

**AN EVALUATION ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE  
PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN IRAN**

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**UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA**

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**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the  
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<من لم يشكر المخلوق لم يشكر الخالق>

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AIOU</b>	Allama Iqbal Open University
<b>ANOVA</b>	Analysis of Variance
<b>CPD</b>	Continuous Professional Development
<b>ETeMS</b>	English in the Teaching of Mathematics and Science
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>ICDL</b>	International Computer Driving Licence
<b>KBSM</b>	<i>Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah</i> (Integrated Curriculum Secondary Schools)
<b>KBSR</b>	<i>Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah</i> (New Primary School)
<b>MOE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>OECD</b>	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>OFSTED</b>	Office for Standards in Education
<b>TPD</b>	Teachers' Professional Development

# **PENILAIAN KEBERKESANAN PROGRAM PERKEMBANGAN PROFESIONAL GURU SEKOLAH RENDAH DI IRAN**

## **ABSTRAK**

Tujuan kajian ini ialah untuk menilai keberkesanan program pembangunan profesional guru-guru sekolah rendah (TPD) di Iran. Ia memberi tumpuan kepada pandangan peserta latihan dalam perkhidmatan khusus tentang kekuatan dan kelemahan dari segi sepuluh komponen model sarang labah Akker (2003). Peserta kajian adalah guru sekolah rendah yang mengajar gred enam pada tahun 2012-2013 dan telah menghadiri program latihan dalam perkhidmatan yang dianjurkan oleh Kementerian Pendidikan Iran. Kajian ini menganalisis data kuantitatif dan kualitatif yang dikumpul daripada soal selidik dan temu bual kumpulan fokus untuk menilai keberkesanan pembangunan profesional guru-guru sekolah rendah (TPD) di Iran. Data kuantitatif yang dianalisis termasuklah gender, umur, tahap pendidikan, daerah asal dan pengalaman. Sebanyak 380 soal selidik yang mengandungi 132 soalan tertutup menggunakan skala Likert 5-mata dan 8 soalan terbuka telah diedarkan kepada guru-guru sekolah rendah di beberapa daerah di utara, timur, barat, tengah dan selatan Tehran, ibu negeri Iran. Kadar pulangan soal selidik adalah 88%. Sepuluh orang guru telah dijemput untuk memberikan maklumat terperinci mengenai aspek-aspek tertentu program ini melalui sesi temu bual kumpulan fokus. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa para peserta berpuas hati dengan rasional, tujuan dan objektif, kandungan, peranan jurulatih dan penilaian. Mereka agak berpuas hati dengan aktiviti-aktiviti pembelajaran, dan pengumpulan peserta dan bahan dan sumber. Dapatan kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa mereka tidak berpuas hati dengan masa dan lokasi program TPD tersebut. Responden mencadangkan bahawa elemen-elemen ini perlu dipertimbangkan oleh pengurus program apabila mahu menjalankan



program pembangunan profesional. Secara umum, dapatlah disimpulkan bahawa responden berpendapat kursus ini memenuhi harapan mereka dalam sesetengah aspek atau komponen model Akker. Dapatan kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa kursus dalam perkhidmatan telah meningkatkan pengetahuan dan kemahiran responden. Walau bagaimanapun, responden menyatakan keinginan untuk mempelajari lebih lanjut dan berharap untuk menambahbaik pengajaran mereka. Berdasarkan dapatan ini, dicadangkan kajian akan datang bolehlah menggunakan pendekatan kaedah sebab-perbandingan supaya dapat memberi lebih banyak pandangan dan maklumat tentang program TPD. Kedua, kajian ini telah menumpukan kepada guru-guru sekolah rendah, oleh itu kajian masa depan bolehlah melibatkan guru sekolah dari peringkat lain atau kakitangan lain di institusi pendidikan lain di Iran.

# **AN EVALUATION ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN IRAN**

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of primary school teachers' professional development (TPD) programmes in Iran. It focuses on the views of in-service training participants' specifically on the strengths and deficiencies or shortages according to ten components of Akker's (2003) Spider Web Model. The participants of the study were primary school teachers teaching in grade six in the academic year 2012/2013 and had attended in-service training programmes organized by the Ministry of Education in Iran. This study analyzed quantitative and qualitative data collected from a researcher-designed survey and focus group interviews. The quantitative data analyzed included teachers' gender and age, level of education, districts and teachers' experience in addition to teachers' responses about the in-service training according to the components of Akker Model. A total of 380 questionnaires containing 132 closed questions on a 5-point Likert scale and 8 open-ended questions were distributed to primary school teachers in different districts in the north, east, west, centre and south of Tehran, the capital city of Iran. The return rate for the questionnaires was 88%. Ten teachers were invited to provide in-depth information on certain aspects of the programme through focus group interview sessions as well. The findings showed that the participants were satisfied with the rationale, aims and objectives, content, trainer's role and assessment. However, they were only somewhat satisfied with the learning activities and grouping and material and resources. The findings also showed that they were not satisfied with the time and location of the TPD programme. The respondents

suggested that these elements should be considered by managers when conducting professional development programme. In general, it can be concluded that the respondents felt that the in-service courses fulfilled their expectations in some aspects or components of the Akker Model. The findings also showed that the in-service course improved the respondents' knowledge and skills. However, the respondents indicated that they would like to learn more and hope to improve their teaching. Based on the findings it is suggested that further studies could employ a reason-comparison method approach to provide more insights about the TPD programmes and to involve other levels of school teachers or other staff in other educational institutions in Iran.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

It is impossible to find an organization which does not deal with the professional development of its employees. In addition, taking into consideration the diversity of job variety, the scope of development, and the basic limitations of human learning, the abilities and skills of people are increasingly becoming out of date in professional areas. This trend has led to occupational inadequacies in contemporary organizations. For this reason, training and development of staff has become one of the main concerns of managers in organizations and institutions. Consequently, professional development of employees has been given much more attention in recent decades. This means that staff development needs to be considered a major enterprise in all organizations. To reach these objectives, defining training needs, programme development, providing resources, and facilitating programme implementation are considered important and they are the critical challenges faced in organizations (Abtahi, 1998). It is very important that people are not only trained to reach an acceptable standard, but they must also be able to provide the necessary proof that they have achieved the standard. Furthermore, the manager should have the ability to prove that the duty of concern has been practiced, regardless of training (Gordon, 2008).

There is a universal conformity that learning to teach is an enduring procedure. This idea of continuing and lifelong professional learning for teachers in all fields has been emphasized by researchers, and providing significant professional development for in-service teachers is seen as central to this aim. There has been

growing recognition that teachers are the most important factor in student attainment. However, most of them especially new teachers' are not adequately prepared to meet the requirements of their students, and many experienced teachers have yet to adjust to new standards (Atay, 2008). Just like practitioners in other professions, teachers need to expand their knowledge and improve skills over the years of their career. Unfortunately, the needs for valuable professional development for those in the teaching profession have all too often gone unmet (Bubb, 2004).

The Ministry of Education (MoE) in Iran shoulders the responsibility of managing and planning a variety of educational activities at all levels of Iran. From the organizational structure point of view, the system is the initiator and the holder of (shared with other organizations) general and special training functions. The teachers employed by the MoE to work in schools should have appropriate opportunities for professional development and should be up-to-date in the continuously changing education system. The education system in Iran as well as in many other countries encountered many complicated subjects that if not considered and fixed in time, could lead to other complexities in the educational system. The relevant evidence to this claim is the presence of various problems in different sectors of the society, which could be traced back to the education system structure and its practice (Aghazade et al., 2004).

Several studies conducted in Iran have shown that staff professional development activities have not been effective in many aspects. Some of the studies conducted by Ghoshooni (1995), Reza Zadeh (1996), Nasre Esfahani (1997), Khaleghi Moghadam (1999), Tarighi Taher (1999), Raoofi Fard (2002), Khezri (2007), Saed Panah (2007), Karamiani (2008) and Mohammadi (2009) showed that

due to the many problems associated with on the job training, the tendency of staff participating in in-service training has decreased.

## **1.2 Background of the Study**

Since 1948, in-service training has become a part of the plan and many training programmes have been executed. Different ministries have executed different programmes based on their needs to support government programmes for the staff. The State Employment Rule in 1966 required all government ministries to institute and to administer educational or training courses for their staff as ratified by the Organization for Office and Employment Affairs (Abtahi, 1999).

Primary and secondary school teacher trainings were undertaken under the support of the Ministry of Education. Teachers were trained at special Teacher Training Centres. Training for secondary level teachers who must have obtained their High School Diploma and successfully passed the public university entrance exam (Konkur) – were offered at several major universities, for example, at Colleges of Education (for vocational/technical teachers), and at Tarbiat-Moalem university, (a specialist teacher training university in Tehran). There are seven teacher-training colleges in Iran (MoE, 1999). These centres offer a two-year curriculum towards a Post Diploma (Fogh Diplom). For the purpose of teaching from grades 9 to 12, in theory, a bachelor's degree is needed. However, due to the lack of teachers in Iran, schools have been required to train teaching staff, even with other educational qualifications.

Teachers' professional development (TPD), usually consisted of short-term or one-off in-service programmes conducted by "external experts" who shared their

knowledge based on knowledge, constructed almost exclusively by “experts” (Cullen, 1999). These programmes have been greatly accepted as they provide teachers with a break in practice, an opportunity to meet new colleagues, a chance to convey their professional troubles, and to get exposure to thought-provoking latest ideas. However, the knowledge transmitted was in general practically and theoretically far away from the contexts of the teachers, and the situational factors that affect their classroom practices were not given any considerations. As a result, the plan of making up teachers’ professional development was seldom achieved.

The absence of a structured training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme, the competence of those involved, could be challenged (Gordon, 2008). In the other words, in-service training is a continuous improvement of the staff’s knowledge, skills and behaviours that contribute to their welfare and the organizations in which they serve. Thus, the purpose of the in-service training is to enhance their capabilities, increase their efficiency and to provide them a chance to obtain better conditions for reaching higher positions (MoE, 2012).

There has been a deficiency of focus on teacher training system in Iran. These can be observed in society’s problems, such as the lack of honour and merit awarded to the teaching profession, as a small token of services to the land (British Council, 2010).

Current schemes and advances show the government’s concern of the troubles existing in the training of teachers. The Seventh Point of the Charter of the Education Revolution in Iran focuses on the necessity of teachers’ professional development (TPD) in the achievement of the nation’s objectives. As teacher training plays a basic role in the country’s education planning as well as the social and

scientific growth of the nation, all organizations associated with teacher-training programmes should attempt to reinforce and regulate them to meet the requirements of the nations (Tahemi, 2004).

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

The importance of teachers' professional development (TPD) is fully recognized by Iranian authorities, and in the recent years, there have been some activities and programmes for teachers' development. In educational systems where teacher education activities are well established, Teacher Professional Development can be explained as an all-embracing programme that improves professional job growth (Little, 2001; Rogan & Grayson, 2004; Teclé, 2006). It would also provide formal and informal experiences during the teacher's career (Hargreaves & Fullan 1997; Arends et al. 1998).

The results from the selected programmes have shown that teachers' professional development (TPD) were not successful as expected in terms of reaching the predetermined goals. Studies (Ghoshooni, 1995; Rezazadeh, 1996; Nasre Esfahani, 1997; Tarighi Taher, 1999; Khaleghi Moghadam ,1999 ; Raoofi Fard, 2002; Aghazadeh et al., 2004; Toorani, 2005 ; Boghozian, 2005; Fathi, 2005; Khezri ,2007; Saed Panah ,2007 ;Safavi, 2008 Karamiani, 2008 and Mohammadi , 2009) have shown that professional training for teachers in the educational system in some states encountered many issues and problems. Professional development activities were found to be ineffective in many aspects.

A large amount of human and financial resources has been allocated for administrating such training courses annually (Ghoshooni, 1995). Therefore, it is



necessary that all resources should be used effectively to achieve the desired professional development goals of teachers in primary education. Problems and inadequacies in the programmes of the teacher's professional development (TPD) are amongst the issues that have been given less attention and consideration. Therefore, continuous evaluation of in-service training courses is most important. Without proper evaluation it would be impossible to meet the needs of the customers (Bolam, 1998, p, 99).

The failure of some teacher professional development activities have become the subject of many discussions. Such as (Khaleghi Moghadam, 1999; Rezazadeh, 1996; Tarighi Taher, 1999; Raoofi Fard, 2002; Khezri, 2007; Saed Panah, 2007; Karamiani, 2008 and Mohamadi, 2009) Valuable efforts have been applied by the Iranian Education System towards improving the training systems. However, in the current situation, the education system of the country needs a new perspective to improve and promote the professionalism of the primary school teachers.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of primary school Teachers' Professional Development (TPD) programme in Iran.

#### **1.5 Research Aim and Objectives**

The purposes of this study are to evaluate the effectiveness of the primary school teachers' professional development programmes (TPD) programmes in Iran specifically, the objectives of this strategy are:

1. To evaluate the effectiveness of TPD programmes of primary schools from the perspective of the teachers.

2. To identify the strengths and weaknesses of TPD programmes of primary school teachers.
3. To provide recommendations directed towards the improvement of TPD activities primary school teachers.

## **1.6 Research Questions**

Specifically, the study attempted to seek answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent have the TPD programmes fulfilled the expectations of participants in terms of:
  - (a) Rationale, aim, and objectives?
  - (b) Content?
  - (c) Learning activities and grouping?
  - (d) Trainers' role?
  - (e) Resources and materials?
  - (f) Time?
  - (g) Location?
  - (h) Assessment?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the TPD programmes?
3. What are the ways and strategies for resolving the possible deficiencies in TPD programmes?

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The main reason for the evaluation is to improve the effectiveness of TPD programmes. Information gathered from this research will provide essential data for the managers and organizers of the programmes to improve the quality of the

teachers' professional development (TPD) programmes. The current study will be significant in many ways.

The information gained can be used as guidelines to plan for future continuation of professional developments or in-service training activities for teachers and to appropriate problems that are likely to occur. The feedback will be valuable to all stakeholders involved. The MoE and the organisers of teachers professional development (TPD) programmes need to know the deficiencies, the shortages, and the strengths of their programmes. Only then they would know whether they are doing the right things accurately. Data from the study will provide evidence that can be used to correct mistakes or to maintain an exemplary process. Thus, this study will improve a knowledge-based process of teacher's professional development to provide effective and well-organized in-service in the future. In general, if teachers' training is to be improved, it must depend on those who are in direct contact with the primary school students.

According to Philips (1997), the most general purpose of evaluation is to find out the effectiveness of a programme. For in-service training programmes, the aspects that need to be evaluated are the school organization, individual educators, and ultimately the students themselves. The research findings will furnish some insights for a successful implementation of the TPD programmes.

The study also assessed the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the implementation of the teachers' in-service training activities. By evaluating the programmes, it would then be possible to identify programme gaps in relation to identifying needs for training, and hence, to attract institutional attention to the

deficiencies. Responses from teachers who need to survive in a reform environment also need to be revealed.

The findings can be used to determine the progress of the effectiveness of activities on the subject of teachers' professional development and in-service training, which are directed to the constant enhancement of students' opportunities to learn. The development of teachers' perspective is needed for the accomplishment of the educational organization.

This study would be useful to teachers, managers and all stakeholders involved in the training of teachers. To attain a superior understanding of what the teacher has gained, it is significant to get a closer look at the teachers' training aspect and continuous professional development. In addition, educators can have a better understanding on how teachers can be helped; the consequences possibly would show guidelines for improving the latest plans for developing the standard of professional development programmes.

The study is significant because the results would indicate some light on new, extended and latest information concerning teacher training activities, hence, making the training more important and more relevant to the actual work of teaching.

Furthermore, findings from this study to some extent would provide advice and options to approaches that can be applied in the educational system in Iran, with the aim of formulating strategies to improve attainment. Besides, the results obtained would provide the direction to improve the teaching and learning process and teaching professionalism.

## **1.8 Definition of Terms**

### **(a) Evaluation**

Mirkamali (2004) suggests that evaluation means determining the positive or negative parts of conducted tasks. It is a process used to determine what has occurred throughout a given activity or an organization. The purpose of evaluation is to see if a given programme is working, if an institution is successful in achieving the goal set, or if the original aim is being successfully carried out. Assessment and evaluation adds the component of value judgment of the social value, desirability, or effectiveness of a programme, product or process, and it sometimes includes a suggestion for some course of action (Best & Kahn, 2008). There are several evaluation levels, ranging from basically providing information on participants' reactions to the training; the effectiveness of the teacher or trainer, the relevance of the contents, the quality of the materials, to measuring the conclusions or results of the training programme (World Bank Institute, 2008).

### **(b) Effectiveness**

The term effectiveness is concerned with how far an activity has brought about the intended result pertaining to the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills expected of a participant (Bramley, 1999). In this study, effectiveness refers to the measurement of the degree of accomplishment of the course or workshop objectives. This would determine whether their objectives have been achieved (Fauza, 2012) or can be achieved.

**(c) Assessment**

A value-free investigation is the extent to which objectives of a programme determined at the outset have been attained by participants. Assessment is a value-free ascertainment of the extent to which objectives determined at the outset of a programme have been attained by participants. Assessment of these objectives requires no value judgement as to whether the programme is worthwhile to be implemented. It is simply a nonjudgemental checking whether or not certain purposes have been attained (Brookfield, 2001).

**(d) Professional Development**

Every action which enhances the skills, knowledge or understanding of the teachers, and their effectiveness in schools are called professional development. It is everything that the teachers do to stay abreast with progress and to remain up to date, starting with training on their job thoroughly (DfES, 2000).

**(e) In-service training**

The chances given for teachers to achieve new skills, knowledge, approaches and dispositions in developing their classroom's teaching and effectiveness. According to Sparks and Hirsch (1997), in-service training, professional development, and staff development should influence the knowledge, attitudes and practices of the trainee. In this study, the term in-service training, professional development, and staff development have been used interchangeably to relate to the continuous learning activities. These terms are crucial to increase the teachers'

professional confidence, personal education, and desires, and common understanding of their changing roles and tasks.

**(f) Learning**

Learning is a change in human disposition or capability, which continues over a period of time (Gagne, 2003).

**1.9 Limitations of the Study**

This study is designed to evaluate the effectiveness of primary schools teachers' professional development (TPD) programmes in Iran and to provide strategies for dealing with issues related to evaluation. This study has some limitations:

First, the study is limited to the 2012-2013 academic years. As this research restricts its focus to about 50 public primary schools in 5 districts, and to teachers teaching grade 6 in Tehran, the capital city of Iran, the study findings could not be generalized to other types of schools, districts or states. However, the coverage of the qualitative questions on the survey and the focus group may have improved the transferability of the results to other places.

Second, the study was undertaken in winter and spring of 2013; hence, it did not include teachers who changed their status and grade that they were teaching during the 2012-2013 school years.

Third, as the school principals had their own preference when selecting a teacher from their own school to participate in the focus group, therefore the

selection process was not made at random. Moreover, for the focus group discussion, 10 primary school teachers, were selected to be interviewed in this study.

Fourth, this research was limited to study the teachers' expectation about the professional development experiences during the in-service training programmes for grade six teaching. Hence, the impact of professional development on the teachers' performance and student accomplishment could not be concluded from this study.

Fifth, for this study, no available relevant instruments (standard questionnaire) were available. The self-designed questionnaire employed the Likert scale. Therefore, there is the probability that the teachers could have given their answers with the intention to average out their responses.

Sixth, this study was limited within the domain of the chosen district in this study and the researcher might not have been able to determine whether the respondents realized the relevance of the questions they were being asked. Moreover, the views of other participations that chose not to take part in the study might be different from that of those who participated in this study.

Furthermore, accuracy of the memory of the participants was another possible limitation, since some of the professional development programmes participated by teachers might have taken place nearly 7 to 10 months earlier.

The final limitation of this research is that generally, the teachers may have given their responses to the questions and subjects similar to their responses in the qualitative data.

## **1.10 Summary**

This research was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of primary schools teachers' professional development programmes, organized by the Iranian Ministry



of Education. This study is structured into five chapters. Chapter 1 presents the introduction and definitions of terms that related to professional development, while focusing on the context for the current study and limitations of this study. In addition, it discusses the educational system in Iran, the conditions for the study on teachers' professional development, teachers' training, and the history of in-service training in Iran. Evaluation models, Akker's model components and related research are presented in Chapter 2. A discussion on the theoretical framework for this study is included at the end of the chapter. The methods, measures, elaboration of instruments, pilot study, and data collection techniques are elaborated in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 provides the findings gained from the data. It contains detailed results related to the research questions. Finally, Chapter 5 presents the conclusions, implications, recommendations for future and some suggestions.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the teachers professional development (TPD) programmes for primary school teachers in Iran. The study focuses on the views of in-service training participants, specifically the aspects or components according to Akker's (2003) model.

This chapter presents a representative literature review for this study. The literature review starts with a short report on the educational system, teacher training and teacher in-service training in Iran. The main focus of the study is on the procedures related to education, preservice and in-service education. The second part is concerned with evaluation models and the different terms of evaluation, programme evaluation, and professional development. Several models of teachers' professional development will be described and compared. All the components of the Akker (2003) model will be described in this part as well. The third part reviews studies on teachers' professional development (TPD) programmes and teachers' training. The framework of the study is also presented, and finally, the chapter closes with a summary at the end of this chapter.

#### **2.2 Educational System in Iran**

Islamic Republic of Iran as a developing country has an enormous historical background and inherits a rich civilisation. Iran has also experienced a lot of ups and downs throughout the centuries. With an area of 1,648,195 km<sup>2</sup>, Iran is the 18th biggest country in the world and has a population of around 78 million (Statistical

Centre in Iran, SCI, 2010). Iran's population is currently well above 70 million and it is growing at an annual rate of 1.5% (3.5% in 1992). Almost two-thirds of Iran's population is below 30 years old (MAI, 2012, Annual Report).

Tehran, the capital city of Iran, is the country's largest city. It is the political, cultural, commercial and industrial centre of the nation and its population is 8,244,535 persons. The population of Tehran, inhabiting the urban areas is about 12 million (MAI, 2012).

Iran basically has a centralized educational system, and decisions on the management of all educational levels (primary, secondary, and high schools) are administered at the national level by the Ministry of Education (MoE) of Iran. The level of K-12 education is organized by the MoE, while higher education is controlled by the Ministry of Science and Technology. Preprimary school (Pish-Dabestani) starts at ages of 4 and 5 for two years. However, this period is not compulsory as it is an optional choice for parents. Primary school (*Dabestan*) starts at the age of 6 for 6 years. The Middle school, recognized as course series (*Dabirestan1*), starts from grade 7 to 9. High school (*Dabirestan2*), which is the last three years of schooling is not obligatory, and is categorized into academic, vocational/technical and mathematical/physical, with each programme having its own fields (MoE, 2004).

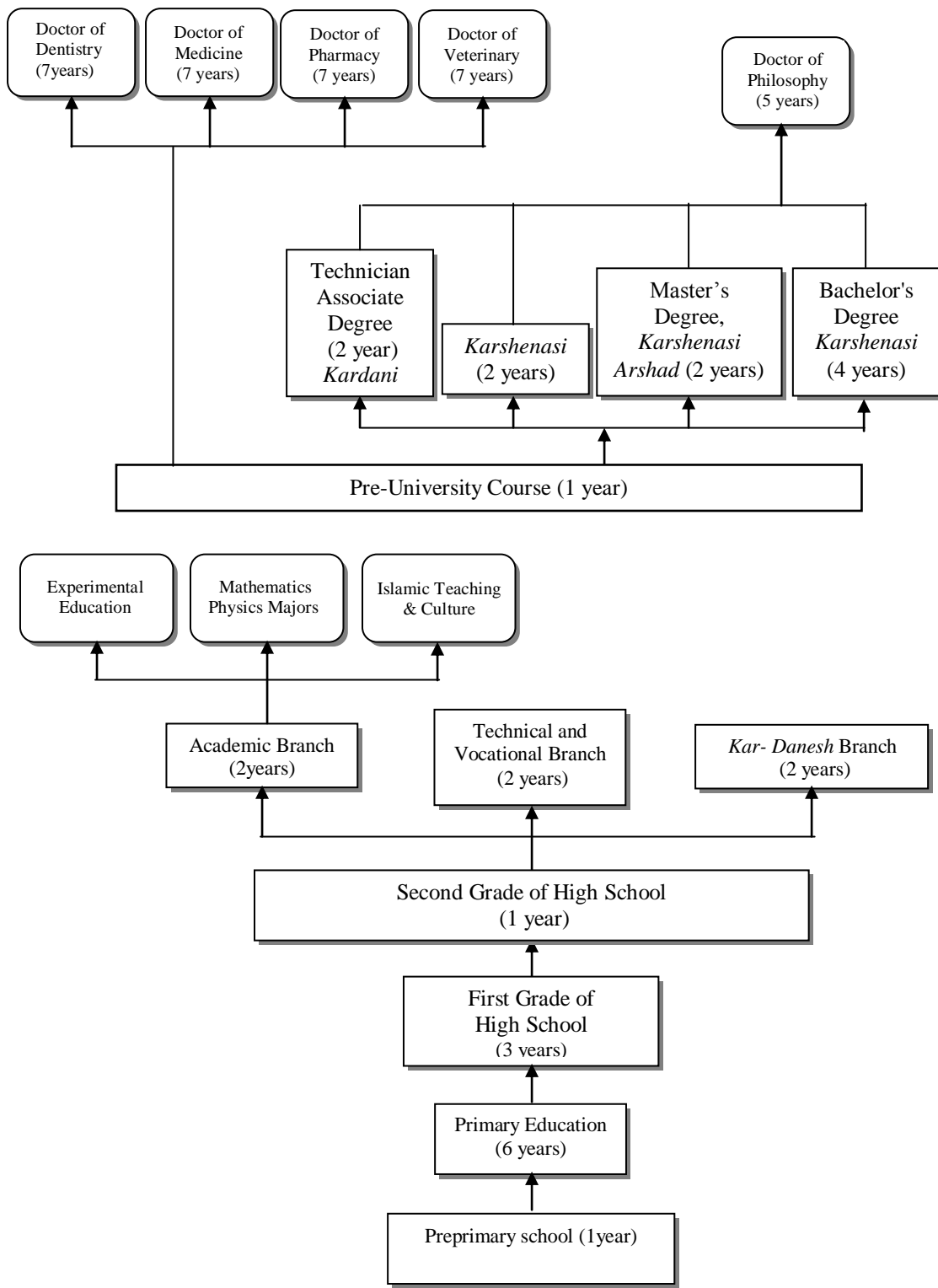


Figure 2.1. The various levels of education in Iran (MoE, 2011).

Universities, institutes of technology, medical schools, and public colleges, are at the higher educational level. A high school Diploma is required for pursuing higher education, while a pass in the public University entrance exam (*Konkoor*) is required to pursue university education. Higher education is certified by diverse levels of diplomas, for instance, *Fogh-e-Diplom* or *Kardani* after 2 years of higher education, *Karshenasi* (also known as “license”) is obtained after 4 years of higher education (Bachelor Degree) *Karshenasi-ye Arshad* is gained after 2 more years of study (Master’s Degree). Finally, a student needs to take an additional examination that permits the applicant to follow a doctoral (PhD) programme. Figure 2.1 illustrates the various levels of Iranian education.

The system of education in Iran is administered under a federal system. The education programme is developed by the national curriculum authority in the federal organization and is launched to be carried by the schools. Teachers are mandated to apply the mandatory syllabus as approved by the government. Neither teachers nor students are allowed to create or modify the plan; they do not have any role in programme development. There is no chance for the state representatives to contribute in curriculum needs assessment and development (Fathi et al., 2010).

Table 2.1 shows the various courses of primary school level in Iran. The table shows all the subjects and courses from grade 1 to grade 6 for all pupils.

Table 2.1  
*Primary Schools' Courses (2012-2013) in a Week (Hour)*

Courses	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Qur'an	1H	2H	2H	2H	2H	3H
Religious studies	-	2H	2H	2H	2H	2H
Persian language	12H	10H	8H	7H	5H	5H
Social studies	-	-	2H	3H	3H	3H Mixed
			Geography	History	Civic	
Thinking & research	-	-	-	-	-	1H
Work & technology	-	-	-	-	-	1H
Mathematics	5H	5H	4H	4H	4H	4H
Science	2H	3H	2H	3H	4H	2H
Art & Calligraphy	2H	2H	2H	2H	2H	2H
Sports	2H	2H	2H	2H	2H	2H
Total	24H	24H	24H	24H	24H	26H

Notes. Taken from MoE, Iran, 2012.

In grade 1 to 6, students must learn the courses of Qur'an (for Muslims), Religious Studies (Islam, Christian, Jewish, or *Zoroastra*), Persian Language, Social Studies, Thinking and Research, Work & Technology, Mathematics, Science, Art and Calligraphy, and Sports, according to the curriculum's schedule by MoE (MoE, 2012). All these subjects and courses must be taught by a single teacher in a class and each grade at primary schools apart from Qur'an, Religious Studies, and Sports after grade 3.

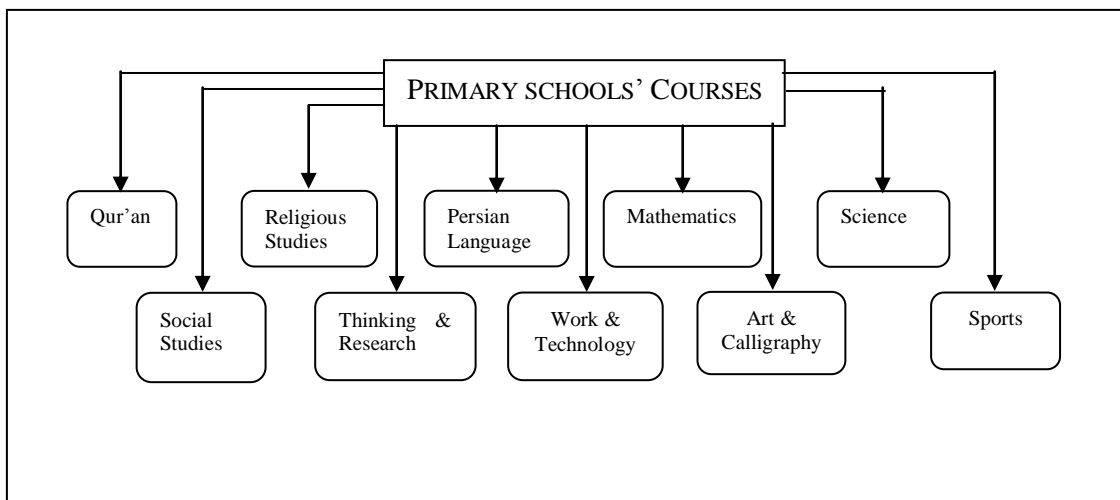


Figure 2.2. The primary schools' courses of grade 6 in Iran

Figure 2.2 shows that courses in grade 6 consist of 10 subjects made up of Qur'an, Religious Studies, Persian Language and Literature, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Thinking and Research, Work and Technology, Art and Calligraphy and Sports. Specific aims and objectives of the primary educational level are derived from the general objectives and are further narrowed to target each text for each particular grade. Goals, in terms of anticipated behaviours, to be attained after the implementation of the lesson, are specified for each lesson (MoE, 2012).

The ultimate goal of the policy of MoE is to produce a workforce and technocrat community that are able to compete at the international level and that can contribute indirectly to the development of the country. To this end, schools have a responsibility to provide each pupil with these skills and knowledge competency necessary for their academic, economic, and social growth. It is also the responsibility of MoE to provide well-qualified teachers to deliver perfect instruction. In fact, teachers are the mediators between curricula, materials, educational goals, and the students.

### **2.2.1 Philosophy, Aim and Objectives of Teacher Properties (TPD) in Primary School Level in Iran**

Table 2.2 shows the teaching objectives in grade 6. According to the Ministry of Education of Iran (2012) at the primary school level, specific aims and objectives of in-service training for the teachers are in relation to all the five core content areas: Mathematics, Science, Persian Language and Literature, Religious Studies, and Social Studies. This means that the teaching and in-service training objectives are similar for all courses.

Table 2.2  
*The Teaching Objectives in Primary School Level Grade Six*

Course Content	Teaching Methodology	Assessment
Teaching objectives. At the end of the course, participants are expected to be able to:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the rationale and general goals of the course at the Primary level</li> </ul>	Lecture	Written
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the approaches and orientations of the curriculum as well as content organization</li> </ul>	Workshop	Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know the course/subjects' syllabus</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know the sequences and alternations of the primary level program</li> </ul>	Workshop	Formative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the goals, concepts, definitions &amp; scientific terms of the course</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize each chapter's appropriate teaching-learning approaches and assessment methods</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize educational and experimental activities and workshops for each topic</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse the scientific contents of the course</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know about the materials, instruments and educational resources appropriate to the course</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply ICT in teaching the course</li> </ul>		

*Notes.* Adapted from Ministry of Education of Iran, 2012.

Table 2.3 indicates the types of attendance in classes in the process of in-service training. According to the Ministry of Education of Iran (2012), the teaching mode in these courses should be face-to-face; and teachers must be present in the classes. The features of the courses are specialized.



Table 2.3  
*The Kinds of Attendance in Classes*

Teaching mode	Course Feature	Assessment	Type of attendance in classroom(hour)		
Attendance in class (Face to face)	Specialized	Yes	Practice (5)	Theory (15)	Total (20)

*Notes.* Adapted from Ministry of Education of Iran, 2012.

### 2.3 Teachers' In-Service Training in Iran

In-service training programmes in the Iranian MoE, dates back to 1931. Before that the teachers were trained by *Darol-fonoon*. Such training was done for official and educational staff without considering the real needs of the organization concerned (MoE, 2000). Since 1966, simultaneous to the first round execution of State Employment Law, such disorderly in-service training programmes were put in order and have been done appropriately. In 1968, just official staff such as the head of an office, general director or manager and some other staff were selectively trained. However, from 1973, simultaneous with the second round execution of State Employment Law, a bureau called “In-service Training Bureau” undertook to train educational staff. The bureau helped to support educational programmes in some cities of Iran (MoE, 2000).

After the Islamic revolution, teachers’ training took an ideological and vital role by setting educational needs, when the peak of organizational pyramid was changed. Teachers, even who belonged to the lowest educational level, started to determine and realize their educational needs. Classes and courses such as general education classes and Islamic and Qur’anic Knowledge were held automatically, and since the In-service Training Bureau increased its responsibilities, it was promoted to “In-service Training General Office” (MoE, 2001).

Since 1986, with respect to the necessity of promoting the scientific and academic levels of teachers, long-term and continuous associate programmes, noncontinuous bachelor and master programs with the permission of the Organization for Official and Employment Affairs were developed. To use the available resources and facilities optimally, in 1995, the In-service Training General Office was merged with In-service Training Bureau and formed “In-service teacher Training and Human Resource Education Department General” (MoE, 2001).

### **2.3.1 History of In-Service Training in Iran**

“Learning” while “teaching” has a long history in Iran. Outstanding teachers at *Nizamiyya* Schools and seminaries, other training and educational institutions, while educating their own students, have worked on their own learning, research and authoring numerous books. In-service training evolution began after the gradual establishment of new schools and the central government’s taking responsibility for training and educating teachers (MoE, 2012).

With the development of new style primary and high schools, and the needs of teachers in such schools to information on psychology and education as well as teaching methods, in-service training classes were formed in the *Darul Fonoon* Academy. In-service trainings started at the Ministry of Education about the year 1930. Emphasis on educating and training staff has existed in the rules and regulations of the Ministry of Education, including "Rules of Compulsory Education" approved in 1942.

In 1947, training programmes for staff became part of the government's agenda. Between the years 1952 and 1956, due to the expansion of primary education, several job-training courses were held for the teachers in summer. For a few decades, in-service trainings did not have an organized and coordinated form and no special unit was made in charge of them. What formed the whole activities of the in-service trainings were a few special courses for the administrative and teaching staff that were hardly based on real needs of Education, were taste-based and were performed on an irregular and scattered basis (MoE, 2012).

In 1969, the responsibility for training the staff of the Ministry of Education was given to the "Institute of Educational Planning and Management." The Institute designed and conducted various courses to enhance the level of knowledge of general managers, deputy general managers, heads of departments and their deputies, district agencies and heads of departments of new districts of education (MoE, 2012).

From 1973 onwards, a more integrated and centralized planning for training the staffs of Ministry of Education was carried out under the responsibility of "In-service Training Office". In the year 1974, the In-service Training Office held several seminars for the secondary school educational consultants in various cities. In addition, in the year 1977, to prevent centralization of in-service trainings, in some cities educational centres were equipped to facilitate the conduct of in-service courses in a broader and noncentralized way (MoE, 2012).

In 1977, the long-term training programme was also included in the agenda and during the summer of the same year the first course was held, and 4570 teachers in secondary schools were admitted a diploma certificate in teaching English, Humanities, Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Vocational courses. Under this