that there is little information about the duties of world university presidents. Research on university leadership has been conducted from different perspectives such as internal governance, organizational culture and gender (Coate, et al., 2018; Huang, 2017). Some research has also examined presidents' views on universities (Bosetti & Walker 2010). However, very little scientific research has been done to reveal the characteristics and work of the presidents of world universities. (Shattock, 2013) (Huang, 2017; Sirat, et al., 2012). It should be noted that the characteristics of university educational leaders in developing countries are precious because of future environmental developments, which highlights the novelty of the article. Also, examining some variables of the university education system can provide a suitable framework for future university education policymakers or leaders.

## Literature Review

New leadership approaches have been known since the early 1981s (House & Aditya, 1997). Higher or university education leadership is attributed to the performance of different leadership or decision-making aspects, including setting directions, missions, visions, and goals for the future (Yielder & Codling, 2004). The five common concepts of academic leadership include being responsible, directing others, influencing results, commanding subordinates, and isolating oneself from others. (Gordon, 2002). Filan and Seagren (2004) also described the essential components of educational leadership as self-awareness, self-management, recognizing and understanding transformational leadership, establishing and maintaining relationships, leading teams, leading change in the university's strategic plans, and building communication networks. (Filan & Seagren, 2004). A leader's good behaviors in higher education include focusing, influencing others, leading to progress, personal awareness, performance improvement, building relationships, fostering teamwork, developing others, and empowering others. They also provide a shared culture, support, and the opportunity to share knowledge between colleagues. (Scott et al., 2008). Leadership is clearly about more than a set of functions that any educated individual can be trained to perform. However, the idea that people can become better leaders by acquiring new skills is not rejected. People's previous academic achievements are not enough to lead. A leader needs attitudes and skills related to their academic task (Macfarlane, 2013). The focus of research is on university education leadership (Middlehurst, 2008). The educational leader is the president of the college or university. Educational leadership may not involve active participation in the day-to-day affairs of the organization (Marturano & Gosling, 2007). Research has been done on the skills of leaders. Seven basic and teachable skills for future leaders of the organization are (1) problem solving, (2) tolerance of ambiguity, (3) Overcome failure, (4) empathy, (5) creativity with limited resources, (6) response to Critical feedback and (7) teamwork approach.) Peschl, et al., 2020). According to Hershey Balnchard and Johnson (2006), successful organizations have essential characteristics that distinguish them from unsuccessful ones. The mentioned characteristics are related to dynamic and effective leadership. Therefore, organizations are constantly looking for effective leadership because many failures of organizations, companies, and even research projects have been due to poor leadership. (Herbst, 2003). In addition to training human resources

for economic development and social change, university leaders can instill helpful beliefs and values in students. They can also build self-confidence, strengthen national identity, and encourage creative work in society, leading to growth and development, competition, and change in society. (Ho, et al., 2015). Educational leadership is a logical and scientific concept to solve academic problems. The task of educational leaders is to set goals and manage the means to achieve them. (Azeiteiro, et al., 2015).

The empirical background of the research can also be stated. Aljbour (2021) examines the educational needs of educational leaders in Jordanian private universities. The results showed that there are administrative, technical, and social educational needs for educational leaders. There are also IT-related training needs for educational leaders at Jordanian private universities.

Day and Summons (2016) conducted two types of transformational leadership and educational leadership. Successful leadership models include improving education, curriculum redesign, corporate reorganization, role redesign, building relationships within the organization, promoting education, and building relationships outside the organization. Bateh & Heyliger (2016) examined the leadership style in the state university system. The results showed that faculty members who have chosen transformational leadership have higher job satisfaction than other leadership styles. McFarlane (2011) examined the impact of distance education leadership on the quality of educational institutions according to Maniz Berg's theory. He concluded that young faculty members are less resilient in the change program. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (2014) has presented an educational leadership model. The model shown in four areas included cultural-strategic dimensions, systems, learning, and professional. Tang (2009) examines the pattern of educational leadership of university faculty members. The leadership components of education include: Conveying ideas for a better life, Gaining credibility, Facilitating learning associations, Overcoming obstacles, Turning ideas into action, Cultivating a culture of success. Bush (2013) examines educational leadership in South Africa. The results showed that the main components of effective academic leadership included monitoring, evaluation, observation, and modeling. Abdullah & Kassim (2011) examined educational leadership and attitudes toward organizational change. The results show a positive and significant relationship between the components of managers' educational leadership and attitudes toward change. Waters & Cameron (2012) provided an educational leadership framework through the relationship between vision and action. The study was conducted at the Intercontinental Research and Teaching Institute in Colorado. In the model provided for educational leadership, the responsibilities of educational leaders within the organizational structure are discussed. Therefore, by examining the research background and the operational gap regarding the research conducted and the lack of a coherent model regarding the competence of university educational leaders, this research aims to develop a competency model for educational leaders in universities. Therefore, this research aims to identify the characteristics of university education leadership. Given the above, the following questions arise:

- 1) What are the dimensions and components of educational leadership in universities?
- 2) What is the ranking of the dimensions of educational leadership in universities?

## Methods

The research has been done qualitatively and with the method of content analysis. Content analysis is a method of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns in qualitative data. The thematic analysis method analyzes textual data and converts scattered and diverse data into rich and detailed data. (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The Theme Network is a convenient method of theme analysis developed by Attride Stirling. Based on a specific process, the network of themes extracts the lowest level of the theorems of the phenomenon from the text, which is called the primary themes. Then, by categorizing the basic themes and summarizing them into more abstract principles, the organizing themes are created. The overarching themes are included in primary metaphors and become the themes that govern the whole text in the next step. The themes are shown in web maps, and prominent themes of each of these three levels, along with their relationships. Thematic networks are represented graphically to eliminate the idea of any hierarchy among them.) Attride Stirling, 2001).

Theoretical saturation occurs when the researcher concludes that similar concepts and answers are obtained at some point in the work, and new ideas do not emerge. During the research, data were collected using a semi-structured interview method. The interviews continued until the data were saturated. In other words, with the increase in the number of interviews, no new opinions were found, and the opinions of other interviewees were repeated as before. Inclusion criteria were more than 15 years of work experience, satisfaction with participating in the research, and the ability to retell experiences. Exclusion criteria included unwillingness to participate in the continuation of the research process. The participants were 12 members of the board of trustees of the universities in Iran, who was also the university president at the time of the research. These people are the policymakers of the Azad university education system. Azad University means private universities in Iran that allow students to continue their studies at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels by receiving a fee. These universities operate under the supervision of the government. Lincoln & E. Guba (1985) state that in a carefully conducted study in which sample selection was evolutionary and follow-up, the saturation point could be reached with about 12 participants. The sampling method in this research is snowball. According to Burns and Grove (2005), this method is suggested when one participant leads us to other participants. This method collects samples that are difficult to obtain in other ways, so the Snowball sampling method has also been used (Burns & Grove, 2005). Each interview took 45 minutes. With the participants' permission, the interviews were recorded, and each interview was completed.

The interview questions are as follows:

- ✓ What personality traits do you think a university educational leader should have?
- ✓ What psychological skills do you think a university educational leader should have?
- ✓ What management skills do you think a university educational leader should have?
- ✓ What are the social skills of a university educational leader?
- ✓ What skills do you think a university educational leader should have in the face of environmental change?

The coding method was used to analyze the information obtained from the interviews.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) methods were used to evaluating the validity and reliability. There are four criteria: reliability, reliability, verifiability, and transferability. Credibility means convincing research. In this study, the method of external audit and long-term conflict has been used for credibility. It is mentioned separately below:

*External Audit:* In this method, the researcher provides some of the findings to the study group to review their analysis and answer the questions: Did the researcher correctly understand what they said? Does this analysis make sense to them as well? In this study, the researcher asked some of the interviewees to review the final report of the first stage, the analysis process with the obtained categories, and express their opinion about them. According to these people, the research findings have reflected mainly the existing reality, which indicates the acceptable validity of the present research findings.

*Long-term involvement:* The researcher has been involved in the research topic for a long time (about nine months), which indicates the acceptable validity of the present research findings.

## Results and discussion

The main steps of thematic network analysis include text parsing, text exploration, and then integrating inquiries, which are described below:

### 1. Text delivery

In the first step, the recorded interviews are first written down, then supplemented with notes taken during the interview sessions. After careful discussions, all the independent ideas are identified as essential themes, and a code is assigned to each. If there are sections with similar themes in the text of previous interviews, the same code has been used as an indicator. This study extracted 107 basic themes.

### 2. Convert themes

The organizing themes and the pervasive themes have been abstracted according to the basic themes. We have tried to reorganize the basic themes to achieve more abstract themes that lead us to more original, comprehensive, and central themes. At this stage, 20 organizing themes have been extracted.

### 3. Discover and describe a network of themes

By reviewing and analyzing related themes, eight comprehensive themes with the following names have been extracted: Individual characteristics, psychological skills, Professional skills, charismatic traits, Intuitive features, Managerial features, social skills, and Environmental skills. Each of the pervasive themes is described below, along with examples of some of the interview data:

#### 1. Individual characteristics

Individual characteristics are considered in the form of organizing themes such as foresight and general skills. An example of this theme in the interview of the participants is as follows.

One of the interviewees states that "An educational leader at the university sets missions and goals. He or she can analyze issues as well as understand critical situations".

The codes extracted from the above interview determine the missions and educational goals and analyze the subject and understand the situation.

Another interviewee states that "It has happened many times that I have been able to identify environmental threats and opportunities

in the community. Of course, this goes back in part to my background in social work. In other province units, they hold the post of head and have excellent executive skills in educational organizations.”

The codes extracted from the above interview identify environmental opportunities and threats and executive work skills in educational organizations.

According to Scott et al. (2008), individual abilities are essential in choosing an academic leader. Also, in terms of competencies, an academic leader must have general competencies in addition to individual competencies.

Table 1. Shows themes related to the personal characteristics of educational leaders

**Table 1. Themes related to the personal characteristics of educational leaders**

| Basic theme   | Organizing themes | Inclusive themes           |
|---|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Drawing a favorable vision and vision of the future               | Foresight         | Individual characteristics |
| Determining missions and training                                 |                   |                            |
| Explain the perspective to faculty and staff                      |                   |                            |
| Ability to analyze the subject and understand the situation       |                   |                            |
| Predicting probabilities  |                   |                            |
| Preventive measures for crisis management                         |                   |                            |
| Identify opportunities and risks                                  |                   |                            |
| Specialization in social fields and educational issues            | General skills    |                            |
| Having the above general information                              |                   |                            |
| Having successful educational experiences                         |                   |                            |
| Teaching experience in the field of educational sciences          |                   |                            |
| Management skills and executive work in educational organizations |                   |                            |

**2. Psychological skills**

Psychological traits are considered in the form of organizing themes such as positive attitude, self-confidence, motivation, and personality traits. An example of this theme in the interview of the participants is as follows.

One of the interviewees states that “As an educational leader at the university, I have a positive attitude towards educational issues. In business, I always try to approach problems in creative ways. In general, I am constantly changing; that is, I try to acquire the necessary skills.”

The codes extracted from the above interview include a practical attitude towards educational issues, initiative and creativity, and having a skill-building spirit. Another interviewee states that “Everyone has a series of objections, and I am no

exception to this rule. But I always try to improve my situation and find my weaknesses and turn them into strengths. An educational leader must make every effort to increase the motivation of staff and faculty at the university.”

The codes extracted from the above interview include:

- ✓ Identifying their strengths and weaknesses.
- ✓ Their willingness to improve.
- ✓ Motivating individuals or groups to achieve goals.

According to Solomon et al. (2017), one of the educational administrators' essential competencies is self-awareness. Table 2. Shows the topics related to the psychological characteristics of educational leaders

**Table 2: The topics related to the psychological characteristics of educational leaders**

| Basic theme                                     | Organizing themes | Inclusive themes     |
|---|-------------------|----------------------|
| A positive view of the human dignity            | Positive attitude | Psychological skills |
| Positive attitude towards education colleagues  |                   |                      |
| Having initiative and opposition                |                   |                      |
| A practical perspective on educational issues   |                   |                      |
| Positive attitude towards                       |                   |                      |
| Having a spirit of skill enhancement            |                   |                      |
| The desire for self -improvement                | Self - esteem     |                      |
| Identify your strengths and weaknesses          |                   |                      |
| Having self- esteem                             |                   |                      |
| Interested in the profession                    |                   |                      |
| Recognize personal strengths related to the job | Motivation        |                      |
| Have the motivation to lead professors          |                   |                      |
| Motivate individuals or groups to achieve goals |                   |                      |
| involved at work                                |                   |                      |
| Having excitement and enthusiasm                |                   |                      |
| Creating self-efficacy in employees             |                   |                      |

**3. Professional skills**

Professional skills are considered in the form of organizational themes such as specialized knowledge and technological

knowledge. An example of this theme in the interview of the participants is as follows.

One of the interviewees states that “As an educational leader at the university, I am familiar with most of the political processes related to the country's education system, and in addition to being familiar with the university's rules and regulations, I adhere to them.”

The codes extracted from the above interview include familiarity with the political trends related to the country's educational system and familiarity with the rules and regulations of the university.

Another interviewee states that “If we do not master the university's various software and educational systems, I will face a problem. In my opinion, it is even necessary for a person who is the president of the university to be aware of new technologies. In other words, his knowledge is up to date.”

Codes extracted from the above interview include mastery of various software and training systems and using new technologies. According to Guskey (2009), managers' job responsibilities have become more complex due to the expansion of demand, the quick search for growth in education and learning, and rapid access to information from new technologies. The various changes and needs of the teaching leadership job make it necessary for managers to participate in an ongoing technology learning course.

Table 3. Shows topics related to the professional skills of training leaders.

**Table 3. Topics related to the professional skills of educational leaders**

| Basic theme   | Organizing themes     | Inclusive themes    |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Having an extroverted feature   | Personality Traits    | Professional skills |
| Responsibility and seriousness at work                                      |                       |                     |
| Observance of discipline  |                       |                     |
| Patience  |                       |                     |
| Commitment  |                       |                     |
| Realistic and innovative  |                       |                     |
| Science of educational needs assessment                                     | Specialized knowledge |                     |
| Familiarity with educational psychology                                     |                       |                     |
| Familiarity with various monitoring and evaluation methods                  |                       |                     |
| Knowledge of mastery of practical methods and skills                        |                       |                     |
| Mastery of technical knowledge in the job field                             |                       |                     |
| Familiarity with political trends related to the country's education system |                       |                     |
| Knowledge of the country's university education                             |                       |                     |
| Having a national cultural knowledge of the country                         |                       |                     |
| Familiarity with university rules and regulations                           |                       |                     |
| Keeping up to date with new technology in the field of education            |                       |                     |
| Improving knowledge by continuously studying educational issues             |                       |                     |
| Mastery of various software and training systems                            |                       |                     |
| Ability to use new technologies   |                       |                     |
| Ability to recognize and use teaching aids and tools                        |                       |                     |

**4. Charismatic traits**

Charismatic traits are considered organizing themes such as moral values, civic behavior, and leadership ability. An example of this theme in the interview of the participants is as follows.

One of the interviewees states that "An educational leader is a symbol of a person who adheres to moral values in the university. I mean, it is essential to observe ethical principles in the university. Those who work as the university president must have their words in line with their actions.”

The codes extracted from the above interview are the observance of ethical principles in the university.

Another interviewee states that “It has happened that we have to promote a sense of cooperation and cooperation between colleagues

for various reasons. Sometimes there are critical situations where everyone on campus has to work to manage the crisis to get through the crisis.”

The codes extracted from the above interview are the spirit of cooperation and collaboration and influencing other colleagues.

Leaders of organizations have long considered charismatic leadership as House et al. (1977) emphasize, the characteristics of a charismatic leader on the symbolic behavior of the leader; Inspirational and dreamy message; Non-verbal communication; Tendency to ideological values; He knows how to change his followers by changing their goals, values, needs, beliefs, and aspirations. Table 4. Shows topics related to the charismatic characteristics of educational leaders.

**Table 4. Topics related to the charismatic characteristics of educational leaders**

| Basic theme  | Organizing themes | Inclusive themes   |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|
| Observance of ethical principles in the university | Ethical values    | Charismatic traits |
| The relevance of science and practice              |                   |                    |
| Observance of justice and fairness                 |                   |                    |

|   |                       |  |
|---|-----------------------|--|
| Observance of principles of meritocracy       | Citizenship behavior  |  |
| Creating confidence in others                 |                       |  |
| Sense of cooperation                          |                       |  |
| Sacrifice                                     |                       |  |
| Having a spirit of self-sacrifice             |                       |  |
| Spirit of cooperation                         | Ability of leadership |  |
| Inspirational behavior                        |                       |  |
| The power to influence the teaching community |                       |  |
| Change management                             |                       |  |
| Ability to empathize with employees           |                       |  |
| Entrust the work to a specialist              |                       |  |
| Knowledge affecting employee behavior         |                       |  |

**5. Intuitive features**

Intuitive features are considered in the form of organizing themes such as diagnostic skills and analytical thinking. An example of this theme in the interview of the participants is as follows.

One interviewee states, “Identifying crises and being decisive in making decisions is very important when diagnosing a problem. Because when trouble arises, we do not have much time to make decisions. A successful person in this situation can make quick decisions. Of course, in my opinion, these are intuitive decisions and thoughts.”

The codes extracted from the above interview include identifying crises, assertiveness in decision-making when recognizing the problem, and intuitive thinking skills.

According to Darling. (2001) The world is the energy field and the bedrock of all things, and this bedrock is ubiquitous and endless. The world is all aware and the field of information. Acquiring awareness is not a linear process but has an intuitive state, and its capacity is infinite.

Table 5. Shows topics related to the intuitive characteristics of educational leaders.

**Table 5: Topics related to the intuitive characteristics of educational leaders**

| Basic theme   | Organizing themes   | Inclusive themes   |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|
| Counseling skills when problems arise                     | Diagnostic skills   | Intuitive features |
| Decisiveness in decision making when diagnosing a problem |                     |                    |
| Get help from colleagues to solve the problem             |                     |                    |
| Identify crises   |                     |                    |
| Have foresight and insight                                |                     |                    |
| Ability to analyze educational issues                     | Analytical thinking |                    |
| Independence in thinking                                  |                     |                    |
| Not judging from one point of view                        |                     |                    |
| Ability to interpret trends in complex situations         |                     |                    |
| Intuitive thinking  |                     |                    |
| Creative thinking   |                     |                    |

**6. Managerial features**

Management characteristics are considered in organizational themes such as decision-making ability and human resource development skills. An example of this theme in the interview of the participants is as follows.

One of the interviewees states that “Policy-making regarding the organization of educational affairs is one of the duties of an educational leader. As an educational leader, I have tried to act reasonably in my managerial matters. Use the resources properly. Why? I believe that resource management in organizations is critical.”

The codes extracted from the above interview are the organization of educational affairs and the correct allocation of resources for each purpose.

Another interviewee states that, “In my opinion, faculty and staff should not always overlook the learning opportunities created for

them. The skills of colleagues and professors should continuously improve due to environmental changes. Still, we offer in-service courses for employees at the university to update their knowledge and skills.”

The codes extracted from the above interview include creating opportunities for learning and improving the skills of colleagues and holding in-service courses to enhance employees' skills. Ontario Principals Council (2014) believes that in the 21st century, managerial skills for managers include emotional intelligence skills, analytical thinking, problem-solving, innovation and creativity, communication, technology, organization, people management, teamwork, partnership development, interaction with Society is anti-racism and equality, global awareness and understanding.

Table 6. Shows the issues related to the managerial characteristics of educational leaders.

**Table 6: Topics related to the managerial characteristics of educational leaders**

| Basic theme | Organizing themes | Inclusive themes |
|-------------|-------------------|------------------|
|-------------|-------------------|------------------|

|  |                                   |                     |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Planning educational affairs on a large scale                          | Decision-making skills            | Managerial features |
| Organizing educational affairs   |                                   |                     |
| Ability to choose a strategy in difficult situations                   |                                   |                     |
| Proper allocation of resources for each goal                           |                                   |                     |
| Development of a staff's career path                                   | Human resource development skills |                     |
| Creating learning opportunities and improving the skills of colleagues |                                   |                     |
| Paying attention to the progress of staff training                     |                                   |                     |
| Preference to solve staff problems                                     |                                   |                     |
| Paying attention to the staff suggestion system                        |                                   |                     |
| Holding in services courses to improve staff skills                    |                                   |                     |
| Increases employee confidence  |                                   |                     |
| Identify ways to increase employee effectiveness                       |                                   |                     |
| Flourish the talent of employees                                       |                                   |                     |
| Creating job security in employees                                     |                                   |                     |

**7. Social skills**

Social skills are considered in the form of organizational themes such as communication skills and teamwork skills. An example of this theme in the interview of the participants is as follows.

One of the interviewees states that “In the world of communication, we all have to interact with others in the right way at every level and organizational position. The relationship of educational leaders with the central organization is significant. Because many resolutions are sent to other organizations through the central organization, we must strengthen our relationship with the central organization and other

organizations. I have always told employees to try to work as a team to increase their productivity.”

The codes extracted from the above interview include the coordination of the officials of the central organization and the management of the covered colleagues. Brannick et al., 2007 also state that social interaction means encouraging others and having social confidence.

Table 7. shows the topics related to the managerial characteristics of educational leaders.

**Table 7: Issues related to the managerial characteristics of educational leaders**

| Basic theme   | Organizing themes    | Inclusive themes |
|---|----------------------|------------------|
| Establish the right relationship with colleagues  | Communication skills | Social skills    |
| Having a high level of communication skills and public relation                               |                      |                  |
| Ability to express ideas clearly orally   |                      |                  |
| Ability to express ideas clearly in writing   |                      |                  |
| Social acceptance and popularity  |                      |                  |
| Respect for dissenting opinions   |                      |                  |
| Accepting criticism   |                      |                  |
| Having emotional intelligence   |                      |                  |
| Encouragement to work in groups   |                      |                  |
| Managing co-workers as a team   |                      |                  |
| Coordination and participation of the officials of the central organization of the university |                      |                  |

**8. Environmental skills**

Environmental skills are considered in the form of organizational themes such as micro-environment and macro-environment. An example of this theme in the interview of the participants is as follows.

One of the interviewees states that “An educational leader, as a person who is related to the micro and macro environment, must have a series of skills. For example, suppose I do not know the country's economic situation and do not understand its impact on the university's operating costs. In that case, I will face problems in the economic policies of the university.”

The codes extracted from the above interview are recognizing economic conditions and their impact on operating costs. Fiedler (2015), in the theory of contingency leadership, refers to the effects of the environment on performance that an educational leader can understand the environmental barriers and their impact on the university by understanding the ecological conditions.

Table 8. Shows the topics related to the environmental skills of educational leaders.

**Table 8: Topics related to environmental skills of educational leaders**

| Basic theme                            | Organizing themes | Inclusive themes     |
|--|-------------------|----------------------|
| Changing Geographical of the workforce | Small environment | Environmental skills |
| Control of environmental barriers      |                   |                      |
| Changing technology and automation     |                   |                      |

|   |                   |  |
|---|-------------------|--|
| Knowledge of the cultural environment   | Large environment |  |
| Understanding the effects of the macro-political environment                              |                   |  |
| Knowing the economic conditions and their effect on the operating costs of the university |                   |  |
| Recognizing the social effects on educational organizations                               |                   |  |

Based on the performed analysis, the network of university educational leadership themes is shown in Figure 1.

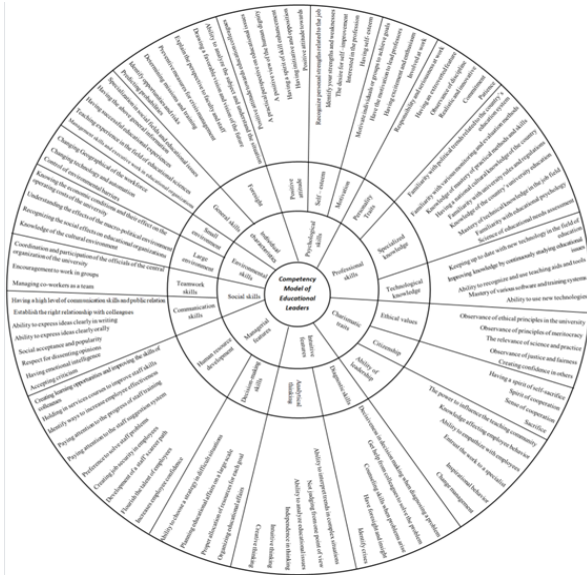


Figure 1. Network of educational leadership themes in universities

**Conclusion**

When the evolution of educational leadership models in recent decades is followed, educational leadership models may have tended to specialize and localize. Such as the model of educational excellence, service compensation, employment, etc., shows that the importance, complexity, and breadth of these models have led to the concept of training leaders in the components of the organization and human resources.

The educational leadership model is a new model based on content analysis. This model is extracted from the participant's experiences in the research and then reviewing the relevant literature. Due to the lack of use of thematic analysis approach in previous research, the general components of none of the models, theories, and results of the prior study are entirely consistent with the components of this model. Still, conceptually comparisons can be made in some components of the conceptual model.

Nworie et al. (2012) state that the educational environment requires educational leaders with a well-known perspective on education and its place in higher education institutions. Leaders have appropriate human skills that enable them to work with their staff, faculty, and managers. The leaders who understand the process of selecting emerging technologies and innovations; Be aware of course design processes, essential teaching and learning theories, and student characteristics; Can manage change, and those who understand and can apply outstanding leadership traits. Thus, models may be designed for use worldwide in leading countries, or international organizations may support these models. Still, generally, each government or even an organization, depending on its ability and knowledge, seeks to design its own native educational leadership model or localization. Deals with international models.

The first theme of the educational leader is individual characteristics. Based on the results obtained, educational leaders

paint a good picture of the future for the university. They explain this vision to administrators, staff, faculty, and students. Leaders create clear, specific missions and goals for the university and a shared understanding of the university's vision, missions, and goals. Determining direction has been considered by many researchers and writers, according to Ramatseba (2012). Choosing the approach is one of the main tasks of leaders. According to some writers and experts, all successful leaders should be able to determine the direction of action and activity.

Leithwood (2006), Leithwood et al. (2006), and Huang (2013) considers directional direction to include the development of a shared vision, strengthening consensus and convergence on goals and priorities, and setting expectations for higher levels of performance.

The second theme of educational leadership is the psychological skills of educational leaders.

Educational leaders can be self-confident. In other words, they can identify their strengths and weaknesses and seek to strengthen their powers and eliminate defects. An educational leader improves teaching and learning conditions. The importance of leaders' attention to learning is that some writers consider educational leadership to have deep knowledge and support of teaching and learning. Bush (2008) and Southworth (2004) believe that educational leadership is more than deep knowledge and consent for teaching and learning. Educational leaders are heavily involved in the educational improvement process.

Successful training leaders create the right atmosphere as well as a supportive work environment for faculty and staff. They also seek to enhance the educational atmosphere and culture. To interact appropriately with the university culture, influential leaders first identify the current culture method or technique. They then decide that the current culture approach should be changed and select and implement an appropriate strategy to steer the culture in the desired direction. Wilkey (2013) showed that successful managers positively form and maintain a good culture. Promoting the level of culture is one of the competencies of leaders.

The fourth known theme in educational leadership is the charismatic characteristics of educational leaders. Educational leaders' moral values and civic behavior make them a role models for staff and other faculty and managers.

Bush (2013) also believes that educational leaders with commanding and charismatic characteristics such as role models and constructive communication penetrate employees' hearts and thus achieve goals quickly with the help of employees. Such people are constantly striving and working in front of others to achieve goals, are sensitive to employees and their problems, and try to solve them instead of despair and hopelessness in employees gives them morale.

The fifth well-known theme in educational leadership is the intuitive characteristics of educational leaders. Educational leaders in universities can be responsive to environmental conditions using creative, intuitive thinking and foresight and foresight.

The sixth well-known theme in educational leadership is the managerial characteristics of educational leaders. One of the managerial characteristics of educational leaders in their decision-making ability and human resource development skills.



Many experts have considered the growth and development of individuals as one of the dimensions of successful leadership or strategies used by successful leaders. These include Leithwood and Reihl (2003), Leithwood (2006), and Leithwood et al. (2006). Leithwood (2006) refers to four categories or categories of leadership activities that all successful leaders should be able to perform. These four categories are referred to as core leadership activities. One of these categories is the development of individuals. According to Manan (2014), encouraging and supporting the professional development of professors is one of the leadership traits of top managers.

Each component of the research can be considered as a qualification for educational leaders. It is also suggested to compare the characteristics of educational leadership in universities in Iran with other countries.

## Declarations

## Ethical considerations

Not applicable

## Data availability

The datasets used for this study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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## Conflict of Interest

There was not conflict of interest of financial benefit to any parties involved in this study.

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