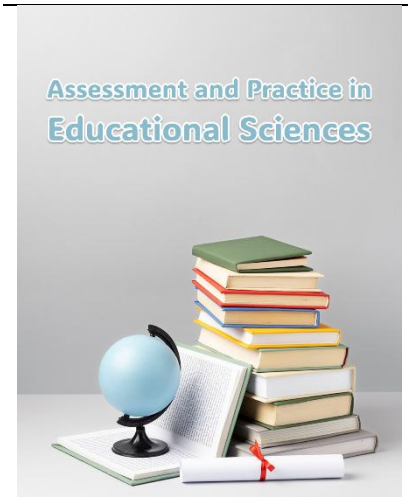
Assessment and Practice in Educational Sciences



Analysis of the Current Status of Public Education from the Perspective of Education Experts

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to analyze the current status of public education from the perspective of education experts. The research employed a quantitative descriptive survey method. The statistical population included all teachers and school principals in the Department of Education of Semnan Province during the 2024–2025 academic year. Using Cochran's formula, a sample size of 357 individuals was determined. The sampling method was stratified random sampling proportional to the educational districts. The data collection instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire developed based on components extracted from the qualitative phase of the study. After the confirmation of content validity by experts, the reliability of the instrument was calculated using Cronbach's alpha. For data analysis, the t-test and the SPSS (version 27) and AMOS (version 24) software were utilized. The results revealed that the component "active and creative participation of learners" had a positive and significant effect on the exogenous variable ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.001$). The path "reflection and continuous improvement" also showed a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.001$). The construct "stable emotional, cultural, and professional foundations" had a significant and positive impact on the outcome variable ($\beta = 0.15$, $p = 0.028$). On the other hand, the paths related to "21st-century skill development and media literacy" ($\beta = 0.13$, $p = 0.058$), "systemic and flexible learning" ($\beta = 0.08$, $p = 0.106$), "multilayered connection with society and the world" ($\beta = 0.07$, $p = 0.161$), and "training transformative teachers and principals" ($\beta = 0.06$, $p = 0.228$) were not statistically significant and had no meaningful effect on the current state of public education. The coefficient of determination (R^2) for public education was found to be 0.70, indicating that approximately 70% of the variance in the dependent variable (current status) was explained by the identified components.

Keywords: Public education, pedagogy, educational system, curriculum

1. Azam. Mesbahian: PhD student in Educational Management, Ga. C., Islamic Azad University, Garmsar, Iran

2. Maryam. AfzalKhani*: Department of Educational Management, Ga. C., Islamic Azad University, Garmsar, Iran (Email: Ma.Afzalkhani@iau.ac.ir)

3. Khadijeh. Khanzadi: Department of Educational Management, Ga. C., Islamic Azad University, Garmsar, Iran

Article type:
Original Research

Article history:
Received 08 July 2025
Revised 16 September 2025
Accepted 21 September 2025
Published online 22 October 2025

How to cite this article:
Mesbahian, A., AfzalKhani, M., & Khanzadi, Kh. (2025). Analysis of the Current Status of Public Education from the Perspective of Education Experts. *Assessment and Practice in Educational Sciences*, *3*(4), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.61838/japes.137

Introduction

Public education systems are the cornerstone of national development, serving as the primary mechanism through which societies cultivate human capital, transmit cultural values, and prepare citizens for participation in economic, social, and civic life. In the 21st century, however, the rapid evolution of technology, globalization, and changing labor market demands have challenged traditional educational paradigms and compelled governments and educators to reimagine schooling in more inclusive, dynamic, and competency-based forms (1-3). The central challenge lies in ensuring that general education not only

transmits foundational knowledge but also equips learners with higher-order skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and digital literacy—competencies that define effective participation in a knowledge-based society (4, 5).

Globally, institutions are undergoing a profound transformation in how learning is conceived, delivered, and assessed. The OECD's Education at a Glance 2025 report emphasizes that education must shift from rote memorization to competency development, integrating lifelong learning approaches to meet the dynamic needs of future societies (2). Similarly, UNESCO's 2023 report on education for social justice highlights that equitable access to learning opportunities and cultural inclusion are essential in achieving sustainable educational transformation (1). This global movement toward inclusivity, personalization, and innovation aligns with the World Bank's (2024) emphasis on "learning for all in a digital age," which frames education as a tool for resilience in the face of technological disruption (3).

In this evolving context, scholars have increasingly focused on reimagining teaching and learning as interactive, learner-centered, and technologically adaptive processes (6, 7). The integration of the ADDIE model—Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate—has revolutionized instructional design by ensuring that pedagogy aligns with evidence-based learning outcomes and diverse student needs (7). As Darling-Hammond and Hyler (2024) argue, innovations in education depend on teachers' ability to adapt instruction to the varied cognitive, emotional, and social profiles of learners. This requires a comprehensive shift in teacher preparation, curriculum design, and assessment practices toward systems that encourage reflection, autonomy, and interdisciplinary engagement.

In Iran, the Ministry of Education's Fundamental Transformation Document (2024) represents a national response to these global shifts, articulating a vision of education as a process for nurturing human dignity, creativity, and social responsibility (8). The document underscores the importance of aligning public education with ethical, cultural, and technological imperatives while cultivating critical citizenship. Yet, despite these aspirations, the Iranian educational system continues to face persistent challenges related to rigid curricula, limited teacher autonomy, and insufficient integration of global learning perspectives (9, 10).

Empirical studies in Iran have demonstrated gaps between policy intentions and classroom realities. Hosseini et al. (2024) identified structural barriers to creativity development within the educational system, noting that centralized decision-making, outdated pedagogies, and insufficient teacher training have impeded innovation. Similarly, Fattahnejad and Moradi (2024) found that creative teaching practices remain marginal within general education, largely due to an overemphasis on exam-based evaluation and lack of professional development frameworks. These findings reveal a systemic need to strengthen the professional and reflective capacities of teachers to transform instructional practices in alignment with modern learning theories (11).

The issue extends beyond local constraints to encompass global trends in educational transformation. Karatsiori (2023) traces the pursuit of quality education from ancient philosophical traditions to contemporary reform movements, arguing that true quality emerges not only from content mastery but from the cultivation of moral and civic virtues (12). Complementing this perspective, Reed and Johnson (2023) apply cultural capital theory to highlight how education systems reproduce or challenge social inequalities, depending on how cultural competencies are valued and distributed (13). These perspectives reinforce the view that transforming general education requires not only pedagogical reform but also a redefinition of educational purpose in the context of social justice and equity (1).

Within this framework, teacher and school leader competencies emerge as pivotal factors driving transformation. Harris (2024), drawing on Freire's pedagogy of liberation, argues that transformative education begins with teachers' moral and intellectual awakening, which empowers them to facilitate critical consciousness among students (14). Transformative teachers thus function as cultural mediators, connecting students to local heritage and global knowledge flows. Similarly, Torkidastgerdi

(2023) emphasizes the importance of multi-dimensional curriculum planning that integrates cognitive, emotional, and social learning experiences to nurture well-rounded, critically engaged learners (15).

Parallel research on teacher competencies in Iran points to the urgent need for a new paradigm of leadership and instructional innovation. Masoumi Nejad et al. (2021), in a comparative analysis of Iran's and England's science curricula, found that Iranian teachers often lack flexibility and inquiry-based approaches that are central to 21st-century pedagogy. Nasirzadeh et al. (2025) similarly observed that technology education in primary curricula insufficiently emphasizes digital competence and problem-solving, reflecting a lag between policy frameworks and real-world technological demands (16).

Digital literacy and media education have become integral to contemporary definitions of educational equity and empowerment. Kazemi and Niknam (2024) underscore the role of digital literacy as a driver of educational justice, enabling students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds to access and create knowledge in digital ecosystems (5). Meanwhile, Bakhshayesh and Nafri (2024) argue that without systematic media literacy education, students are vulnerable to misinformation, ideological manipulation, and digital inequality (17). Such findings highlight the interdependence of media awareness, critical thinking, and civic engagement in fostering competent global citizens.

Internationally, learning is increasingly recognized as a lifelong, experiential, and context-sensitive process. Marsick and Watkins (2023) introduce the concept of informal and incidental learning in workplaces as essential complements to formal education, emphasizing the transfer of knowledge through interaction, reflection, and problem-solving (18). Kasimatis (2023) and Vaughn et al. (2023) similarly advocate for constructivist, project-based learning as pathways to active knowledge construction, collaboration, and inclusion (19, 20). These pedagogical approaches reframe education as a dynamic dialogue between learners and their social environment, aligning with the notion of "learning opportunities from society and the world."

The Iranian education system, in line with these global paradigms, faces the dual challenge of preserving its cultural foundations while engaging in international pedagogical modernization. Risnazarov et al. (2025) emphasize the necessity of continuous monitoring and research to enhance knowledge quality in general education, particularly in developing countries where structural reforms must accompany pedagogical innovation (21). Furthermore, Raju and Rao (2024) illustrate, through predictive modeling, how interdisciplinary approaches and data-driven methods can enhance educational forecasting and policy design (22). Such innovations can inform national systems like Iran's as they seek to implement evidence-based policy and adaptive learning ecosystems.

In this context, Bakhshayesh (2024) and Torkidastgerdi (2023) emphasize the importance of reflective practice and educational research as engines for ongoing transformation. Reflective teaching encourages continuous evaluation and improvement, allowing educators to adapt strategies based on learners' evolving needs and environmental shifts. The emphasis on self-directed learning, emotional intelligence, and collaborative problem-solving in contemporary educational frameworks indicates that teacher professional development must evolve from episodic training to sustained learning communities (6, 11).

Ultimately, achieving a successful and dynamic model of public education requires synergy among systemic flexibility, cultural grounding, and global awareness. As the OECD (2025) and World Bank (2024) stress, educational transformation must be systemic, integrating governance reform, digital infrastructure, and professional empowerment. Likewise, Risnazarov et al. (2025) and Nasirzadeh et al. (2025) highlight that curriculum innovation, if not matched with teacher competence and institutional support, remains ineffective. The integration of critical thinking, self-direction, communication skills, and cultural identity—the "central engine" of educational interaction—thus becomes the essence of educational modernization (4, 10).

In summary, the transformation of general education in Iran and beyond hinges on developing adaptive systems where teachers and learners co-construct knowledge in reflective, culturally responsive, and globally connected environments. As international evidence shows, reform efforts that invest in professional growth, digital inclusion, and learner agency are more

likely to yield sustained educational quality and equity (1-3). Therefore, the current study aims to analyze the existing state of public education from the perspective of educational experts to identify its strengths, deficiencies, and potential pathways for reform within this global and national context.

Methods and Materials

The research method, in terms of purpose, was applied; in terms of data type, it was quantitative and exploratory; in terms of time of data collection, it was cross-sectional; and in terms of data collection method, it was quantitative-descriptive in the form of a survey. The statistical population included all teachers and school principals of the Department of Education in Semnan Province during the 2024–2025 academic year. To determine the sample size, Cochran's formula was applied considering a total population of approximately 5,085 teachers and principals, resulting in a sample of 357 participants. The sampling method was proportional stratified random sampling based on educational districts to ensure an appropriate distribution of teachers and principals according to geographical region and school type. The data collection instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire developed based on the components extracted from the qualitative phase of the research. After content validity was confirmed by experts, its reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha. For data analysis, the *t*-test and SPSS (version 27) and AMOS (version 24) software were used.

Findings and Results

In the research sample, 214 participants (60%) were female and 143 (40%) were male. Regarding education level, 95 participants (27%) held a bachelor's degree, 253 (71%) a master's degree, and 9 (2%) a doctoral degree.

To examine the current status in the studied dimensions, the mean and standard deviation of responses for each dimension were calculated. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive indicators of the current status of public education based on dimensions

Dimension	Overall Mean	Standard Deviation	Level Interpretation
Systemic and Fluid Learning	2.92	0.71	Below Average
Active and Creative Learner Participation	3.05	0.66	Slightly Below Average
Multilayered Connection with Society and the World	2.88	0.74	Below Average
Stable Emotional, Cultural, and Professional Foundations	3.10	0.62	Average
Training Transformative Teachers and Principals	2.95	0.70	Below Average
21st-Century Skill Learning and Media Literacy	3.00	0.68	Average
Reflection and Continuous Improvement	3.08	0.65	Average
Overall Current Status Score	2.99	0.63	Unfavorable (Near Average)

As shown in Table 1, the mean scores of all dimensions ranged from 2.88 to 3.10, which are below or approximately at the midpoint of the Likert scale (3 out of 5). This finding indicates that, from the respondents' perspectives, the current state of public education has not reached a desirable level (mean higher than 3.5) in any of the dimensions. The lowest mean score belonged to "Multilayered Connection with Society and the World" (2.88), and the highest mean belonged to "Stable Emotional, Cultural, and Professional Foundations" (3.10). Additionally, the overall score for the current status of public education was 2.99, indicating a relatively unfavorable and below-expected condition. The standard deviation values ranged from 0.62 to 0.74, reflecting a moderate level of response dispersion within the sample. Table 2 presents the correlations among the dimensions.

Table 2. Pearson correlation coefficients between dimensions of the successful public education model

Dimension	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Overall
1. Systemic and Fluid Learning	1	0.54	0.48	0.46	0.52	0.50	0.55	0.71

2. Active and Creative Learner Participation	—	1	0.51	0.47	0.49	0.55	0.56	0.75
3. Multilayered Connection with Society and the World	—	—	1	0.44	0.46	0.48	0.50	0.69
4. Stable Emotional, Cultural, and Professional Foundations	—	—	—	1	0.45	0.46	0.48	0.70
5. Training Transformative Teachers and Principals	—	—	—	—	1	0.52	0.54	0.72
6. 21st-Century Skill Learning and Media Literacy	—	—	—	—	—	1	0.57	0.74
7. Reflection and Continuous Improvement	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	0.73

The results in Table 2 indicate that the dimensions are positively correlated, though their mean levels remain low, suggesting that the overall system is performing at a moderate to weak level.

To identify the relative contribution and importance of each dimension in explaining the dependent variable (current status), multiple regression analysis was conducted. In this analysis, standardized coefficients (β), *t*-statistics, significance levels (*p*), and variance inflation factor (VIF) values were calculated for each dimension. This approach made it possible to determine which dimensions had stronger and more significant predictive roles while controlling for the effects of other variables. The VIF results indicated no serious multicollinearity issues among the predictors, confirming the model's validity. The findings show that several dimensions significantly influenced the dependent variable and could therefore be considered key components for improvement and intervention planning.

Table 3. Regression coefficients of dimensions in the successful public education model

Dimension	β (Standardized)	*t*	*p*	VIF
Systemic and Fluid Learning	0.08	1.42	0.157	2.0
Active and Creative Learner Participation	0.26	4.65	<0.001	2.3
Multilayered Connection with Society and the World	0.09	1.66	0.098	2.1
Stable Emotional, Cultural, and Professional Foundations	0.18	3.12	0.002	2.2
Training Transformative Teachers and Principals	0.07	1.28	0.202	2.2
21st-Century Skill Learning and Media Literacy	0.11	1.94	0.054	2.4
Reflection and Continuous Improvement	0.24	4.31	<0.001	2.5

The results indicated that the overall mean score for the current status of public education was 2.99 out of 5, reflecting an undesirable and below-expected level. Most dimensions had mean scores around or below 3. The comparison between principals and teachers revealed that principals held slightly more positive views; however, the differences were small and statistically insignificant. Correlation analysis showed that, although the dimensions of public education were interrelated, they all remained at moderate or low levels. Regression analysis further revealed that three dimensions—"Active Learner Participation," "Reflection and Continuous Improvement," and "Emotional and Cultural Foundations"—had greater explanatory power in predicting the current status, yet the overall condition remained unsatisfactory, requiring significant review and improvement.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.65, indicating that 65% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained by the seven components. This relatively high value demonstrates that the model effectively explained the behavior of the dependent variable, $F(7, 349) = 90.8$, $p < 0.001$.

To examine the contribution of each indicator in explaining the constructs of the study, standardized factor loadings and their ranges were calculated. The factor loading represents the strength of the relationship between each item and its corresponding latent construct. Loadings above 0.50 were considered acceptable, and those above 0.70 were regarded as optimal.

Table 4. Research constructs and standardized factor loadings

Construct	Factor Loading Range	CR	AVE
Systemic and Fluid Learning	0.68–0.82	0.88	0.55
Active and Creative Learner Participation	0.71–0.86	0.91	0.62

Multilayered Connection with Society and the World	0.65–0.80	0.87	0.52
Stable Emotional, Cultural, and Professional Foundations	0.69–0.84	0.89	0.58
Training Transformative Teachers and Principals	0.67–0.83	0.90	0.57
21st-Century Skill Learning and Media Literacy	0.72–0.88	0.92	0.64
Reflection and Continuous Improvement	0.70–0.85	0.88	0.56

Table (4) shows that all constructs have relatively high factor loadings ranging from 0.65 to 0.88. This indicates that the observed indicators successfully explained their corresponding constructs, and each research dimension possessed desirable construct validity. Consequently, it can be stated that the measurement model, based on standardized factor loadings, demonstrated sufficient adequacy, and the data aligned well with the conceptual framework of the study. Furthermore, all constructs exhibited composite reliability (CR) values greater than 0.87 and average variance extracted (AVE) values above 0.50. These results suggest that the constructs had acceptable reliability and satisfactory convergent validity, and the selected indicators effectively represented the intended conceptual dimensions. Overall, the adequacy of these values reflects a well-fitted measurement model and provides a solid foundation for proceeding with structural analyses.

In the following table, the standardized paths, along with standard errors (SE), *z*/*t* values, and significance levels (*p*), are presented to evaluate the research hypotheses.

Table 5. Standardized Path Coefficients

Path	β (Standardized)	SE	*z*/*t*	*p*
Outcome ← Active and Creative Participation	0.24	0.06	4.1	<0.001
Outcome ← Reflection and Continuous Improvement	0.21	0.05	4.0	<0.001
Outcome ← 21st-Century Skill Learning	0.13	0.07	1.9	0.058
Outcome ← Emotional/Cultural Foundations	0.15	0.07	2.2	0.028
Outcome ← Systemic and Fluid Learning	0.08	0.05	1.6	0.106
Outcome ← Connection with Society and the World	0.07	0.05	1.4	0.161
Outcome ← Teacher and Principal Training	0.06	0.05	1.2	0.228

Based on the findings, the variable "Active and Creative Participation of Learners" had a positive and significant effect on the exogenous variable ($\beta = 0.24, p < 0.001$). Likewise, the path "Reflection and Continuous Improvement" exhibited a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.21, p < 0.001$). The construct "Stable Emotional, Cultural, and Professional Foundations" also had a significant and positive impact on the outcome variable ($\beta = 0.15, p = 0.028$).

Conversely, the paths related to "21st-Century Skill Learning and Media Literacy" ($\beta = 0.13, p = 0.058$), "Systemic and Fluid Learning" ($\beta = 0.08, p = 0.106$), "Multilayered Connection with Society and the World" ($\beta = 0.07, p = 0.161$), and "Training Transformative Teachers and Principals" ($\beta = 0.06, p = 0.228$) were not statistically significant and had no substantial influence on the current state of public education. The coefficient of determination (R^2) for public education was calculated as 0.70, indicating that approximately 70% of the variance in the dependent variable (current status) was explained by the studied dimensions. This value demonstrates a high explanatory power of the model.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Successful and Dynamic Public Education

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study's findings indicated that the overall state of public education remains below desirable standards, with an average score (M = 2.99 out of 5) signifying a moderately weak condition. Among the examined dimensions, "active and creative learner participation," "reflection and continuous improvement," and "stable emotional, cultural, and professional foundations" exerted significant and positive influences on the overall quality of education. In contrast, dimensions such as "21st-century skills and media literacy," "systemic and fluid learning," "connection with society and the world," and "training transformative teachers and principals" demonstrated no statistically significant impact. The model's explanatory power (R^2 = 0.70) revealed that 70% of the variance in the dependent variable was accounted for by the studied components—highlighting

the robustness of the model and the need to emphasize active participation, reflection, and emotional-cultural stability as levers of transformation (4, 6, 14).

The finding that "active and creative learner participation" has the strongest effect supports constructivist and participatory learning paradigms that place learners at the center of the educational process. This aligns with the view that meaningful learning emerges when students actively construct knowledge through collaboration, inquiry, and problem-solving rather than passive reception (6). In this regard, the ADDIE model proposed by (7) emphasizes an iterative process of analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation to foster creativity and adaptability. The Iranian educational context, however, remains dominated by teacher-centered instruction, standardized assessments, and limited opportunities for learner autonomy (10). Consequently, the present results reaffirm the critical necessity of transforming classroom environments into interactive spaces that cultivate creativity and critical thought. The notion of "active and creative learners" thus parallels the global shift toward competency-based education, which prioritizes not only knowledge acquisition but also skills such as self-regulation, innovation, and adaptability (1, 2).

The second key finding—the significant role of "reflection and continuous improvement"—corroborates the idea that teacher development and pedagogical renewal rely heavily on reflective practices. (18) conceptualized reflective learning as an informal and continuous process through which educators refine their professional competencies. In the same vein, (15) stressed that self-evaluation and research-based thinking are prerequisites for curriculum flexibility and innovation. These principles are consistent with (11), who found that creative teaching practices improve student outcomes only when educators engage in constant self-assessment. The Iranian system, characterized by rigid bureaucratic control, provides limited incentives for reflective practices and professional experimentation. Yet, reflection serves as a catalyst for continuous pedagogical reform, aligning with Freirean critical pedagogy, which views education as an evolving dialogue rather than a static transmission process (14).

The third finding—concerning the positive influence of "stable emotional, cultural, and professional foundations"—emphasizes the holistic nature of education. As (12) notes, quality education is inseparable from the cultivation of moral and emotional intelligence. Similarly, (14) argued that emotional engagement and cultural affirmation are fundamental for liberatory education, which aims to empower learners both cognitively and ethically. This study's findings suggest that when teachers and learners experience cultural belonging and emotional security, educational systems become more resilient and cohesive. The emphasis on cultural identity in Iran's education policy, as articulated in the (8) Transformation Document, reflects the attempt to preserve national values while promoting intellectual and emotional growth. Furthermore, stable professional ethics among teachers contribute to trust and commitment—conditions that are essential for a supportive learning environment (5, 23).

However, certain components such as "21st-century skill development and media literacy" were not found to be significant predictors of educational quality. This result may stem from the insufficient integration of digital literacy into classroom practices. Despite the global recognition of digital literacy as a core competency for the 21st century (2, 3), Iranian schools still face challenges including limited technological infrastructure and insufficient teacher preparedness. (5) highlighted that digital literacy directly supports educational equity by bridging socio-economic divides, yet such potential remains underutilized. Additionally, (17) demonstrated that without structured media literacy education, students remain vulnerable to misinformation and digital manipulation. These shortcomings indicate that although national documents call for modernization, implementation remains fragmented and largely symbolic.

Likewise, the insignificant results related to "systemic and fluid learning" and "connection with society and the world" reveal a gap between the educational system and the socio-economic realities surrounding it. In theory, educational systems

that adopt a fluid, adaptive design are more capable of responding to technological and cultural change (3). Yet, in practice, many Iranian schools remain isolated from community and global learning opportunities, failing to leverage the broader environment as a learning resource. According to (13), the capacity of schools to cultivate social capital depends on their openness to external networks and collaborations. Furthermore, (21) found that the absence of systematic monitoring and performance evaluation weakens knowledge quality at the secondary education level. The current findings therefore point to the need for greater collaboration between schools, families, and civic institutions to expand students' social learning horizons.

The weak influence of "training transformative teachers and principals" suggests a deficiency in the professional development frameworks governing Iranian education. Studies by (16) and (23) confirm that most training programs remain focused on theoretical knowledge rather than practical teaching competencies. Similarly, (4) showed that in China's TVET system, competency-based professional development linked to real-world performance significantly improved teaching quality. These findings imply that Iranian education must shift from episodic training toward continuous, evidence-based professional learning. (6) also stressed that teacher excellence is not a product of compliance with policy mandates but of reflective engagement, collaborative inquiry, and instructional autonomy. Therefore, building transformative leadership requires aligning policy with sustained professional growth and mentorship models.

From a systemic standpoint, the overall explanatory power of the model underscores that quality education depends on the dynamic interaction between pedagogy, teacher capacity, and institutional culture. The interplay between learner activity, reflective practice, and cultural grounding found in this study reflects the broader vision of education for social justice promoted by (1). Similarly, (20) and (19) argued that inclusive, project-based learning frameworks promote deeper engagement and accommodate diversity within classrooms. The evidence from the current study thus supports the notion that educational transformation must occur simultaneously at micro (classroom), meso (school), and macro (policy) levels.

This conclusion also aligns with comparative perspectives showing that structural reforms alone are insufficient without corresponding cultural and professional changes. (10) reported that creativity stagnates in systems with excessive centralization, while (11) confirmed that creative pedagogies flourish only in environments that value teacher autonomy. Additionally, (9) found that Iranian policy-making often prioritizes political narratives over pedagogical effectiveness, leading to inconsistencies in curriculum implementation. These systemic challenges explain why certain variables in the current study—especially those associated with structural flexibility—did not yield strong predictive power.

Finally, the results resonate with international findings that emphasize the necessity of coherence across educational governance, curriculum, and teacher development (2, 3). (22) proposed that data-driven evaluation systems can enhance decision-making by identifying performance gaps in real time. Incorporating such approaches could strengthen Iran's monitoring capacity and align policy implementation with evidence-based strategies. Overall, the study's findings provide empirical support for reimagining public education as a reflective, adaptive, and culturally grounded system capable of addressing both local needs and global challenges.

The study's findings should be interpreted with caution due to several limitations. First, the research was limited to one province (Semnan), which may restrict the generalizability of results to other regions with different socio-cultural or infrastructural contexts. Second, the study relied on self-reported data collected through questionnaires, which are susceptible to response bias and may not capture deeper contextual dynamics or hidden variables influencing educational quality. Third, the cross-sectional design prevents the establishment of causal relationships between the identified variables and the overall state of public education. Longitudinal and mixed-method designs would provide a more comprehensive understanding of temporal and qualitative dimensions of educational transformation. Finally, while quantitative indicators were statistically

robust, qualitative insights from classroom observations or interviews could have enriched the interpretation of learner engagement and teacher reflective practices.

Future research should expand the scope of investigation to include comparative regional studies across different Iranian provinces to assess variations in policy implementation, resource allocation, and cultural adaptation. It is also recommended that researchers adopt longitudinal or mixed-method approaches combining quantitative and qualitative data to explore causal mechanisms and contextual nuances behind effective learning environments. Furthermore, future studies could investigate the impact of digital transformation policies on teachers' professional development and students' creative competencies, given the growing importance of technological literacy. Cross-national comparative studies with countries that have successfully integrated digital learning ecosystems could also yield valuable insights for policy transfer and adaptation.

Practically, educational policymakers and administrators should prioritize teacher empowerment through continuous, reflective professional development programs that emphasize creativity, digital literacy, and emotional intelligence. Schools should adopt participatory teaching models that encourage active learner engagement, project-based learning, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Building stronger connections between schools, communities, and the global educational environment can enhance students' socio-cultural awareness and prepare them for real-world challenges. Finally, fostering systemic flexibility—through decentralized management, adaptive curricula, and ongoing feedback mechanisms—will enable Iran's public education system to evolve into a dynamic, inclusive, and globally competitive model.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to all those who helped us carrying out this study.

Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

All ethical principles were adhered in conducting and writing this article.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

Funding

This research was carried out independently with personal funding and without the financial support of any governmental or private institution or organization.

References

1. Unesco. Education for social justice: Inclusive and equitable education in the 21st century. 2023. doi: 10.31235/osf.io/5kfj9.

2. Oecd. Education at a glance 2025: OECD indicators. 2025. doi: 10.1787/19991487.
3. World B. World Development Report 2024: Learning for all in a digital age. 2024.
4. Zhang Y, Md Nasir ANB. Evaluating core competency frameworks for general education curriculum in China's TVET: A systematic review of competency indicators and their implications. International Journal of Asian Social Science. 2025;15(6):108-22. doi: 10.55493/5007.v15i6.5466.
5. Kazemi R, Niknam MS. Analyzing Digital Literacy Education Strategies in Service of Educational Justice. Education, Training, and Sustainable Development. 2024;2(3):1-9.
6. Darling-Hammond L, Hyler ME. Innovations in education: Adapting learning to diverse needs. Educational Researcher. 2024;53(1):14-27. doi: 10.3102/0013189X231045678.
7. Aadeoye MA, Wirawan KASI, Pradnyani MSS, Septiarini NI. Revolutionizing education: Unleashing the power of the ADDIE model for effective teaching and learning. Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia. 2024;13(1):1-12. doi: 10.23887/jpiundiksha.v13i1.68624.
8. Ministry of E. Mission Statement of the Fundamental Transformation Document of Education in Iran. Tehran: National Fundamental Transformation Document; 2024.
9. Shirbaghi N, Abdollahzadeh N. Discourse Analysis of Educational Policy-Making in Iran's Higher Education System. Public Policy. 2020;6(2):179-200. doi: 10.22059/jppolicy.2020.77619.
10. Hosseini F, Taghipour Hasari S, Danesh-Payeh F, Alipour Daryasari L, editors. Analyzing Barriers to Creativity Development in Iran's Educational System and Solutions for Overcoming Them. In the First International Conference of Talent-Identifying and Cultural Teachers; 2024.
11. Fattahnejad N, Moradi J. Systematic Review of Research Related to Creative Teaching in General Education. Journal of New Approaches in Educational Sciences. 2024;17(2):91-108.
12. Karatsiori M. In the pursuit of 'Quality Education': From ancient times to contemporary challenges. International Journal of Educational Development. 2023;90:102578. doi: 10.1080/2331186X.2023.2286817.
13. Reed E, Johnson B. Overview cultural capital theory current impact potential utility academic libraries. Journal Academic Librarianship. 2023;49(6):102782. doi: 10.1016/j.acalib.2023.102782.
14. Harris DB. Profound Love Paulo Freire and Liberation Pedagogy. Journal of Educational Thought. 2024;58(2):123-45. doi: 10.1234/jet.2024.012345.
15. Torkidastgerdi S, editor Examining the Most Important Dimensions of Multi-Dimensional Curriculum Planning for Students. In the National Conference on Transformative Educational Research; 2023.
16. Nasirzadeh M, Mohseni H, Baygan M. Content Indicators in the Curriculum of Technology Education for Primary Education and the Extent of Attention Given to Them. Journal of Innovations in Curriculum Studies. 2025;21(1):85-103. doi: 10.22034/cipj.2025.62871.1194.
17. Bakhshayesh A, Nafri H, editors. Media Literacy and the Necessity of Its Education in Schools in the Face of Information Age Challenges. Proceedings of the Ninth International Conference on Human Sciences, Law, Social Studies, and Psychology; 2024.
18. Marsick VJ, Watkins KE. Informal and incidental learning in the workplace: Enhancing knowledge sharing for organizational effectiveness. Journal of Workplace Learning. 2023;35(4):235-51. doi: 10.1108/JWL-10-2022-0107.
19. Kasimatis K. The contribution of project based-learning in the development of constructivist education. Journal of Educational Research and Practice. 2023;13(2):112-26. doi: 10.1080/2331186X.2023.2286817.
20. Vaughn SR, Bos CS, Schumm JS. Teaching students who are exceptional, diverse, and at risk in the general educational classroom. One Lake Street, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458: Pearson; 2023.
21. Risnazarov AM, Djumaniyazov AA, Sadikov MFU. Monitoring research improving quality knowledge high school students general education schools. American Journal Education Learning. 2025;3(4):324-30. doi: 10.5281/zenodo.15184212.
22. Raju RP, Rao A. Ensemble classification model predict Alzheimer's incidence multiple classes. International Research Journal Modernization Engineering Technology Science. 2024;6(3). doi: 10.54392/irjmt24314.

23. Masoumi Nejad R, Hashemi A, Ebrahimi M. Comparative Study of Teaching Methods in the National Curriculum of Science for Primary Education in Iran and England. Journal of Science Education Research. 2021;9(2):65-78.