

The Impact of Critical Thinking on Educational Management for the Professional Development of English Language Teachers

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Abstract : Critical thinking, as one of the essential skills of the 21st century, plays a fundamental role in improving teaching and learning processes. In the field of educational management, strengthening this skill among teachers can contribute to designing more effective educational programs, enhancing teaching quality, and improving learning outcomes. English language teachers, by utilizing critical thinking, can analyze educational challenges and find innovative solutions for them. The aim of this research is to examine the role of critical thinking in educational management and its impact on the professional development of English language teachers. Additionally, identifying optimal methods to enhance this skill among teachers and educational managers is another objective of this study. This research was conducted using a mixed-methods approach with a sample population of 200 teachers and 20 educational managers from schools and English language teaching institutions across three provinces in Iran. Sampling was carried out through stratified random sampling for teachers and purposive sampling for managers. In the quantitative section, a standardized critical thinking questionnaire with 30 closed-ended questions and a Likert scale was employed, and the data were analyzed using independent t-tests, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), and regression analysis. In the qualitative section, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 managers and 10 experienced teachers. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The validity of the instruments was confirmed by five experts in the field of education, and the reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89. The findings revealed that teachers with high critical thinking skills are more successful in designing innovative educational programs, managing classrooms, and solving educational issues. Additionally, managers who adopt critical management approaches create a more dynamic educational environment for fostering these skills. Regular training programs and critical thinking workshops had a positive impact on the professional development of teachers. Critical thinking is a key element in educational management and the professional development of English language teachers. Providing targeted educational opportunities, specialized workshops, and constructive feedback can strengthen this skill among teachers and lead to improved teaching quality. The results of this study can assist educational policymakers in designing professional development programs for teachers and serve as a model for other educational domains.

Keywords : critical thinking, educational management, professional development, teachers

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