Role of PTA in Improved Quality of Education in Public Primary Schools for Girls in Tehran

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to evaluate the role of PTA in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran. The population studied in this survey consisted of all principals and deans of primary schools for girls in Tehran and PTA members. Krejcie-Morgan table was used to select samples (320) randomly by multistage cluster sampling. A 31-item questionnaire evaluating six variables was used to collect data. The main hypothesis assumed a significant difference in the role of PTA in improved quality of education. Other hypotheses addressed the role of participation in decision-making, coordination with community, family-school communication, encouragement for voluntary participation of parents, education of PTA members and encouragement for voluntarily financial participation in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran. The results found that PTA plays an effective role in improved quality of education and the six scales listed above; therefore, the hypothesis is confirmed that there is a significant difference.

Keywords: improved quality of education, communication, encouragement for voluntary participation

Introduction
The education system is highly responsible for educating different groups of people. This responsibility becomes more important every day, because demand for education has been unprecedentedly growing. The increased number of students in different educational levels requires the establishment of new training centers and schools, recruitment of more teachers and larger investments (Alagheband, 1996). Activities of this thorough wide system will not be continued without participation. Public participation is not limited only to costs, but continuous, active, full and effective presence in all education activities (Abedini, 2005). Parents as the first educators play a vital role in education of their children, and continue this important role when their children start the school. Parents want their children to gain knowledge by attending in schools. This is not achieved but by cooperation of parents and teachers (Alagheband, 1996). Research shows that parental involvement in education increases interest and willingness of students to study. Thus, schools around the world seek to provide more and more opportunities for parental participation. This is why parent-teacher association (PTA) is formed. By cooperation of these two groups, students realize that home and school are not separated and there is no dichotomy between their educational approaches (Chazan, 1997). The health of any society depends on the quality of the educational system. A large part of the educational system involves education and training. Therefore, quality of education system its effective factors require special attention. Accordingly, it appears that one of the most common and effective ways to attract parental participation is to PTAs in schools. This concept and its role as a contributing factor in improving performance, achievement and generally improved quality of education have always been concerned. Given the above, the question arises that to what extent PTA can be effective in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran.
Theoretical Background
Training and educational activities of schools will not be productive without parents' attention and cooperation, because children are more influenced by families than other factors. Educational achievements will be very low and sometimes impossible unless these factors are identified and unnoticed as important factors influencing the growth and learning of students. On the other hand, students spent much of their lives outside of school; they spend only 12% of their time in schools. Thus, parents have to be aware of programs, goals, tasks and demands of school to participate in education in accordance with educational needs of students and coordination with the school (Abaszadeh, 1999). Proper education of children and adolescents requires mutual efforts and cooperation of family and school to identify and solve everyday problems. Currently, the ongoing home-school connection and interaction of parents and teachers are considered as an important part of education. Parents consider schools responsible for their children's education and expect them to meet those educational needs and requirements which are not within the framework of public and formal education; they lose opportunities expecting outcomes of formal education. This causes difficulties and shortcomings which can be easily overcome by cooperation and consultation of family and school on time. Parents are always highly motivated to provide opportunities for scientific progress, social and moral education and vocational training of their children. Certainly, parents will participate in the educational system if their capabilities are properly used. It seems that the current system of education lacks mechanisms to attract specialized scientific and technical cooperation of parents in a systematic form and it may be neglected by planners (Davoodi, 2006). Batista (2014) showed that parental involvement in the school life of their children was still at an early stage. Karlbayeva (2014) also showed that a good relationship between parents and teachers could have a positive effect on children's education, so they might be motivated in learning and participating in school activities. Matejevic (2013) showed that maternal characteristics involved authoritative parenting practices which was related to more involvement in school activities and more successes achieved by the student. The paternal characteristics involved authoritarian parenting style which was related to the lack of time to participate in school activities. The results implied a serious problem about paternal involvement in school activities of children and indifference of schools to cooperate with parents. Gökyer (2013) suggested following strategies to increase participation of parents: 1) installing billboards; 2) informing parents on educational activities and responding their questions about the details; 3) organizing farewell activities; 4) organizing plays; 5) organizing knowledge tournaments; 6) adding popular topics on the agenda; 7) offering refreshments during meetings; 8) meeting parents individually; 9) holding seminars for parents.

Questions
This study addresses the following questions:
1) Is PTA effective in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran?
2) Is participation in decision-making effective in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran?
3) Is coordination with the community effective in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran?
4) Is family-school communication effective in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran?
5) Is encouragement for voluntary participation of parents effective in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran?
6) Is encouragement for voluntarily financial contribution effective in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran?
7) Is education of PTA members effective in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran?

Materials and Methods
This study was an applied research using a descriptive ex post facto method to collect and analyze data. The studied population included 7656 people (2552 principals and deans of primary schools for girls in Tehran and 5104 PTA members) in 5 selected districts (1, 3, 7, 9 and 18) from 22 districts in division of
Ministry of Education. The sample size (320) was calculated by Krejcie-Morgan Table from all experts who were working in Ministry of Education in Tehran. The questionnaire was developed by participation of parents and guidance of the supervisor professor in the Likert scale. Table 1 lists the items and variables of the questionnaire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Participation in decision-making</td>
<td>The first question</td>
<td>1 to 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Coordination with the community</td>
<td>The second question</td>
<td>7 to 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Family-school communication</td>
<td>The third question</td>
<td>12 to 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Voluntary participation of parents</td>
<td>The fourth question</td>
<td>19 to 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Voluntarily financial participations</td>
<td>The fifth question</td>
<td>24 to 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Education of members</td>
<td>The sixth question</td>
<td>30 to 31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accordingly, the scores of 30 initial samples, which were randomly selected in two stages within a week, were calculated. Reliability ($\alpha = 0.81$) of the questionnaire was measured for evaluating the role of PTA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in decision-making</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination with the community</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family-school communication</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary participation of parents</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntarily financial participations</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education of members</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (role of PTA)</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results

- **First question**: Is PTA effective in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Observed distribution</th>
<th>Expected distribution</th>
<th>Chi-square value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>489.33</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 3, the highest distribution observed (207) was related to the choice (very high) and the lowest distribution observed (0) was related to the choice (very low). According to the Chi-square value (489.33) and the significance corresponding to chi-square test (0.000), PTA is highly effective in improved quality of education.

- **Second question**: Is participation in decision-making effective in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Observed distribution</th>
<th>Expected distribution</th>
<th>Chi-square value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>509.27</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 4, the highest distribution observed (222) was related to the choice (very high) and the lowest distribution observed (0) was related to the choice (very low). According to the Chi-square value (509.27) and the significance corresponding to chi-square test (0.000), participation in decision-making is highly effective in improved quality of education.
• **Third question**: Is coordination with the community effective in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Observed distribution</th>
<th>Expected distribution</th>
<th>Chi-square value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>598.01</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 5, the highest distribution observed (237) was related to the choice (very high) and the lowest distribution observed (0) was related to the choice (very low). According to the Chi-square value (598.01) and the significance corresponding to chi-square test (0.000), coordination with the community is highly effective in improved quality of education.

• **Fourth question**: Is family-school communication effective in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Observed distribution</th>
<th>Expected distribution</th>
<th>Chi-square value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>293.53</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 6, the highest distribution observed (164) was related to the choice (very high) and the lowest distribution observed (8) was related to the choice (very low). According to the Chi-square value (293.53) and the significance corresponding to chi-square test (0.000), family-school communication is highly effective in improved quality of education.

• **Fifth question**: Is encouragement for voluntary participation of parents effective in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Observed distribution</th>
<th>Expected distribution</th>
<th>Chi-square value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>481.12</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 7, the highest distribution observed (208) was related to the choice (very high) and the lowest distribution observed (0) was related to the choice (very low). According to the Chi-square value (481.12) and the significance corresponding to chi-square test (0.000), encouragement for voluntary participation of parents is highly effective in improved quality of education.

• **Sixth question**: Is encouragement for voluntarily financial participation of parents effective in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Observed distribution</th>
<th>Expected distribution</th>
<th>Chi-square value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>428.80</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 8, the highest distribution observed (199) was related to the choice (very high) and the lowest distribution observed (4) was related to the choice (very low). According to the Chi-square value
(428.80) and the significance corresponding to chi-square test (0.000), encouragement for voluntarily financial participation of parents is highly effective in improved quality of education.

- **Seventh question:** Is education of PTA members effective in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran?

### Table 9: Results of Chi-square test for the seventh question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Observed distribution</th>
<th>Expected distribution</th>
<th>Chi-square value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>361.30</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 9, the highest distribution observed (202) was related to the choice (very high) and the lowest distribution observed (9) was related to the choice (low). According to the Chi-square value (361.30) and the significance corresponding to chi-square test (0.000), education of PTA members is highly effective in improved quality of education.

Table 10 reports the scores related to the effect of PTA variables in improved quality of education.

### Table 10: Scores related to the effects of PTA variables in improved quality of education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean score (1-6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordination with the community</td>
<td>4.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary participation of parents</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in decision-making</td>
<td>4.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntarily financial participation</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education of members</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family-school communication</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test value</td>
<td>127.017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 10, the highest mean score (4.84) is related to the coordination with the community and the lowest mean score (3.26) is related to family-school communication. According to Friedman test (127.017) and the significance corresponding to Freidman test (0.000), a significant difference is observed in mean scores of six variables and generalized to the population. Therefore, respondents believe that the greatest effect in improved quality of education belongs to coordination with the community followed by voluntary participation of parents, participation in decision-making, voluntarily financial participations, education of members and family-school communication, respectively.

### Discussion and Conclusion

The first question addressed the effect of PTA in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran. Results of Chi-square test confirmed the hypothesis that there is a significant difference between the role of PTA and improved quality of education. According to these results, the respondents believe that PTA is highly effective in improved quality of education. This is consistent with Vahidi (2010), Saravani (1999), Saeedfar (1998), Ash'ari (1994), Sheikhi (1994), Khoori (1994), Karlbayeva (2014), Chen et al. (2010) and Hill and Taylor (2004). The second question addressed the effect of participation in decision-making in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran. Results of Chi-square test confirmed the hypothesis that there is a significant difference between the role of participation in decision-making and improved quality of education. According to these results, respondents believe that participation in decision-making is highly effective in improved quality of education. Therefore, it can be concluded that the educational system need to adopt strategies to promote participation in schools and take PTA more seriously, because its participation in decision-making will lead to the improved quality of education. However, no consistent finding was found in the literature. The third question addressed the effect of coordination with community in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran. Results of Chi-square test confirmed the hypothesis that there is a significant difference between the role of coordination with community and improved quality of education.
According to these results, respondents believe that coordination with community is highly effective in improved quality of education. Therefore, it can be concluded that the educational system can help promoting the coordination of families and schools by providing programs and obligating schools to perform the programs. It is highly essential, because societies are changing rapidly. However, no consistent finding was found in the literature. The fourth question addressed the effect of family-school communication in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran. Results of Chi-square test confirmed the hypothesis that there is a significant difference between the role of family-school communication and improved quality of education. According to these results, respondents believe that family-school communication is highly effective in improved quality of education. According to the results, schools can help promoting family-school communication by considering programs for higher parental involvement in schools throughout the year. Parents are one of the main pillars of educational process; therefore, their communication with schools further improves the educational system. This is consistent with Teymoori (1998) and Saravani (2010), who found a relationship between parental involvement in schools and academic achievement of students. The fifth question addressed the effect of encouragement for voluntary participation of parents in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran. Results of Chi-square test confirmed the hypothesis that there is a significant difference between the role of encouragement for voluntary participation of parents and improved quality of education. According to these results, respondents believe that encouragement for voluntary participation of parents is highly effective in improved quality of education. Accordingly, schools will successfully encourage parents to participate in education process voluntarily if they are successful in the three variables addressed earlier, i.e. family-school communication, coordination with the community and participation in decision-making, because voluntary participation will provide better quality thereby better outcomes. However, no consistent finding was found in the literature. The sixth question addressed the effect of voluntarily financial participation of parents in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran. Results of Chi-square test confirmed the hypothesis that there is a significant difference between the role of voluntarily financial participation of parents and improved quality of education. According to these results, respondents believe that voluntarily financial participation of parents is highly effective in improved quality of education. Accordingly, financial participation of parents can be essential in schools, especially in public schools; therefore, it seems essential to use solutions for this purpose. As noted earlier, the voluntary participation is more useful. However, no consistent finding was found in the literature. The seventh question addressed the effect of education level of PTA members in improved quality of education in public primary schools for girls in Tehran. Results of Chi-square test confirmed the hypothesis that there is a significant difference between education level of PTA members and improved quality of education. According to these results, respondents believe that education level of PTA members is highly effective in improved quality of education. Accordingly, those members with higher level of education and knowledge can perform better in all the variables noted earlier and help schools to achieve better quality. This is consistent with Saravani (2010) who found a relationship between parental education level and academic achievement of students.
References
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