

Original Research

A survey on the Level of School's Staff Familiarity with the Fundamental Reform Document of Education and Readiness for Implementation

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Abstract

The Fundamental Reform Document of Education, IRI was approved by the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution in 2011. Based on different reports and studies, however, it seems that a decade after approval, not only the majority of its operational strategies have not been implemented, but its setting and establishment is still in a state of ambiguity. As school's educational staff are the most crucial element of implementing such a document, this survey measures school readiness and staff familiarity. In this case, the survey method was used comprises the number of 129 educational staff working in public and private schools at different levels elementary, middle, and high schools including girls and boys) was studied in Tehran and Kerman provinces. Results showed that educational staff is familiar with the Fundamental Reform Document of Education, its theoretical foundation, and subsequently with its six subsystems, respectively. The readiness of schools to implement the Fundamental Reform Document of Education is also as follows: 81% for the relationship between schools and institutions, 77% for educational staffs readiness, 76% fostering affairs, 73% for the preparedness of classrooms, workshops, and laboratories, 72% for teachers with professional experiences, 71% for access to internet infrastructure, 66% for sports space, facilities, and equipment, 65% for schools' institutional autonomy for decision-making, and 56% for financial resources. At the final stage of this article, we submitted a model for utilizing the school's capacity to implement the Fundamental Reform Document of Education.

Keywords: The Fundamental Reform Document of Education, School, teachers and administrative, schools' readiness, schools' infrastructure, financial resources.

Introduction

Simultaneous with the Islamic revolution, radical evolution in the educational system was

required to be compatible with evolution in other sectors as economic, social, political, and cultural fields in IRI. Therefore, the reorientation, reforms, restructuring, and transformation of the educational system have been considered the main concern of IRI-related authorities for many years. After 2001, fundamental changes in the formal education system in the IRI were put on as the critical issue in the agenda of related responsible bodies. Accordingly, the Theoretical Foundation of the Fundamental Reform in Formal General Education System of IRI was developed, and subsequently based on such theoretical foundations and also comparative studies and SWOT analysis, a committee was formed to design and develop the Fundamental Reform Document of Education under the responsibility of the author (Abbas Sadri). The Fundamental Reform Document of Education comprises a values statement, mission statement, vision statement, eight goals, 15 strategies, 23 objectives, and 133 operational strategies approved by the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution (2011a, b).

Although some assessments of the Ministry of Education have shown that some parts of the operational strategies have been implemented (Ministry of Education, 2020) but, after ten years from the Fundamental Reform Document of Education's approval, many dimensions are not established and implemented in the education system (Navidpour, 2017; Mozanebi, 2012). Therefore, maybe precise evaluation of the related success or failure of implementing the Fundamental Reform Document of Education can be utilized by policymakers. Although Implementation of Theoretical Foundation of the Fundamental Reform has numerous dimensions and sectors, this study has focused on its implementation at the school level. This is because we believe that many of the Fundamental Reform Document of Education's operational strategies can be implemented and executed at the school level.

The importance of schools' role and especially teachers and administrators, has been emphasized in different parts of the Fundamental Reform Document of Education. For example, space, equipment, and technology subsystem, schools' readiness, and their equipment have been under emphasis for Fundamental Reform Document of Education's implementation. In this subsystem, the functional realm is defined as follows: "all the activities of planning, organizing, designing, implementing, assessing and supplying related to the provision of the body of the formal public education system and its equipment and technology following the curriculum and in harmony with the architecture and urban designing, manufacturing technology, equipment and supplies, resources (human, material, financial) and technical management and engineering to achieve formal public education system's goals" (Supreme Education Council, 2016:7).

The most critical tasks mentioned in this subsystem including physical space provision, equipment and technology, site selection and proper space allocation, security, designing, and required information's provision (ibid, 8). In this connection, eight goals have been developed, which briefly include:

- Manufacturing, renovating, developing, and equipping educational,
- Training, and sports spaces,
- Organizing current physical spaces,
- Attracting maximum participation of all relevant institutions and organizations,
- Reconstructing and retrofitting old school spaces,
- Providing required space, equipment, and technology for all educational Centers,
- Optimal maintaining of existing educational spaces,
- Per capita increasing the educational space and equipment,

Increasing productivity (ibid 16-17).

Literature review shows that few studies have been done regarding the schools' readiness and challenges and their staff familiarity with Fundamental Reform Document of Education. Findings of Amrollahi's research (2015) about the obstacles confronted the implementation process of the Fundamental Reform Document of Education from teachers' point of view in District 2 of Tehran shows that among managerial, structural, participation, and cultural-human areas, the most critical factors are managerial, structural and participation. Nazarpour's (2018) findings show that designing architectural educational space, "attention to enhance students", "social interaction", "attention to Islamic-Iranian values", "possibility of acquiring multiple skills", "attention to exceptional student's requirements", "use of Iranian arts in designing", etc. should be considered. Nemati and Ghaffarian (2018) addressed internal and external challenges in implementing the Fundamental Reform Document of Education. Their results point to the most critical challenges as Fundamental Reform Document of Education's weakness in environmental analysis, defining existing situation and status and developing desired vision; the existence of tenure in the implementation and neglecting decentralization in education; neglecting cultural differences across the country; lack of mechanisms to attract public participation; and impact of political parties and change of governments in Fundamental Reform Document of Education's implementation.

The reason for the importance of schools and educational staff readiness is that considering the Fundamental Reform Document of Education goals and operational strategies required the provision of schools other physical, financial, institutional, and legal infrastructure as well as specialized and committed human resources, all of which providing the required situation for Fundamental Reform Document of Education's implementation. A part of this readiness lies in items like space and educational equipment, which considering their importance, are one of the six subsystems of the Fundamental Reform Document of Education. In this context, "educational space is not limited to classrooms; actually, training happens in an environment including classroom, campus, laboratories, workshops, library, prayer hall, and even outside the school. In this context, "educational space is not limited to classrooms. The reason for the importance of schools and educational staff readiness is that considering the Fundamental Reform Document of Education 's goals and operational strategies, and schools need the provision of different physical, financial, institutional, and legal infrastructure as well as specialized and committed human resources, all of which providing the required situation for Fundamental Reform Document of Education's implementation. In addition, the education system's readiness for Fundamental Reform Document of Education's implementation in other areas like having specialized and committed human resources in teacher-training area should also be considered. If we consider competent and committed human resources based on Islamic teaching that it is the ultimate goal of Fundamental Reform Document of Education, the teachers play the crucial role in achieving Fundamental Reform Document of Education (Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, 2011b). Fundamental Reform Document of Education has given schools' teachers and administrators such special importance due to their status, which is considered in "teacher training and human resources" (Supreme Education Council, 2019) and "leadership and management" (Supreme Education Council, 2017) subsystem.

Despite various obstacles in fundamental Reform Document of Education implementation

in different levels are recognized, the schools' readiness and the familiarity of educational staff with Fundamental Reform Document of Education has not been studied yet. Therefore, this study raises two critical questions:

1. What is the level of familiarity of teachers and school administrators with the Fundamental Reform Document of Education, Theoretical Foundation of the Fundamental Reform and 6 subsystems?
2. What is the level of schools' readiness to implement the Fundamental Reform Document of Education?

Methodology

This paper explores the documentary research method (DSM) and survey method. In the documentary section, documents were related to the development, establishment, and implementation of the Fundamental Reform Document of Education, and its statistical population included all the documents, minutes, approvals and enactments, laws, regulations, evaluations, appraisals, and all the other items regarding the establishment and implementation of Fundamental Reform Document of Education. In this case, the questionnaire was used to collect information on school status and readiness, including the familiarity of teachers and principals with the Fundamental Reform Document of Education.

The Statistical population included all the school administrators and teachers across the country. For this purpose, the data were collected from 129 educational staff in Tehran and Kerman provinces using the non-probability (purposive) Sampling method. Purposive sampling is the researcher's conscious selection of specific participants (Jalali, 2012; Abolma'ali, 2011). This sampling method includes "selecting the units or items of research based on its purpose, not just randomly" (Ranjbar, Haghdoost, Salsali, Khoshdel, Soleimani & Bahari, 2012:240). Samples were thus selected from public and private schools, boys' and girls' schools, and elementary and middle and high schools.

In the first question, the level of familiarity with the Theoretical Foundation of the Fundamental Reform, Fundamental Reform Document of Education, and its six subsystems was assessed. To assess the schools' readiness to implement the Fundamental Reform Document of Education, the components of this readiness were classrooms, workshops, laboratories, sports space, facilities and equipment, internet connection, infrastructure for fostering affairs, organizational autonomy, financial resources, professional human resources and communication with other social institutions.

Results

General characteristics of respondents

Although the sample population in this study was not selected randomly, the distribution of the questionnaire has been done with considering different variables to achieve a more comprehensive illustration of the school's teachers and administrators' point of view towards the Fundamental Reform Document of Education, its implementation, and the challenges ahead. The sample distribution based on official status showed that more than 60 percent of the respondents were teachers, and about 32 percent were school administrators (accredited responses). More than 56 percent of the respondents worked in elementary schools (first and second grade) and the rest in secondary schools (first and second grade). Finally, about 20 percent worked in private schools, and about 78% worked in public schools. In addition, about

53% of the respondents worked in girls' schools and about 46% in boys' schools. Another significant variable was the respondents' distribution based on their working experiences; for 10% of the respondents, working experiences were less than a decade, for about 20%, it was between 11 and 19 years, for about 57%, it was between 21-30 years, and for about 12% it was more than three decades. Based on the results, more than two-thirds of the respondents had working experiences of more than two decades. This means that most of these respondents have had working experiences in the education system from the Fundamental Reform Document of Education approval. Finally, about 59% of the respondents belonged to Tehran, and the rest in Kerman province.

Q1: How familiar are you with these items?

Table 1

The level of familiarity of respondents with Fundamental Reform Document of Education

Fundamental Reform Document of Education		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Respondents	Excellent	17	13.1	13.2	13.2
	Good	67	51.9	52.3	65.5
	Poor	32	24.8	25	90.5
	very poor	9	6.9	7	97.5
	Not at all	3	2.3	2.3	100
	Total	128		100	100
Refusing to answer		1			
Total sum		129	100		

In this section, the first question was regarding the familiarity of the school's teachers and administrators with the Fundamental Reform Document of Education and its related programs. As shown in table 1, about 64% of the respondents declared this familiarity is excellent and good, and about 2% are not familiar with the Fundamental Reform Document of Education. On the other hand, about a quarter of the respondents declared that this familiarity is poor and very poor.

Table 2

The level of familiarity of the respondents with theoretical foundations of the Fundamental Reform Document of Education

Theoretical foundations of the Fundamental Reform Document of Education		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Respondents	Excellent	14	10.8	10.8	10.8
	Good	59	45.7	45.7	56.5
	Poor	44	34.1	34.1	90.6
	very poor	10	7.7	7.7	98.3
	Not at all	2	1.5	1.5	100
	Total	129	100	100	100

Table 2 presents the level of familiarity with the Theoretical Foundation of the Fundamental Reform in which 57 percent of the respondents declared this level is excellent and good, and 40% declared it is poor and very poor.

Table 3

Familiarity level with Fundamental Reform Document of Education 's 6 subsystems

Fundamental Reform Document of Education 's 6 subsystems	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Respondents	Excellent	18	13.9	13.9
	Good	54	41.8	55.7
	Poor	44	34.1	89.8
	very poor	9	6.9	96.7
	Not at all	4	3.1	100
	Total	129	100	100

Table 3 shows the level of familiarity with the Fundamental Reform Document of Education's six subsystems. Over 55 percent of the respondents declared this familiarity is excellent or good with subsystems and about 40 percent expressed this familiarity is poor or very poor. About 3 percent of the respondents declared they are not familiar with subsystems at all.

Question 2: How do you assess the readiness of schools based on the following items for the Fundamental Reform Document of Education's implementation?

Table 4

Level of teacher's readiness to implement Fundamental Reform Document of Education

Teachers	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Respondents	very satisfied	34	26.4	27
	satisfied	66	51.2	79.4
	Not satisfied	23	17.8	97.6
	very dissatisfied	3	2.3	100
	Sum	126		100
Refusing to answer	3			
Total sum	129	100	100	

The following important variable relies on respondents' assessment about the readiness of different sectors and elements of schools for implementing Fundamental Reform Document of Education. Table 3 showed the readiness of educational staff. More than 77% of the respondents believe that level of teacher's readiness is satisfied or very satisfied and about 19% declared it

is not satisfied or very dissatisfied to implement Fundamental Reform Document of Education.

Table 5

The readiness of classrooms, workshops and laboratories to implement Fundamental Reform Document of Education

classrooms, workshops and laboratories		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Respondents	very satisfied	35	27.1	27.8	27.8
	satisfied	60	46.5	47.6	75.4
	Not satisfied	31	24	24.6	100
	Total	126		100	100
Refusing to answer		3			
Total sum		129	100	100	

Table 5 shows the readiness of classrooms, workshops, and laboratories to implement the Fundamental Reform Document of Education. More than 73% of the respondents declared schools' readiness is satisfied or very satisfied and about a quarter of participants declared this readiness is not satisfied.

Table 6

The readiness of sports space, facilities, and equipment to implement Fundamental Reform Document of Education

sports space, facilities and equipment		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Respondents	very satisfied	26	20.2	20.8	20.8
	satisfied	60	46.5	48	68.8
	Not satisfied	32	24.8	25.6	94.4
	very dissatisfied	7	5.4	5.6	100
	Total	125		100	100
Refusing to answer		4			
Total sum		129	100	100	

Table 6 indicates the readiness of schools in the case of sports space, facilities, and equipment, in which about two-thirds of the respondents chose satisfied or very satisfied options and about 30 percent of the respondents declared that it is not satisfied or very dissatisfied.

Table 7

The readiness of internet connection

internet connection		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Respondents	very satisfied	33	25.6	25.8	25.8
	satisfied	59	45.7	46.1	71.9
	Not satisfied	31	24	24.2	96.1
	very dissatisfied	5	3.9	3.9	100
	Total	128		100	100
Refusing to answer					
Total sum			100	100	

Table 6 shows the readiness of schools for internet connection in which more than 71% of the respondents believe schools readiness is satisfied or very satisfied and 28% declared it is not satisfied or very dissatisfied.

Table 7

The readiness for conducting fostering affairs programs (prayer hall, library, etc.)

Fostering affairs programs (prayer hall, library, etc.)		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Respondents	very satisfied	44	34.1	34.4	34.4
	satisfied	55	42.6	43	77.4
	Not satisfied	29	22.5	22.6	100
	Total	128		100	100
Refusing to answer		1			
Total sum		129	100	100	

Table 7 shows the readiness of schools for conducting fostering affairs programs (prayer hall, library, etc.). The findings show that more than 76% of the respondents declared that the schools' readiness for conducting such programs is satisfied or very satisfied, while about 22% assessed this readiness is not satisfied or very dissatisfied.

Table 8

Financial resources' readiness for implementing Fundamental Reform Document of Education

Financial resources		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Respondents	very satisfied	23	17.8	18	18
	satisfied	49	38	38.3	56.3
	Not satisfied	33	25.6	25.7	82.1
	very dissatisfied	23	17.8	18	100
	Total	128		100	100
Refusing to answer					
Total sum		129	100	100	

Table 8 presents the schools' status from the point of view of financial resources. About 56% of the respondents assessed this item as very satisfied or satisfied, and 43% declared it is not satisfied or very dissatisfied.

Table 9

schools' readiness in case of institutional autonomy for decision-making

institutional autonomy for decision-making		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Respondents	very satisfied	32	24.8	25	25
	satisfied	52	40.3	40.6	65.6
	Not satisfied	31	24	24.2	89.8
	very dissatisfied	13	10.1	10.2	100
	Total	128		100	100
Refusing to answer					
Total sum			100	100	

Table 9 indicates the level of institutional autonomy for decision-making for Fundamental Reform Document of Education's implementation. More than 65% of the respondents assessed this autonomy as very satisfied or satisfied, and about 34% assessed it as not satisfied or very dissatisfied.

Table 10

schools' readiness to implement Fundamental Reform Document of Education from the perspective of human resources with professional experiences

perspective of human resources with professional experiences		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Respondents	very satisfied	36	27.9	28.8	28.8
	satisfied	57	44.2	45.6	74.4
	Not satisfied	27	20.9	21.6	
	very dissatisfied	5	3.9	4	100
	Total	125		100	100
Refusing to answer					
Total sum			100	100	

Schools' readiness from the perspective of human resources with professional experiences for implementing Fundamental Reform Document of Education is shown in table 10. As it shows, more than 72% of the respondents believe schools' readiness is satisfied or very satisfied and about a quarter of them declared it is not satisfied or very dissatisfied.

Table 11

Schools' readiness in having relationship with other social institutions (family, local institutions, etc)

Having relationship with other social institutions (family, local institutions, etc.)		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Respondents	very satisfied	38	29.5	29.7	29.7
	satisfied	67	51.9	52.3	82
	Not satisfied	19	14.7	14.8	96.8
	very dissatisfied	4	3.1	3.1	100
	Total	128		100	100
Refusing to answer					
Total sum			100	100	

The relationship between schools and other institutions involved in implementing the Fundamental Reform Document of Education is presented in table 11, based on which 81% of the respondents claimed schools' condition is satisfied or very satisfied. From the perspective of 18% of the respondents, this relationship is not satisfied or very dissatisfied.

Discussion

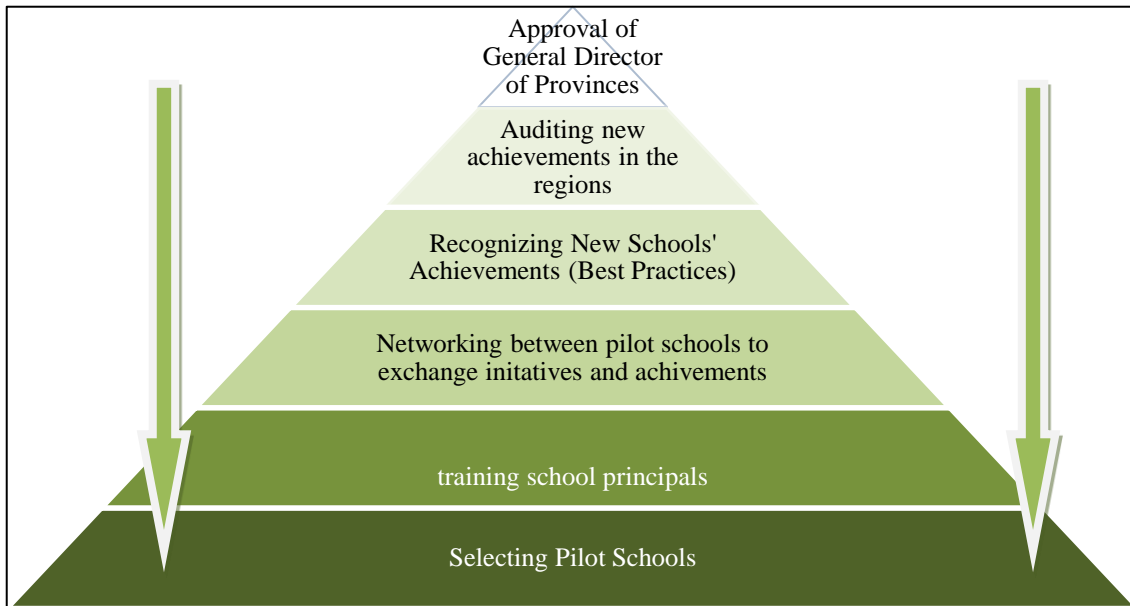
This study was conducted to study the level of familiarity of school's teachers and administrators with the Fundamental Reform Document of Education and the readiness of schools to implement the Fundamental Reform Document of Education in Tehran and Kerman provinces. As results show, the familiarity of educational staff with different Fundamental Reform Document of Education sections is more than average;. However, their familiarity with its subsystems -which pave the way for implementing Fundamental Reform Document of Education's operational strategies from the point of view of those involved in Fundamental Reform Document of Education's implementation, is less than their familiarity with the Fundamental Reform Document of Education and its theoretical foundations. Additionally, respondents assessed the schools' readiness for implementing Fundamental Reform Document of Education as follows: 81% for the relationship between schools and other institutions, 77% for teachers and principals readiness, 76% for implementation of fostering affairs, 73% for the readiness of classrooms, workshops, and laboratories, 72% for having human resources with professional experiences, 71% for having an internet connection, 66% for sports space, facilities, and equipment, 65% for institutional autonomy in decision-making, and 56% for financial resources.

It is necessary to mention some points regarding the results. First, the issue lies in generalizing study findings, especially in the case of schools' readiness. As the study's sample population is limited to Tehran and Kerman provinces, their results cannot be generalized to the whole country. This is because deprived areas are likely to have less readiness to implement the Fundamental Reform Document of Education than provinces like Tehran. It is also possible that the broad dimensions of the Fundamental Reform Document of Education have not been explained to educational staff, and thus, their perception of schools' readiness is inconsistent with the factual situation. Amrollahi (2015) findings indicate the existence of fundamental obstacles and challenges in schools' infrastructure.

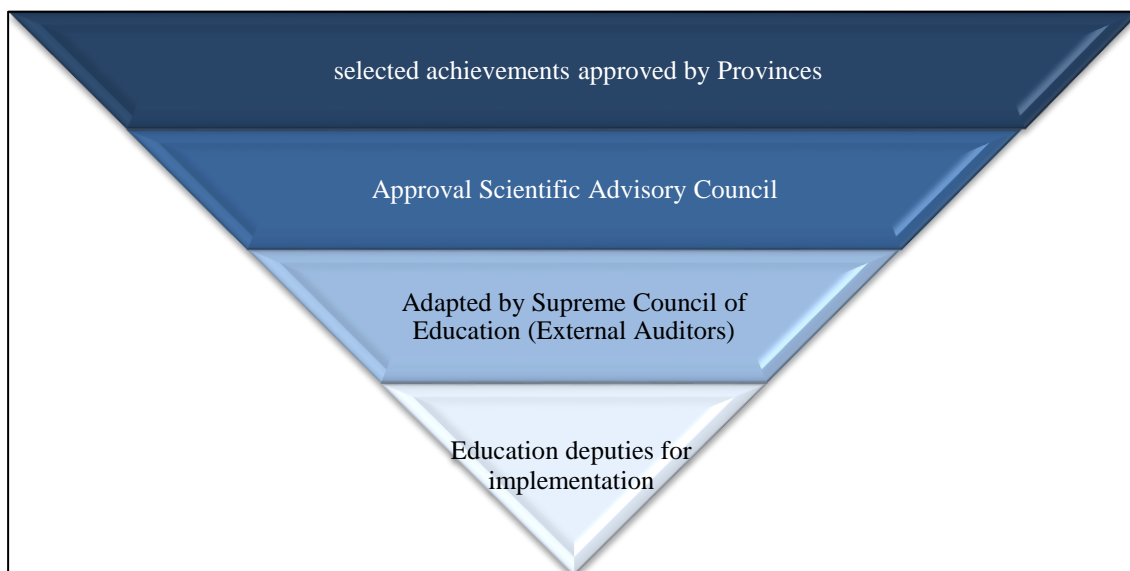
Some of the challenges existing in the Fundamental Reform Document of Education's implementation progress possibly lie in the issues related to the development and approval process of the Fundamental Reform Document of Education. It seems that the developers and executors of the Fundamental Reform Document of Education did not have a precise estimate of school s' capacities for implementing the Fundamental Reform Document of Education.

Establishing and implementing the Fundamental Reform Document of Education on the school level requires numerous facilities, infrastructure, and capacities that have been neglected during the development of the Fundamental Reform Document of Education. So, it seems that expectations from schools' administrators and teachers should be considered based on their capacities.

Finally, reviewing the Fundamental Reform Document of Education and its six subsystems show that a precise mechanism and structure are required to establish and implement Fundamental Reform Document of Education's operational strategies, including engagement of schools. On the other hand, the reverse approach is that establishment and implementation process can be conducted from the school level (bottom-up approach- mechanism).



The first phase of the suggested model



The second phase of the suggested model

Chart 1: a suggested model for implementing Fundamental Reform Document of Education through the bottom-up approach-mechanism

Conclusion

The author (Abbas Sadri) recently developed the above model to improve and modify the Fundamental Reform Document of Education's implementation processes at the school level. It suggested that some schools can be selected as pilots to implement the Fundamental Reform Document of Education based on the bottom-up approach- mechanism presented in the above model. Also, to promote schools' achievements and share their lived experience in implementing the Fundamental Reform Document of Education, the next step is networking between selected schools. This leads to recognizing schools' new achievements in implementing the Fundamental Reform Document of Education and selecting the most

important. All of these achievements then will be delivered to the Scientific Advisory Council in education headquarters through the approval of the General Directorate in different provinces (beginning of phase 2). This council has designed a model based on selected achievements of pilot schools, and the Supreme Council of Education (External Audit) will approve the macro project and transfer it to Education Deputies for implementation.

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