Pedagogically Centered Leadership in Primary Schools: An Application of Descriptive Phenomenology

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Abstract

This research mainly aimed to identify the indicators of pedagogically-centered leadership in Sanandaj primary schools, which was conducted using a qualitative research approach and a descriptive phenomenology strategy. The two main questions raised in the research were as follows. According to the mentalities and experiences of the participants, what are the meanings and indicators of pedagogically-centered leadership in Iranian elementary schools? What characteristics can make pedagogically-centered leaders separate and unique leader from other educational leaders? The current research is developmental-applied in terms of purpose and qualitative in terms of approach, which was conducted using a descriptive phenomenology strategy. To collect data, 18 primary school principals were selected by purposive sampling and interviewed through three-stage phenomenological interview protocols. Their perspectives and experiences were investigated during the interviews. After conducting the interviews, the data were first manually analyzed, and then by MAXqda 2020 software, based on three-stage thematic analysis (basic, organizing, and global) of Attride-Stirling, analyzed. As the result of data analysis, 90 initial codes, 42 basic themes, 18 organizing themes, and finally, 8 global themes were specified. Also, four distinctive characteristics were identified as unique features of a pedagogically-centered leader: participation-seeker, activist of social justice and equal opportunities, valuing subcultures, and leader of leaders. Findings implicitly indicated that the implementation of this style of leadership in schools requires major changes in the mental paradigms of school community members. These changes include changing the paradigm of playing fixed roles to flexible ones, changing the paradigm of management to leadership, changing the paradigm of bureaucracy to specialization, changing the paradigm of teaching-centered to learning-centered, changing the paradigm of parental participation to parental involvement, and changing the paradigm of knowledge transfer to knowledge creation in students.

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Introduction

Currently, the function of effective leadership is highly different from what was done in recent generations due to significant global demographic, economic, and technological changes (Friedman, 2007). Contemporary leaders need to understand the complexities and interconnectedness of systems and organizations (Allen & Cherry, 2000). They should know how to communicate with diverse populations (Caser & Moriarty, 2000) and recognize the difficulty of action with integrity and a sense of ethics in ambiguous situations. Success in these areas does not simply come through practice or repetition but must be achieved through study. People are only willingly led by those who know what they are doing. One of the main reasons leaderships is not successful is that the intended leader, even when he has the knowledge and attitude, is not sure what to do when pressured to act in real-time.

The true success of effective leadership programs is measured not by how well students connect with their educators, but by students' ability to apply their learning to the challenges they face after completing those programs. Therefore, educators should participate in learning more than teaching. This knowledge-oriented approach places educators in the role of a transferor instead of a distributor and requires attention to collaborative learning styles, personal responsibility in growth and development, and the creation of an inclusive learning community. Therefore, leadership educators must practice transparent teaching practices and embrace their learning in this process (Magulda & King, 2004).

Most of the theories of educational administration are developed outside the area of education and later applied in schools and higher education. Educational administration as a field of study, is based on linking two aspects of organizational behavior and educational attitude with a special focus on educational organizations. Education in the first place is learning and in the second place, teaching, and then it includes issues related to supporting these functions. Educational administration requires supporting the teaching-learning process. In many training programs for educational leaders, they are taught in such a way that these functions are not given importance. These programs are like dishwashers in the production line. Leadership models must be developed to place learning and teaching at the center of attention rather than at the margin (English, Papa, Mullen, & Crichton, 2013).

It could be argued that in practice, no effort has been made to prioritize the teaching-learning process at the center of attention of schools; and according to internal research, schools still emphasize knowledge transfer.

Although there is much research in the field of leadership, there is no research regarding pedagogically-centered leadership precisely done by Iranian researchers. Therefore, to

implement and establish the pedagogically-centered leadership approach, it is necessary to analyze the indicators of this style of leadership, that is, pedagogically-centered leadership, before any program implementation.

Motivation to change leadership styles in schools has been created in various ways. Figures like Paulo Freire were trying for the "education of the disadvantaged" or "critical education". Educational stakeholders want to change the boundaries of care and education through the idea of social education, and governments want to limit the activities of teachers by requiring them to follow 'pedagogical techniques' (Smith, 2012).

Emphasizing leadership as the basis of successful education means that teachers must conceptualize education as strategies greater than teaching, where educators act as leaders in helping students learn and grow. Successful education includes three separate areas: 1. Implementation of effective educational strategies, 2. Classroom/environment management techniques, and 3. Curriculum planning (Marzano, 2007). Therefore, teachers who maximize their potential in building students' leadership capacities should be consistent with their intended program or course outcomes as well as with theories related to student development and purposeful leadership. For example, student supervisors should consider a set of results in mind for their leadership development. They should understand the growth and development level of typical students they supervise and create a comprehensive plan to build their leadership capacity. Finally, they should use an effective set of

educational techniques in meetings, interactions, and general supervision of students to achieve their goals (Brooks and Normore, 2016).

Pedagogically centered leadership can enable learners to "design their representations of knowledge instead of using the preconceived representations of others; to use them for supporting deep reflective thinking that is necessary for meaningful learning. This makes learning conscious and challenging" (McMillan, 2007, p. 1986). Pedagogically-centered leadership is deeply related to content knowledge, teaching and learning, and assessment (Ludwig and Herschel, 1998). All of these include multiple practices that shape the student experience. In this regard, teachers and educational leaders need to ask the following two questions: A) How to effectively teach students with diverse backgrounds? B) How students can learn and use different knowledge and use them in complex, dynamic, and interactive environments of home, class, etc. (Smith, 2012).

The organizing centers of pedagogically-centered leadership include the following six items: 1. Awareness of how people grow and progress, which includes group-centered progress and cultural differences in the family, and after that, "specifying the design of learning experiences and particular methods of facilitating learning". 2- Accurate understanding of the learning process and how this understanding can lead to learning. 3- Extensive knowledge about the conceptual patterns related to the field of study and how they affect the discourse of the disciplines. 4- Understanding how specific educational methods are related to

particular theoretical perspectives and how they are focused upon special philosophical situations and conditions in achieving long-term learning. 5- Using different strategies to evaluate educational methods, which includes the use of valid assessment models. 6- How to link and integrate all the above-mentioned items to create the common core standards of the curricula that are being developed (Hollins, 2011, p. 397). In other words, pedagogically-centered leadership consists of teachers and administrators who operate in a collaborative and less hierarchical and structured environment.

Pedagogically-centered leadership is essentially considered a participatory and democratic activity. In this sense, this approach is a type of leadership that decentralizes the hierarchy, destroys superior/subordinate relationships, and creates new sets of relationships that make people more sensitive to what they have to do. Pedagogically-centered leadership is more than recognizing a traditional practitioner in the classroom with a high level of expertise. It also considers the combination of educational leadership and teacher leadership, which provides a basis for more democratic schools. As Woods (2005) asserts: "Dispersion and distribution of leadership, which includes teachers, can consist of goals that promote democracy and social justice" (p. 62). There is a highly close relationship between democratic education and the pursuit of social justice. Therefore, these developments are considered as a renewal of the strong centrality of educational leadership for public education.

There are no research records that directly deal with the topic of pedagogically-centered leadership in

Iranian schools. Based on the literature review, a model of educational leadership similar to pedagogically-centered leadership has been proposed in the last decade under the title of instructional leadership. Like pedagogically-centered leadership, this approach is also different from other leadership models, in that it emphasizes the direction not the process of leadership. First of all, the aforementioned leadership model emphasizes the goal of education and highlights the need to focus on teaching-learning as the main goal of educational institutions. Instructional leadership is supported by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) in England and considers it one of its ten leadership areas. Of course, this leadership model gives fewer comments about the process through which educational leadership is developed. In other words, this model focuses on the "what" of educational leadership, not on "how". Therefore, it has been criticized. For example, it underestimates the significant goals of education including student welfare, socialization, and the process of young people becoming adults. Also, it emphasizes the less academic aspects of education, including sports, art, and music (Bush, 2010; translated by Najafi, Siadat, Rahimi, Yarmohammadzadeh, and Faqihi, 2012, pp. 243-244).

Several capacity-building programs for leadership do not specify the degree of concentration used in the curriculum or their results. Day (2001) describes this issue as the lack of distinction between leadership and leadership development. He explains that leadership development focuses on building collective capacity to practice leadership within an organizational

context—that is, where individuals within those organizations can more easily and successfully practice effective leadership. Instead, leader development deals with skill development in individuals.

Yorkbar and Duke (2004) have proposed the "teacher leadership" approach as a solution to ineffective schools for three reasons: First, teacher participation leads to increased commitment and more effort to achieve school goals. Second, teachers have unique types of professional knowledge based on best practices. Third, by considering teaching as a profession, it will be possible to shape career development patterns that keep the most talented people in the classroom or other relevant fields.

Particularly, Yamarino, Dion, Yukachan, and Dinsreau (2005) describe four interrelated "levels of analysis" regarding leadership educators as follows: (a) the person level, where programs focus on individuals and their characteristics, skills, abilities and behaviors; (b) the second level, where the focus is on interpersonal relationships, often within the context of group leader members; (c) the group level, which includes hierarchical work teams with supervisors or non-hierarchical social or non-work teams; and (d) the collective/system level, where programs focus on leadership in systems, communities, and society as a whole. Therefore, competent leadership educators must expand their curricula by attending to students' competencies, their ability to communicate and collaborate with other learners and organizations, and their desire and skill to create a positive impact on a large

scale, and consider the aspects of each of these four levels.

Instructional leadership emphasizes influence rather than environment and resources. Therefore, more emphasis is placed on directing and influencing rather than the influence process itself. The increasing focus on teaching and learning management as the core of the activities of educational organizations has led to "curriculum leadership" or "learning-based leadership". Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinich (1999) believe that instructional leadership is not clearly defined and believe that this concept has several definitions. Instructional leadership typically assumes that leaders focus on those teacher behaviors that directly affect student growth. Bush and Glover's (2002) definition emphasizes the process of influence: "Instructional leadership emphasizes teaching-learning and the behavior of teachers when working with students. Leaders influence student learning through teachers."

Blisseh and Blisseh's (1998) research with 800 principals in American schools indicates that effective classroom leadership behavior consists of three aspects: talking with teachers, promoting teachers' professional development, and nurturing teacher's thinking. The term "instructional leadership" is taken from North America, and is introduced as the concept of "learning-centered leadership" in England and other countries. Rhodes and Brandert (2010) believe that the second concept is broader and has a great impact on school and student performance. They have examined the transition from instructional leadership to learning-centered leadership and its relationship

with teaching quality, linking a wide range of leadership practices to learning outcomes.

According to Southworth (2004), leaders influence learning by using three main strategies: modeling, monitoring, and professional dialogue. Modeling is about the power of examples. Learning-centered leaders are role models for others because they are interested in learning, teaching, and the classroom and want to learn more about these topics. Monitoring includes observing classrooms, observing teachers while working, and providing feedback to the teachers. Professional dialogue is creating opportunities for teachers to talk with colleagues and leaders about teaching and learning. While the emphasis on learning is highly significant. Principals should pay attention to other aspects of school life, for example, socialization, students' health, well-being, and self-esteem, as well as broad issues such as creating a suitable culture and climate related to the specific needs of the school and its community (p. 78-83).

Ping and Chodi (2021) in their research entitled the perception of principals on education-centered leadership in elementary schools in the Czech Republic concluded that in most cases, the participatory dimension of pedagogically-centered leadership is considered the most important dimension. These researchers confirmed that pedagogically-centered leadership should be a process of participation, learning, and support that increases the satisfaction of all stakeholders.

Investigating educational leadership in the 21st century, Trevor Male & Palaiologou (2013) state that instead of using leadership models, we should see leadership as a practice that is not only concerned with the dichotomy of teaching-learning and outcomes but rather with an integrated conceptualization of the relationships between teaching-learning, learning ecology of society and a social complex of related areas in which the educational organization is located. Hence, this understanding of educational leadership is concerned with the links between desired educational outcomes and a set of social realities that surround the educational environment.

Trevor Male & Palaiologou (2017) conducted two case studies in English schools, entitled pedagogically-centered Leadership in Practice. The results of data analysis demonstrated that the data identify six categories of pedagogically-centered leadership activities that contribute to the continued growth of these schools: creating a culture of success, managing external expectations, selecting and inducting staff, managing a strong supportive environment, maintaining effective internal relationships and leadership behavior of principals.

Forssten Seiser (2020) in his research with an action research approach in the investigation of advanced pedagogically-centered leadership concluded that students' learning and growth are important components of pedagogically-centered leadership of administrators and that pedagogically-centered leadership consists of setting the conditions for teachers in such a way to allow them to improve their teaching. He also explains that pedagogically-centered leaders not only talk about changes but also call for concrete actions in the inner work of schools, which include organizing the surrounding arrangements in such a

way that learning and collaborative school practices are made possible. Alonso-Yanz et al. (2021) concluded that leadership methods can eliminate inequalities in schools and promote the well-being and learning of students, which creates an environment full of trust.

Cesar Augusto and Nunez (2021) in their research entitled pedagogically-centered Leadership in the Covid-19 Pandemic concluded that this pandemic will be an indicator of education in the coming years, for which political, technical, and economic decisions will be made that will modify the educational processes and teaching-learning processes in which the pedagogically-centered leaders play a central role. The change of leadership in schools should be considered and move towards professional communities in which pedagogically-centered leaders in schools also follow a kind of distributed leadership.

Palaiologou and Arvidso (2022) in a study entitled pedagogically-centered leadership: A comparative study from England, Greece, and Sweden indicated that there is a difference between organizational leadership and pedagogically-centered leadership. Pedagogically centered leaders are those who may not have any organizational responsibilities but lead the direct interaction between children and adults and the instructional elements that make up education. They also emphasize that in England, there is no clear pathway to leadership qualification for staff.

Badmar et al. (2021) in their study entitled "pedagogically-centered Leadership by Principals of Disadvantaged Schools in Spain" indicated that the surveyed teachers and interviewed principals both agreed that they should be given a greater share in decision-making, particularly when hiring teaching staff, to allow them to manage truly effective schools. This, in turn, points to the need for a consensus on the educational policy that regulates the role of Spanish school principals, to allow them to have real educational leadership and, consequently, to guarantee optimal teaching-learning processes.

As a concluding remark for the literature review, it can be said that effective leadership and management realize the goals of schools, which are provided by the stakeholders and the government that provides the credits of educational organizations. In a growing global economy, a well-educated workforce is critical to remaining competitive. Society expects schools to prepare people for employment in an uncertain environment. Teachers, leaders, and administrators are responsible for implementing educational standards. The concept of management is linked with or surpasses the concept of leadership. Many countries welcome school autonomy, which expands the scope of leadership and has direct and indirect effects on student performance. Successful leaders increasingly emphasize learning as the primary and unique focus of educational organizations. They are also faced with unexpected pressures to respond and as environmental pressures intensify, they need more knowledge, skills, and flexibility. The current research is focused on identifying the essence of "what and how" of the concept of pedagogically-centered leadership in elementary schools to implement it and use it in the preparation programs of the new

generation of school managers and teacher training in the country. In this regard, the two main questions raised in the research include:

1) According to the mentalities and experiences of the participants, what are the meanings and indicators of pedagogically-centered leadership in Iranian elementary schools?

2) What characteristics can make pedagogically-centered leaders separate and unique leader from other educational leaders?

Methodology

Research Approach and Strategy: The present research is applied-developmental in terms of purpose, and in terms of approach or method, the qualitative method was used. Qualitative approaches to research give importance to the depth of meaning and subjective experiences of participants and their meaning-making processes. These approaches allow us to build a strong understanding of a subject, and describe the meanings that people attribute to experiences, activities, situations, and circumstances (Levy, 2017). Qualitative research provides a deep, complex, and detailed understanding of meanings, actions, observable and unobservable phenomena, attitudes, intentions, and behaviors, and these examine issues that exist beneath the surface of behaviors and actions (Cohen et al., 2018). Therefore, among the various qualitative methods, according to the purpose of the current research, which seeks to collect the meanings of the lived experience of principals as pedagogically oriented leaders, the most suitable strategy is descriptive phenomenology.

Descriptive phenomenology relies less on the researcher's interpretation and deals more with the description of participants' experiences of the phenomenon. Moustakas (1994) believes that the participants should be asked about their experiences and the contexts in which these experiences occurred. The main goal of phenomenology is to reduce the individual experiences of participants about a phenomenon to describe its pervasive nature. Therefore, phenomenology is not only a description but an interpretative process in which the researcher interprets the experienced meanings (Van Manen, 1990). This description includes what people have experienced and how to acquire this experience (Moustakas, 1994; quoted by Creswell, translated by Hasanqolipour et al., 2011). In phenomenology, the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by the participants in the research (Creswell, 2009; translated by Kyamanesh and Danai Tos, 2018). In this regard, the researcher must put aside his personal experiences and be ready to accept participants' descriptions which are called Epoché. The purpose of this research is to describe the lived experiences of principals in the same way as they experienced in real life.

Research Field and Participants: The research field consists of all principals of primary schools in Sanandaj from 1400-1401. Potential participants are principals of primary schools in Sanandaj who have at least 15 years of experience in education and have at least 5 years' experience of in school management. In a phenomenological study, Reimen (1986) recommended

that 10 people be examined (quoted by Creswell, 2011). Therefore, among all the principals of elementary schools in Sanandaj City, 18 of them were selected and interviewed using a purposeful sampling method. By selecting these participants, the researchers reached theoretical saturation in the collection of information, which means that the researchers found that participants no longer had anything new to express. Table 1 demonstrates the demographic information of the participants.

Table 1: Demographic information of research participants

No.	Gender	Education	Work Experience (year)	Interview Duration (Minutes)	Interview Method	Interview Frequency
1	Male	Bachelor	29	110	In Person	3
2	Male	Bachelor	24	87	In Person	3
3	Male	Bachelor	29	95	In Person	3
4	Male	Master	28	70	In Person	2
5	Male	Master	23	90	In Person	3
6	Female	Master	26	73	Phone Call	3
7	Female	Bachelor	19	120	In Person	3
8	Female	Master	29	83	Virtual	3
9	Female	Bachelor	26	85	In Person	3
10	Female	Bachelor	28	67	Phone Call	2
11	Female	Bachelor	29	75	Virtual	2
12	Female	Master	19	100	In Person	2
13	Female	Master	22	105	Phone Call	3
14	Male	Doctorate	14	110	In Person	3
15	Male	Master	18	98	In Person	3
16	Male	Master	16	92	In Person	3
17	Male	Master	20	121	In Person	3
18	Male	Master	23	124	In Person	3

Data collection tool

The interview is one of the best data collection instruments. According to the purpose of this research, it was necessary to obtain rich data during interaction with the participants. Therefore, in-depth and phenomenological interview protocols were used, which included conducting a series of three interviews separately and at intervals of three consecutive weeks. In the essence of the in-depth interview process, there is a hidden interest in understanding the lived experience of participants and the meaning they create from that experience (Van Manen, 1990). The process of three interviews is as follows: 1- In the first interview; the researcher focuses on the life history of the participant, which stabilizes the context of the participant's experience. As Patton (1989) indicates, without context, there is little possibility of discovering the meaning of an

experience. The researcher asks the participant open-ended questions related to the topic from the past to the present. 2- In the next week and during the second interview, the researcher's focus is on the details of the participant's experiences. By asking several questions, the researchers want to reconstruct the experiences related to the topic in the context of what happened, and the main focus is on the details of the participant's lived experience. 3- In the third week and during the last interview, the researcher focuses on thinking about the meaning of the experience. The researcher encourages the participant to think by asking several open questions so that the participant could make his understanding meaningful from the experience. The researcher's goal of triple interviews is for the interviewee to reconstruct his experiences within the framework of the research topic. There should be a gap of 3 days to a week between each interview. This time interval reduces the influence of possible personal states on the interviews (Seidman, 2013; translated by Koshazadeh et al., 2015). The duration of each interview varied between 40 minutes and 60 minutes.

Before conducting the main interviews, first, an interview was conducted with one of the doctoral students to determine the strengths and weaknesses. Before starting each interview, a description of the purpose of the interview and the topic of the research was presented to all the interviewees. After this introduction, permission was asked from the interviewees to record their interviews. Recording an interview on tape is a suitable method for qualitative research, provided that it is done with the

interviewee's permission (Sharifi and Sharifi, 2019). During the interview, the beginning of each interview started with relatively neutral questions, and then more significant questions were addressed, which made the interviewees answer the questions better. Also, in all the interviews, it was tried that the order of the questions and the way they were expressed were the same, which according to Sarmad et al. (2022) would not cause any difference in the answers from the interviewees. Moreover, the order of the questions was such that each question followed the previous question. This made it possible to observe a certain order in the answers of the interviewees. Also, the interviewees were assured that special care had been taken for the interview data; hence, due to the sensitive nature of the interviews and due to ethical obligations, pseudonyms were used for all interviewees. The preservation and confidentiality of the interviewees was one of the highly significant principles that was considered in the present research.

Data Analysis Method: The recorded interviews with the permission of the participants, were immediately implemented. The implementation of the text of interviews that were recorded with the help of technical tools in the first place is a necessary stage for interpretation (Kowall & Oconnell, quoted by Jalili, 2020). After that, the coding process started. Coding is the process by which data are analyzed, conceptualized, and put together in a new way (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In the analysis stage, among the many methods that exist for thematic analysis, the analysis based on Attride-Stirling's (2001) thematic analysis was chosen. The mentioned analysis has three levels

of analysis of basic, organizing, and global themes, which is done in three stages and six steps. First, by a careful investigation of the text, the phrases that had outstanding characteristics and important topics related to the research topic were highlighted as the primary code, and then the analysis was done using MAXQDA 2020 software. The theme is a distinctive and repetitive feature of the text, which, in the researcher's opinion, expresses a certain experience and understanding of the research questions (King and Horrocks, 2010). Thematic analysis is a useful tool that provides analysis by drawing thematic networks. A thematic network summarizes the main themes of a text. Thematic networks are powerful and highly sensitive instruments for organizing and presenting qualitative analyses; hence, they are tools for analysis and not the analysis itself. When the thematic networks with predominant themes from the research are formed, then they can be used as an analysis tool for interpretation so that the results are understandable for the readers (Atrid Sterling, 2001).

For the criteria of confirming the validity and reliability of the qualitative research, the criteria of Guba and Lincoln (1985) were used, which include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability: Credibility: In this research, the conducted interviews were examined several times continuously and after that, the transcripts of the interviews were sent to the participants via email to confirm that this is what they said in the interview. Transferability: The transferability of findings refers to how well the findings obtained from the research can be used in other fields. To increase the transferability of their findings, most qualitative researchers try to make it possible for others to follow the research path and the characteristics of the studied population with deep, detailed, and targeted explanations of the research process and actions performed in the field of study (Rezapour, 2016). In this research, by fully explaining how to choose the participants, entirely explaining how to conduct in-depth phenomenological interviews, and describing the method of data collection, the criterion of transferability was strengthened so that the reader can decide on the transfer of information to other situations. Dependability: In this research, by having a code booklet and giving the text of the interviews to several consultants outside the research, for independent coding and re-examination of parts of the text of the interviews that were coded, the criterion of data dependability was confirmed, to obtain a list of main codes and the agreement between the coders was used instead of a complete list of codes. Finally, the interviewees were assured that special care had been taken for their interview files. Rosetta (2001) suggests using special care for the research subject when people share their personal experiences because they may challenge the norms of their societies and not accept a traditional point of view. Accordingly, due to the sensitive nature of the interview, pseudonyms were used for all the interviewees.

Findings

The results of the data analysis will be presented in three main sections. Sterling's thematic analysis (2001) has three levels of analysis of basic, organizing, and global themes, which

are performed in three stages and six steps.

Section A: Coding Method: From the analysis of the interview texts, a total of 90 initial codes, 42 basic themes, 18 organizing themes, and finally 8 global themes were extracted, which are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

The first stage of analysis (reduction or breakdown of the text): In this stage, the following three steps were taken.

First step: First, the text interviews were placed in the form of the created coding framework (thematic analysis).

Second step: according to the initial codes obtained and the topics discussed by the codes, the basic themes were identified.

Third step: After organizing and reviewing the basic themes, organizing, and global themes were selected.

The second stage of analysis (the exploration of the text): This stage includes the following two steps.

Fourth step: Thematic networks were drawn and their description and interpretation were discussed.

Fifth step: Thematic networks were summarized.

The third stage of analysis (integration and exploration): This stage includes the last step of analysis.

Sixth step: The patterns obtained in the fifth step were interpreted in the form of two graphs.

The first stage of thematic analysis is the stage of text reduction or breakdown. In the first step of this stage, initial codes were manually extracted from the text of the interviews, then the extracted initial codes were placed in the form of a coding framework. In the second step, the basic themes were identified. An example of the coding method is presented in Table (2).

Table 2. From Codes to Basic Themes

No.	Initial Codes	Discussed Topics	Basic Identified Themes
1	Increasing teachers' capabilities, giving importance to teachers' opinions and ideas, paying attention to the role of teachers in schools, creating learning conditions for teachers, holding in-service training courses, holding training workshops for teachers, holding numerous meetings with teachers, asking teachers for their opinions on the decisions made, involving teachers in school affairs, paying attention to teachers' ideas in teaching, providing teaching facilities for teachers	Considering teachers' abilities Collaborative decision making Principal's attention to teachers' needs Highlighting teachers in the teaching-learning role Principal's attention to the professional development of teachers	School leader provides conditions for teachers to reach their potential (empowerment). Teachers participate in school decisions. Each teacher is the final decision-maker in the teaching-learning process. School leader helps teachers' professional development by holding educational workshops.
2	Paying attention to students and their needs, considering diverse needs of students, self-improvement of students, not focusing on one aspect of	Highlighting student's role in learning	The principal tries to provide an educational environment for students to build their knowledge (constructivism).

	education, providing a challenging learning environment, creating an environment to stimulate students' learning, and helping students to be learners. Increasing the ability of students to learn, identifying the talents of students, providing an environment for students to know more about their abilities, using new teaching methods, paying attention to the self-monitoring factor in students, and attention and reflection of students in the learning process.	Creating a diverse educational environment Knowledge construction Management of students on their learning Familiarizing students with their abilities	The principal tries to separate educational space from the traditional space for students. The principal provides conditions for students to challenge their abilities. Students learn to monitor their learning.
3	Parents' assessment of the teaching-learning process, use of parents' opinions as beneficiaries, belief in better decision-making with the presence of parents, belief in the multidimensionality of education, attention to students' performance, providing grounds for more parental presence in school, holding numerous meetings with the presence of parents. Belief in synergism in decisions with the presence of parents. Paying attention to the importance of the role of parents in the education of their children. The importance of parental active presence in school. Parents' awareness of the school's educational processes	Parents' point of view as a source of assessment Parents' cooperation in school's educational decisions The continuous presence of parents	Parents are involved in school affairs and decisions (parental involvement). The school leader welcomes parents' opinions about the school. The school leader uses different ways to involve parents. The school leader believes that the connection between school and home leads to synergy.
4	Building a new culture, paying attention to cultural diversity, creating cultural innovations, ecology of learning, creating innovation using diverse cultures, paying attention to different cultural contexts, understanding the needs caused by cultural diversity, considering subcultures in school programs, considering cultural diversity in school decisions, providing an	Attention to the subcultures in school Considering subcultures as a context for innovation Attention to the environment in which learning takes place	The leader considers diverse cultures to enrich the cultural environment of the school (cultural adaptability). The leader pays attention to the diverse cultures in the school. Paying attention to different cultures in the teaching-learning process is a priority for the leader.

environment for learning different cultures.		

In the first column of Table (2) the initial codes that were extracted from the text of the interviews are indicated. In the second column, the essence or topics discussed in the initial identified codes are presented, and finally, in the third column, the basic themes identified based on Atrid Sterling's thematic analysis model (2001) are presented. For example, in a row (4) of table (2), the initial codes (construction of new culture, attention to cultural diversity, ecology of learning) which discussed the construction of new culture and attention to subcultures, were finally summarized to the basic theme of acculturation.

Section B: The method of identifying organizing and global themes: In the continuation of the first stage of thematic analysis, in the third step after examining and revising the basic themes, organizing and global themes were identified. In this part of the analysis, 18 organizing themes were obtained, followed by 8 global themes. An example of its results is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. From Basic to Organizing to Global Themes

Basic Themes	Organizing Themes	Global Themes
1. The leader provides conditions so that teachers can reach their potential. 2. Teachers participate in school decisions. 3. Each teacher is the final decision-maker in the teaching-learning process. 4. The school leader helps teachers' professional development by holding instructional workshops.	A- Every teacher in the role of a leader B- Non-bureaucratic decision making C- Empowering teachers	Leader of Leaders
1. The leader tries to provide an educational environment for students to build their knowledge. 2. The principal tries to separate the educational space from the traditional space for students 3. The principal provides conditions for students to challenge their abilities. 4. Students learn to monitor their learning.	A- Construction of knowledge B- Knowledge sharing C- Self-learning D- Challenging existing knowledge E- Reconstruction and re-creation of knowledge F- Lifelong learner G- Critical reflection	Constructivist approach to learning
1. Parents interfere in school affairs and decisions. 2. The school leader welcomes parents' opinions about the school. 3. The school leader calls for parental involvement in different ways	A- Interrelationship between home and school B- The importance of the role of the family C- Development of parental involvement	Encouragement for Parents' Involvement in Children's Education

4. The school leader believes that the connection between school and the home leads to synergy.	D. Synergy of home and school	
1. The leader tries to equip the classroom with various instructional facilities. 2. It is important for the leader to pay attention to the students and understand their needs. 3. By providing dynamic educational conditions, the leader transfers the responsibility of learning to the students.	A- Multimedia educational environment B. Commitment to one's learning C- Satisfying the comprehensive needs of students D. Empowering learners for independent thinking E- Teaching how to learn	Enriching the art of teaching
1. Colleagues participate in doing things with each other in the school. 2. The leader delegates his responsibilities to his colleagues. 3. School members strive to achieve a common goal.	A- Providing the contexts for a democratic school B- Shared decision-making C- The flexibility of roles in school D- Having a perspective	Participation
1. The leader considers diverse cultures to enrich the cultural environment of the school. 2. The leader pays attention to the diverse cultures in the school. 3. Paying attention to different cultures in the teaching-learning process is a priority for the leader.	A- Building a new culture B- Leadership of subcultures C- Accepting the diversity	Valuing subcultures
1. The leader tries to establish equality among school members. 2. The school and its programs are flexible and changeable. 3. The leader moves the school forward according to the changes in society.	A- Justice-Orientation B- Increasing the capacity of teachers C. Creating an agile school D- Reconstructing the school based on the positive psychology	Activism for social justice and equal opportunities
1. The leader provides an atmosphere of trust and respect among the members of the school community. 2. The space of education and school is such that school members can easily access educational resources. 3. The leader tries to provide a space so that teachers can transfer their training and specializations to the school.	A- Development of social capital B- Professionalism in educational leaders C. Transferring training to the workplace	Attention to independence and professional development of teachers

As observed in Table (3), the left columns contain the basic themes extracted from Table (2), which were extracted by using the interpretation and abstraction of the organizing themes, and the global themes were inferred by intensively reducing the data and summarizing and abstracting the organizing themes. For example, in the first row of the table (3), the basic themes (the leader provides conditions so that teachers can reach their potential, teachers participate in school decisions, each teacher is the final decision maker in the teaching-learning process and the school leader helps teachers' professional development by holding instructional workshops) were extracted. Finally, a global theme (leader of leaders) was found. It should be noted that in some of the rows of the table, the number of organizing themes is equal to the basic themes, and this is due to considering the brevity and the appearance of tables.

In the second stage of analysis, i.e. exploration of the text, and the fourth step, according to the global themes, The indicators of pedagogically-centered leadership in the form of four global themes as enriching the art of teaching, independence and professional development of teachers, adopting a constructivist approach to learning and providing the context for parents' involvement in students' education. Each of these themes will be explained in the following.

Enriching the art of teaching: The first indicator of pedagogically-centered leadership is enriching the art of teaching. The teacher's role in teaching is not only the transfer of information to the students, but also the ability of the teacher to identify the needs of the learners in education,

thematic networks were drawn and interpreted. In the fifth step after the review, the thematic networks were summarized. In the last stage of the analysis, that is, the stage of integration and discovery and in the sixth step, the patterns obtained in the fifth step were interpreted in the form of two graphs, and according to the drawn graphs, the research questions were answered, which can be observed in section C.

Section C: Answering the research questions: Two main research questions were raised, which were answered in this section according to the global themes obtained from the text of the interviews (presented in Table 3) and the graphs drawn linearly.

The First Research Question: According to the mentalities and experiences of the participants, what are the meanings and indicators of pedagogically-centered leadership in Iranian elementary schools? Based on the thematic analysis and the findings presented in Table (3), four global themes were identified as the indicators of a pedagogically-centered leader.

prepare the environment according to the content of the educational materials, and how to transfer the materials to the students are function of teachers which are indicative of their art in teaching. The results of the analysis demonstrated that a pedagogically-centered leader pays attention to this aspect of teaching and tries to provide a space for teachers to enrich the art of teaching. When teachers try to teach students in different and diverse ways, the leader welcomes this idea and provides as many conditions as possible for teachers to implement educational methods because they believe that the teacher is directly in contact with the students and sees and understands the

diverse needs of students; so, teachers' ideas in teaching should be welcomed. One of the female principals participating in the interview in the field of teaching art asserts:

[7]... Some teachers tell me that they want to teach a certain subject in a particular way, and when I see that the school teacher is not only thinking about transferring the material and trying to do her work artistically, I will be very happy and help her as much as I can...

Another principal describes her experience in this field as follows:

[11]... I even provided multimedia teaching areas in some classrooms and helped teachers as much as they could to help students learn in different ways, and the teachers welcomed this idea...

Adopting a constructivist approach to learning: Another indicator of a pedagogically-centered leader is to pay attention to the issue of constructivism and the importance of the learner's role in the learning process. To create this learning approach in the school, the leader tries to challenge the existing knowledge and teaching methods in the school and revise them. The leader believes that the school and learning environment should be such that students can monitor their learning and become lifelong learners, in other words, students learn how to learn, which is possible if the school's learning environment is not traditional and changes according to the changes of the society. One of the female principals described her experience in the field of student-centered approach as follows:

[12]... In my opinion, the educational environment is not the same as before. Today, we cannot bring students to class and teach them, and this is something that should be considered and conditions should be provided so that teachers can use teaching methods that involve students in the Learning process.

Regarding the constructivist approach to learning, a male principal states:

[5]... the school should try to involve students in teaching and learning. In this way, the students get to know the weaknesses and strengths of their learning, they know what to do to learn better in the learning process and can monitor their learning process.

In this context, Weiner (2002) asserts: "Constructivist learning refers to a type of learning in which learning materials are not transferred to the learner, but the learner is personally involved in the learning process and builds his knowledge. From the point of view of the constructivist approach, knowledge cannot simply be offered to students, but students must create their special meaning in the process of learning".

Independence and professional development of teachers: Another indicator of pedagogically-centered leadership is the independence and professional development of teachers. The meaning of professional independence is that teachers are free in their professional practice, are the final decision-makers in their classrooms, choose the best procedures and methods, do not feel pressured by other teachers and the principal in the process of performing tasks, and act independently in class management. Hoyle & John (1995) state that teacher independence is a positive type of autonomy that provides the teacher freedom to construct a personal pedagogy. The participants believed that emphasizing the teaching-learning

process and paying attention to the improvement of the quality level requires paying attention to the teacher and providing the grounds for his/her work independence. Because the teacher can make better decisions due to the direct connection with the classroom and the flow of education. Organizational theorists argue that increasing the professional independence of employees, such as decision-making power and greater freedom of thought and action, can improve organizational efficiency (Luthans, 1992; quoted by Shirbagi et al., 2016). Also, Porter (1989) asserts that teachers' independence is the key to better education, which is achieved by the teacher's involvement in determining the standards of student progress. On the other hand, a leader's attention to the teachers and their professional independence causes the teachers to move towards learning and increasing their knowledge and specialization to increase their ability and knowledge to manage the teaching-learning process as well as possible and to improve the level of their professional performance. It provides teachers' professional development and makes teachers welcome it if the principal decides to hold courses and take action in the field of teachers' professional development.

Participating principals stated that once a month they hold meetings in the school and during those meetings, the teachers introduce and explain the methods, plans, and ideas that they design and implement in the classroom so that other teachers can benefit from their decisions and plans. On the other hand, this indicates teachers that have independence in teaching-learning areas. Regarding the professional independence of teachers, one of the female principals asserts:

[13]... Teachers are directly involved with the classroom and students and can better touch classroom and education issues. If I, as a principal, do not give the teachers enough independence to make decisions or adjust programs according to the issues, education will not progress. And the whole school is not doing well...

Another male principal commented on the above-mentioned matter:

[1]... The principal should give the teachers the freedom to be independent in managing their classes. They should not be pressured. If we want to have a good and effective school, we should trust the specialties and give the teachers the freedom to use their skills and implement them in the classroom and education process...

One of the principals explained about teachers' independence in decision-making:

[9]... I always respect the teachers' opinions because I believe that making decisions in the school should not be the responsibility of one individual and there should not be a centralized structure. There should always be a level of freedom and independence in school so that we can use all the specializations...

Providing the context for parents' involvement in students' education: The last indicator of pedagogically-centered leadership is the belief that schools should be able to provide a ground for parents to be involved in their children's education instead of participating. The school must communicate with parents to have an effective education because when education takes place in school, this education must continue at home to consolidate learning. Parents should be

involved in it because sometimes when students are doing activities at home, they notice something that they didn't understand well or didn't learn in the classroom. Therefore, the existence of this relationship seems necessary.

The noteworthy point that existed in this interview was the principals' emphasis on involvement instead of participation; They believed that parents should not only be involved in school affairs, but also that administrators should take care of parents' involvement in their children's educational affairs at school; Because participation is planned and formal and is related to programs that are carried out to solve problems, but parental involvement refers to the involvement and voluntary participation of parents in the educational processes of their children, in which parents participate in all educational activities of schools. One of the principals emphasized the significance of the role of parents and stated:

[3]... In my opinion, parents are one of the factors that feel the positive and negative performance of the school well and quickly, and for this reason, parents can be a good factor for evaluating the school's performance, which can improve the school's performance….

Regarding parental involvement, another experienced male principal commented:

[2]... Parents, as those who are outside the school, can evaluate the school from the outside and the general point of view, and this makes different aspects of the school, such as educational, cultural, pedagogical, etc. to be seen more critically. If parents' opinions are used in schools, one can see positive changes in school performance...

The second question: What characteristics can make pedagogically-centered leaders separate and unique leader from other educational leaders? Based on the analysis of the themes, four characteristics were obtained as the unique characteristics of the pedagogically-centered leader, which is depicted in the.

The unique characteristics of pedagogically-centered leaders were provided in the form of four global themes under the titles of seeking participation, activism for social justice and equal opportunities, valuing subcultures and leader of leaders, which will be further explained in details.

Leader of leaders: The first component regarding the unique characteristics of a pedagogically-centered leader is to look at the members of the organization as a leader. The school principal believes that teachers have their abilities and can lead their own classrooms and education process. On the other hand, they try to use the abilities and ideas of teachers in the decision-making and planning of schools and somehow move towards the creation of participatory management. They believe that by using participatory management, not only teachers' thoughts and abilities can be used, but this participation and transfer of Thoughts to each other make teachers grow together, benefit from each other's opinions, and make use of each other's thoughts and ideas in class decisions individually. The principal tries to provide conditions for each of the teachers to become a leader, and in other words, he tries to create a leader-teacher in the school. Emphasizing the

significance of leadership teachers, one of the principals asserts:

[10]... Everyone who becomes a teacher eventually has some ideas and abilities, if he/she cannot implement them in the classroom and school, those abilities will disappear. In my opinion, a teacher should be free to set goals and plans for his classrooms and have the authority to act so that he can perform better, and on the other hand, this motivates him. We should let the teachers make their own decisions. They are directly connected to the classroom and are the best decision-makers...

One of the male principals participating in the research describes the leadership role of teachers as follows:

[4]... Every once in a while I hold meetings and ask the teachers to give their opinions about the decisions that have been made. Sometimes teachers highlight some points that are not considered at all, and this can be very helpful, I always use the abilities and ideas of teachers in school planning and decisions...

Another male principal discusses the importance of leadership teacher development in the school:

[16]... In my opinion, the principal should pay attention to the fact that his teachers should always be equipped with new abilities and skills, so he should constantly update them, which can be done in the form of holding workshops and training different skills to teachers...

Activist of social justice and equal opportunities: Another characteristic of a pedagogically-centered leader that distinguishes him from other leaders is his leadership to realize justice in communities. Justice is a moral value

for humans, which is possible only by respecting the rights of members of society. One of the basic human needs is the realization of social justice. The leader of pedagogically-centered education commits to providing an equal opportunity for the flourishing of the talents of all students. It is the responsibility of leaders as agents of change, to update the school conditions, both in terms of resources and teaching-learning. By establishing fairness and giving power to teachers, leaders provide conditions so that teachers can perform the best fair performance in the specific situations of students.

Some of the participating principals mentioned that sometimes they, along with teachers, try to provide some school facilities that help the students learn more and make the students of their school not fall behind the students of other schools, and bear their costs. They do this cooperation simply for the reason that if the students of other schools have more facilities and educational resources for learning, their students have the same opportunity to progress academically as other students and do not lag in education and progress. One of the participating female principals highlights the proactive role of school staff:

[8]... In my opinion, all students have the talent to progress and succeed, so I try as much as possible to make different conditions of schools have less impact on their learning. For example, sometimes some teachers volunteered to hold extracurricular classes for weak students, and I welcomed them very much and provided the conditions for them...

One of the male principals commented on the development of social justice:

[14]... Fortunately, our school staff are very diligent and caring. Most of the time, when I see that something is lacking in the school and it should exist so that the students can learn better, I share this issue with the teachers, and they also cooperate because the students follow the examples of other students from other schools, and together we provide the equipment for the students.

Seeking participation: The characteristic of being participative, which was highlighted as one of the characteristics of pedagogically-centered leadership, indicates that the leader has a desire to create a collaborative atmosphere. He uses the opinion of the school community and tries to create an atmosphere so that members of the school community can participate in school affairs. From his point of view, school members have a common vision and goal that everyone strives to achieve, so school members should be with each other and the leader should provide this environment for them. Of course, creating such an environment requires that the leader has a flexible personality and tries to create an atmosphere of trust by delegating some of his authority and creating an opportunity for comments, discussion, and criticism. According to field research, in some schools, the principals place boxes in the school office, which were for teachers' criticisms and opinions about the principal's performance. One of the female principals, who is the principal of one of the special elementary schools, describes principals' participation as follows:

[18]... Different people with diverse abilities are working in the school, so definitely if I want the school to be successful, I have to take advantage of these different abilities. I often leave a part of the work that I have to do to my colleagues and ask them to help me in doing the work, so this makes the teachers feel confident in themselves and their abilities. ...

One of the principals commented on the importance of participation in school management:

[8]... All of us have a common goal in school that we are trying to achieve. Well, when there is a common goal, I have to consult all the teachers and ask for their opinions to achieve the same common goal.

Valuing subcultures: the last feature of pedagogically-centered leader's characteristics is valuing subcultures. The existence of different cultures in schools is inevitable and it is the school leader who can accept cultural diversity with his measures and understand the different contexts of these cultures. Based on the analysis of the research results, one of the characteristics that distinguishes the pedagogically-centered leader is paying attention to the subcultures in the school and valuing them. The leader is aware of the fact that teaching and learning cannot be unaffected by the cultural diversity in the school and not only this cultural diversity should not be ignored but also this diversity should be used to enrich the cultural environment of the school. Some principals said that when a program is implemented in the school, they try to use these different cultures and include them in the program, introduce them to other students, and in this way, they introduce students to other cultures.

One of the experienced principals describes valuing subcultures as follows:

[17]... We have different types of students in the school who belong to different cultures and this is a natural thing and I always try to use these different cultures. I try to familiarize children with different cultures by holding different programs including local competitions…

Another principal emphasized the significance of cultural diversity as follows:

[15]... I always try to take into account the cultural differences that exist in the school. Even the teachers of the same school have different cultures, and I always remind the teachers to keep this in mind in their classrooms and teaching…

Discussion and Conclusion

In this section, while explaining the global themes obtained, how to create and develop pedagogically-centered leadership is explained through a developmental argument. A developmental argument is a discussion that explains how to create and develop a social phenomenon (Hennink, 2020). Then, the participants' perspectives on pedagogically-centered leadership are interpreted.

Leadership indicators refer to the features that pedagogically-centered leaders are identified and introduced with. The results indicated that the participants introduced the indicators of a pedagogically-centered leader in four components teachers' professional development and independence, enriching the art of teaching, adopting a constructivist approach to learning, and encouraging parents' involvement in their children's education. In other words, they believed that a pedagogically-centered leader should

have these indicators and components even if he/she did not believe in them wholeheartedly. The participants stated that a person is a pedagogically-centered leader who considers teachers and their activity in the school important and helps their professional development, and on the other hand, by considering a constructive approach, makes teachers independent from their obligations and job conditions. By equipping classrooms and educational space, such leaders help teachers improve the quality of teaching and learning, and in other words, enrich the art of teaching. They also asserted that pedagogically-centered leadership and training are trying to help teachers make the learning space for students a space for searching and solving problems so that they can create their knowledge and deeply consider the role of parents in raising and educating their children. Therefore, as much as they can, pedagogically-centered leaders provide necessary conditions for parents' involvement in school decisions.

Another purpose of the current research was to find the unique characteristics of a pedagogically centered leader. Unique characteristics are the characteristics that a pedagogically centered leader should inherently possess and as the title suggests, these characteristics are unique to such leaders. That is, even if no one supervises the implementation of activities of these leaders, they fulfill their obligations with the best heart and show these characteristics in their activities because these characteristics are among the inherent features of these leaders.

The analysis of interviews demonstrated that the activism of social justice and equal opportunities, the

leader of leaders, seeking participation, and valuing subcultures are among the characteristics of pedagogically-centered leaders. The participants believed that pedagogically-centered leaders try to provide the same conditions and opportunities for students' education as much as they can because they wholeheartedly believe that all students have their abilities and talents and if the conditions are right, they can develop their talents. Pedagogically-centered leaders also believe in the ability of teachers, and this causes teachers to act as leaders in the classroom and to be decision-makers in classroom activities. The participants believed that pedagogically-centered leader considers teachers as leaders and give them authority, participate with them in school decisions, and respect their opinions. This leader creates the school climate in such a way that people can express themselves freely respects the cultural differences and subcultures in the school and considers them as an opportunity for diversity and creativity.

According to the abovementioned, the social phenomenon of pedagogically-centered leadership can be created and developed in primary schools with three strategies. Choosing principals who have the unique characteristics of a pedagogically-centered leader, that is a leader of leaders, seeking participation, valuing subcultures, and activist for social justice and equal opportunities. Principals who can implement the mechanisms of pedagogically-centered leadership, i.e. enriching the art of teaching, developing and professional independence of teachers, adopting a constructivist approach to learning, and creating a context for parents'

involvement in children's education, should be chosen. Changing the mental paradigms of school community members, which includes changing the paradigm of principals from playing fixed roles to flexible roles, changing the paradigm of principals from management to leadership, changing the paradigm of principals from bureaucracy to specialization, changing the paradigm of teachers from teaching-oriented to learning-oriented, changing the paradigm of parents from participation to involvement in their children's educational affairs at school and changing students' paradigm from knowledge transfer to knowledge creation is well done by such leadership style.

According to the results of the research, two categories of practical implications were obtained, each of which, includes three cases of changing mental paradigms. Three cases of the change of mental paradigms are related to the principals and the other three cases are related to the rest of the members of the school community. The first category includes the practical implications related to school principals, which consists of three components changing the paradigm of playing fixed roles to flexible roles, changing the paradigm of management to leadership, and the third one is changing the paradigm from bureaucracy to specialization.

(1) Changing the paradigm of playing fixed roles to flexible roles: based on the analysis, it can be argued that pedagogically-centered leaders are aware of the fact that today's society is changing rapidly, and in line with these changes, the demands and needs of students and teachers and the society's perspective towards the position and

role of the school has also changed. Therefore, these leaders use all their efforts and expertise to be able to distribute their leadership role in the school and try to turn teachers into classroom leaders because teachers are the ones who are in direct contact with students and with the learning environment and process. Learning is directly related. The leader creates flexibility in roles by changing his mental paradigms towards the members of the school community. In terms of role flexibility, we can refer to the theory of loosely coupled systems, in which the leader tries to link the members of the school together in such a way that they depend on each other as little as possible and reduces the risk that a change in one of the members causes a change and disorder in other members. For example, the school principal is busy teaching in the class, while the teacher is busy coordinating in the school office, and the other teacher is busy visiting his colleague's class, which means that the roles in the school are not fixed, but they are flexible and can change among individuals.

The theory of loosely coupled systems is also proposed in Birnbaum's cybernetic model (1988; quoted by Dadkhah 2011). According to this theory, the more stable the organizational unit and specialized core, the looser the connection of management systems with each other and the stronger the connection of management systems with the environment. In other words, centralized hierarchical relationships are at a low level and management levels are at the lowest level of dependence on each other, and this reduces the risk that a change in one of the members will cause a change and

disruption in other members. Loose connections encourage individual elements to adapt to environmental conditions or events. These adaptations can be made easily without involving other elements or the whole system (Scott, 1987; Weick, 1976).

Loosely coupled systems theory also allows multiple elements to reconcile and satisfy conflicting demands. In loosely coupled theory, related events influence each other, but each event maintains its physical and logical existence and characteristics. Their connection is limited, casual, weak, insignificant, and irresponsible. In other words, a loose link indicates the instability, variability, and temporary nature of all the links that make the organization unified (Bush, 2020; translated by Hasani et al., 2021).

By delegating authority to teachers and colleagues and providing a flexible environment, the pedagogically-centered leader causes school members to perform various tasks reduces the formal and managerial communication of the school, and causes teachers to acquire various abilities. In addition to teaching roles, teachers can take on other duties and roles such as school leadership, supervision, etc.

As Benis (1989) points out, today's organizations do not have only one leader, but they have employees who, like leaders, constantly adapt themselves to the conditions and needs of the environment, empower other employees, and give meaning to their work. They also possess skills to overcome difficult situations. According to the results of the research and the themes obtained, pedagogically-centered leadership can be considered parallel leadership to some extent. Parallel leadership is a

collaborative and democratic activity in nature and it is a type of leadership that eliminates the focus on hierarchy and superior/subordinate relationships and creates new combinations of relationships in the organization (English et al., 2012; quoted by Shirbagi and Sadeghi 2019).

(2) Changing the paradigm of management to leadership: Another change in mental paradigms is the transformation of the concept of management to leadership. Bush (2020) refers to the three dimensions of the difference between leadership and management. He believes that it is influence, values, and change that provide a useful definition of leadership and distinguish it from management. He considers influence as the process of social influence of one person or group on another person or group to regulate relationships in the organization. Regarding values, he states that leadership is related to values, and leaders are expected to act based on professional and personal values. Regarding the dimension of change, he explains that leaders must have the ability to create change.

Therefore, the leader should have the ability to influence teachers with his good behavior and relations with teachers and staff of the school, so that he can coordinate the relations of the school members based on the specified goals, on the other hand, the leader must define certain values in the school. According to the influence process, the leader will cause the school members to recognize the leader's values as their own and internalize them, and finally, the leader can make the necessary changes to achieve the school's goals in the school's structure and programs according to his vision and perspective,

without those changes disrupting the atmosphere of the organization and causing the resistance of school members.

The pedagogically-centered leader believes that today's educational system needs leadership more than ever and the word management and its application in schools should be avoided. The principals believed that a pedagogically-centered leader defines a vision of what the school can achieve and then communicates it to school members, develops strategies to realize it, and organizes relationships among school members to achieve it. He motivates school members and makes it possible for the school to achieve the specified goals by clearly expressing his demands from the school members. A pedagogically-centered leader is aware that a principal must be a leader to achieve the desired results of the school.

(3) Changing the paradigm of bureaucracy to specialization: Changing the environment of bureaucracy to specialization is one of the other changes in the mental paradigm of a pedagogically-centered leader. Based on the results of the present research, a pedagogically-centered leader is aware that when a person enters an organization, he/she brings with him expertise and skills that should be paid attention to and welcomed. In other words, the leader believes in transferring learning to the work environment and pays attention to the fact that teachers' expertise should be used in school, labor should be divided based on the teachers' expertise, and the structure of the school should be changed from a strict and monotonous structure, the environment of which causes exhaustion for the

teachers, to a flexible structure and a space for flourishing and growth.

As Hoy and Miskel (2013) referring to Weber's theory consider specialization as one of the consequences of the division of labor, state that with the specialization of work, efficiency increases, and this in turn leads to the guidance of employees in the area of performing assigned tasks to acquire knowledge and expertise. They also assert that the labor division enables the organization to hire employees based on technical competencies. Therefore, labor division and specialization increase specialized knowledge among school staff.

Section B: Practical implications for other members of the school community: The second category of the practical implications of this research is related to other members of the school community, which includes changing teacher's mental paradigm from being teaching-oriented to learning-oriented, changing the mental paradigm of parents from participation to the involvement in their children's educational affairs and changing the students' mental paradigm from knowledge transfer to knowledge creation.

(4) Changing the mental paradigm from teaching-centered to learning-centered: Another mental paradigm of pedagogically-centered leaders that focuses on teacher's activities in the classroom is changing the mental paradigm of teaching towards a learner-centered environment. In a learner-centered environment, knowledge is not something that has a single existence and is transferred from the teacher to the students, in other words, knowledge is not acquired but is constructed (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2016).

As Schiro (2017) stated that placing students at the center of the teaching-learning process is a logical principle, based on which, learners themselves will understand different materials. The school leader believes that teachers should distance themselves from the traditional teaching methods in the classroom, in other words, the material should not be presented to the students unilaterally by the teacher because it will destroy the creativity of students.

School leaders believe that students like to explore, interpret, and judge, so the teacher should provide these conditions for students to practice how to learn. In other words, teachers should provide a learning environment in the classroom in such a way that the students explore the concepts of the lesson, express their opinions, and evaluate them. As Peterson (2012) points out, the teacher is not a source of knowledge, but a guide to acquiring knowledge and facilitating the learning process for learners and tries to provide a rich environment that suits the needs of learners. Emphasis on new methods in teaching-learning and changing teaching methods from outcome-oriented to process-oriented is one of the practical implications of the present research.

(5) Changing the paradigm of parental participation to parental involvement: Another practical implication is changing the mental paradigm of school community members towards parents. The pedagogically-centered leader considers the role of parents in the school as highly important and provides an environment for parents to be involved in educational affairs by providing a collaborative atmosphere and the possibility of free expression of

ideas. The relationship between home and school is highly significant for the pedagogically-centered leader because the leader believes in synergy between home and school in decisions and activities and on the other hand believes that effective teaching and high learning of students is created when home and school are in communication with each other. As Haitt-Micheal (2005) mentions in developing countries, parents consider education as a means for their children to acquire better knowledge and skills and a higher socio-economic status. In this regard, Flyn & Nolan (2008) indicated that parental involvement leads to improved academic achievement, better school attendance, and higher graduation rates. The pedagogically-centered leader does not believe in the participation of parents in school activities as a planned issue and emphasizes that school conditions should be such that parents can be involved in school affairs at any time without prior planning and convey their opinions to the leader. In other words, from the point of view of a pedagogically-centered leader, the focus of parents' participation in school affairs and decisions is replaced by parents' involvement because they believe that this can have a high impact on the effectiveness of education and school. As Shirbagi et al. (2014) express in their research, when initiatives and programs are based on respectful and trustful relationships between school staff and parents, they will be much more efficient in creating and maintaining links that support students' academic progress. Establishing positive relationships with parents and providing practical ways will parents in their children's educational success.

Something that should be mentioned regarding parental involvement in the education process in the current research was the situation caused by Corona epidemic, because of which, school education was held virtually for two years. Based on the analysis, it can be argued that during the pandemic of coronavirus, even parents were able to get to know the way teachers teach and in some cases, they were able to recognize the learning problems of their children. This issue influenced the cooperation and communication between schools and parents. It created conditions for parents to be involved as much as possible in the education of their children and the educational affairs of the school and not to wait for the invitation of the school to participate in educational activities. Therefore, pandemic of coronavirus caused parents to be involved in school affairs. Involvement is beyond participation. Desforges & Abouchaar (2003) distinguish between these two concepts and assert that involvement is a spontaneous activity, but participation is planned; involvement has a bottom-up process, participation is more of a top-down process and is usually related to programs that aim to solve the problem of insufficient involvement or non-involvement of parents (Desforges and Abouchar, 2003; cited by Shirbaghi et al. 2014).

(6) Changing the paradigm of knowledge transfer to knowledge creation in students: The last change is the change of students' mental paradigm from teaching-centered to learning-centered in the classroom. In other words, it is a change toward a constructivist approach to learning. These leaders believe in creating constructivist learning environments

where students are the main agents in the learning process and assume the role of knowledge creators, which should be supported by teachers. As Watson (2001) states students construct their knowledge consolidate their ideas and understand better when they are guided by teachers. This will gradually increase the level of awareness of the students and they will be able to organize their learning by metacognition. Therefore, from a pedagogically-centered leader's point of view, providing context for the use of new teaching methods and emphasizing it, is one of the significant factors in teaching.

According to the results of the present research, one of the environments that pedagogically-centered leaders emphasized was hybrid learning environments because they believed that today's students need to be equipped with modern skills and technologies and this should be taken into account in the education process. Such leaders considered in-service training courses for teachers along with the implementation of this learning approach, in addition to equipping the environment with various facilities and resources. By this means, they could familiarize teachers with the abilities needed to use this approach. Finally, it can be argued that it is necessary to perceive teaching-learning beyond its simple position in schools, and leaders should try not to use fixed and effective approaches and models, but seek to link the educational results of their schools with social realities and the needs of students and society. They should also try to fill educational gaps.

In line with the implementation of pedagogically-centered leadership, some of the most significant recommendations are as follows:

• Providing an appropriate context for the involvement of parents instead of their participation, through educating and informing them.

• Selection and appointment of individuals with unique characteristics of pedagogically-centered leaders for the post of school leadership.

• Informing teachers to allow students to create knowledge

• Transforming a teaching-oriented process into a learning-oriented process

• Transforming school management into leadership

• Giving importance to specialization instead of bureaucracy,

• Increasing the professional independence of teachers,

• Transforming the fixed and defined roles in the school into flexible and variable roles.

Finally, it should be mentioned that one of the limitations of the present research was the reluctance of some school principals to record their voices during the interview session. Due to cultural issues, most of the female principals did not allow us to record their voices during the interview session. The most important limitation of this research was the principals' lack of familiarity with the concept of leadership. Due to the sensitivity towards the word leadership and some political issues, several school principals did not want to use the word leadership, and their emphasis was on management; as a result, the concept of leadership has not yet found its real position.

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Appendix 1
Interview Protocol

A- The first interview: Focusing on life history

1. Thank you very much for providing your precious time and cooperating in this research. Well, in the first session of the interview, we will go back a little to the past. I think it's better to start here by telling me how was the educational situation in your family during your childhood and adolescence. I mean, what was the status of school and education? Who played the role in this regard?

2. Who were your role models during your education? Can you tell us which of the teachers/school staff/school principals you liked the most during the years you were a school student? Why? What unique features did they have?

3. So what happened that you decided to enter the field of education for your job? Please tell us about your job history in the field of education, what positions have you held so far? How long have you been a school principal or...? Thank you very much for your patience and cooperation. In the next meeting, we will talk more about the role you play as a school principal/teacher.

B- The second interview: Details of the experience

1) Thank you again for your cooperation. Our conversation today is a continuation of the previous interview. Well, you already told us that you have (-) years of school management experience. Please tell us about the events of one of your working days.

2) From your conversations, it is clear that one of your main daily functions during the day is establishing communication. To what extent do you communicate with school members such as teachers, students, parents, and people outside the school?

3) We found that you have a special interest in the field of education. In this regard, as a school leader and not an ordinary manager, what other major roles do you play?

4) What is your motivation to start a working day as a pedagogically-centered leader? What is expected from a school leader who focuses on pedagogy? What actions have you taken in line with these expectations? Tell us about the details of your experience.

5) Which of the functions of the school is a priority for you? Considering these priorities, how do you deal with the goals, organizational structure, and regulations of the school and educational system to play the role of a pedagogically-centered leader?

6) According to the background of your school experiences, how do you think the process of education has changed in your school? Have you and the members of the school played a role outside of the school and at the community level? Provide us with some examples.

7) Should school leaders also be evaluated? If the answer is yes, what should be the evaluation criteria of a pedagogically-centered leader?

C- The third interview: Thinking about the meaning of experience

1) Well, today is the last session of our interview. Today's meeting is a little different from previous meetings, we focus less on your experiences and more on the meaning of your experiences.

2) Considering your valuable experiences in the field of education, what does being a pedagogically-centered teacher/leader mean to you? In what components do you see yourself different from ordinary leaders and principals?

3) In line with pedagogy at the school, what changes did you make in the school curriculum, and the mechanisms of students' education compared to other principals? What goals are you pursuing?

4) How do you improve the quality of learning in your school? What was the role of other school members such as teachers and students in this leadership process? What evidence do you have for your answer?

5) If you think critically, what are your main concerns/responsibilities as a pedagogically-centered teacher/leader?

6) Finally, is there anything else you would like to tell me to provide us with a better understanding of the experience of a pedagogically-centered teacher/leader?