

Role of Management Training in Good Governance: Case of Iran

FaraJollah Rahnavard
State Management Training Center

Abstract

It is most important to identify which particular set of key factors is required for the organizations to make reality good governance characteristics. Management training is among these critical factors. In this context, a major question needed to be addressed. How a management training model to be developed to help organizations to achieve qualities of good governance at state and organizational levels? To answer such a questions, we challenged to design a training model that is relevant to the needs of managers, and is sensitive to information-age and good governance organizations,

The article examines how good governance approach is represented within the training development framework of organizations in the Iranian public sector. The model was conceptualized to: 1) improve the personal competences of the managers; 2) develop public sector organizations; and 3) respond requirements of new forms of governance. After a thorough review of research and a study of current management training system in Iran, a modular training program was developed based on the model which consists of three major components: 1) Relocation course; 2) Refreshment course; and 3) Preparatory Course.

Introduction

In most dictionaries, governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of an organization, institution or state. Governance, like government, can be good or bad (poor). So, instead of definition of "good governance" with precision, crystallizing the qualities that separate good governance from bad could be adequate. A variety of international organizations and states have adopted their own definitions which generally include (Taylor, 2000; Roy and Tisdell, 1998; Mobius, 2001; Weiss, 2000):

- The existence and reinforcement of democratic structures;
- Responsiveness to the needs of the people;
- Transparency, accountability and participatory development;
- The creation of sound economic policies to facilitate development;
- Respect for human rights and the rule of law-

From the above characteristics it should be clear that good governance is an ideal which is difficult to achieve in its totality. Very few countries and societies have come close to achieving good governance in its totality. However, to ensure sustainable human development, actions must be taken to work towards this ideal with the aim of making it a reality.

It is equally important to recognize that countries' or communities' needs and perceptions change with the passage of time, global economic and political situations, community values and aspirations. So, the quality and effectiveness of policy makers and administrators is vital to the process of development. It confirms that public administrators have a critical role to achieve the ultimate goal of governments to maximize the wellbeing of its citizens. It means, policy makers and administrators need to clearly understand environmental dynamics, and their changing symbiotic relationship should be a dominant consideration in good governance and administrative reform initiatives. To do so, they needed to be trained and become professional in management of information-age organizations.

The Training Model

shifting from an industrial to an information centered economy, many of today's public and private organizations are transitioning to meet the demands of tomorrow's knowledge-based society (Brown, 2000). The globalization paradigm demands new forms of governance which in turns require changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes of managers in public, private, and third sectors. So, the role of management training is crucial one in preparing managers to play their new roles in good governance environment.

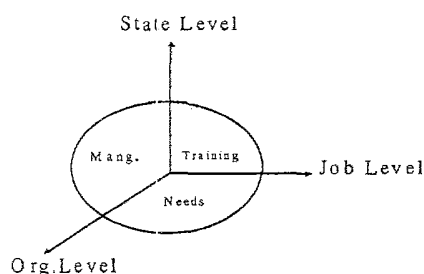


Figure 1. Three dimensional model for developing managerial training needs

Figure 1 shows a model of training needs development in Iran. Each dimension stands for one of the three contexts that has an effect on managerial training needs. In total, the model can provide a better and more realistic understanding of managers' work-related functions- We extracted management functions at three levels. Then these functions translated to managerial knowledge/skills. According to Silver (1991) management knowledge includes the theoretical basis upon which the manager's personal models are based. The training needs at state and organizational level emerged on the view of "good governance" approach in the public sector. This approach conducted us to take into consideration the characteristics of good governance (Accountability, Participation, Predictability, Transparency). We concluded that without "good managers", it is impossible to bring into reality these characteristics. Good management depends on governance of continuous learning process- We here define learning as the human process by which skills, knowledge, habit and attitudes are acquired and altered in such a way that behavior is modified.

This definition embraces both skills and knowledge (Cacioppe and Albrecht, 2000; Klagge, 1998) and it states that real learning is only achieved when it becomes embodied in behavior or intention to behave.

Differences and similarities

We could probably all agree that management positions can be generally categorized as operational (supervisory) management, middle management, and top (executive) management- And in general sense, we could probably agree that different training topics are most appropriate for different level. So, the training model focused on this differences which we called it "training by differences." The focus will be on solving problems and responding to challenges the manager faces, and on generating knowledge for participants during a system of learning. The model is based on the idea that it is both possible and desirable to develop a common training program for managers of public sector organizations. The underlying assumption is that, despite contextual differences between public sector managers with regard to functional domains, geographic differences etc., there are many similarities with regard to training needs and proper training solutions to meet these needs- The assumption is that the elements of the training model will, to a large extent, be common. Focus will be on developing a common model that can easily be adjusted to different national/regional/branch requirements. The detailed contents of the elements in the model, e.g. for the modules in the program, will mainly be common to all public sector managers. For a few modules/subject areas, where functional requirements differ (e.g. hospital management. Training management, etc.), it will be necessary to develop specialized courses for each group of managers.

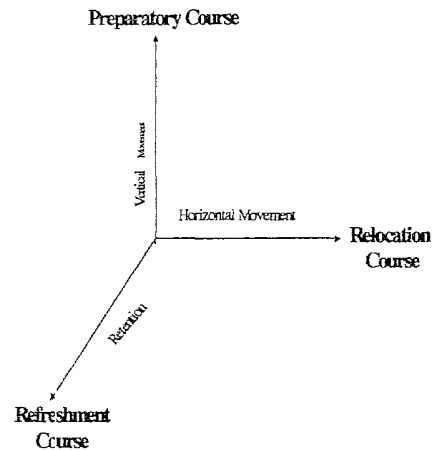


Figure 2. Management training courses by managerial levels

The aim of the training model, is focused on developing a dynamic and flexible model that can easily be adjusted to different job, organization, and good governance requirements. The training program has a modular structure with three courses

(Relocation, Preparatory, and Refreshment) which will be further specified in the following (Figure 2)

1. Relocation Course

This program has long been recognized as offering exceptional value managers who are moved from one organization to another in public sector (horizontal relocation). The program focuses on functional management like hospital management, city management, justice management and gives them a thorough introduction to characteristics of new sector.

2. Refreshment course

The training program includes a follow-up procedure for the participating managers. This program includes regular meetings with fellow managers for discussion of the status quo of the implementation of the different projects in the organizations as well as refreshment of their knowledge and skills. Two to three years after completion of the ordinary preparatory-training program; refreshment courses could be implemented.

3. Preparatory course

People are often promoted into management roles not because of their potential to be a good manager, but because they were successful in their previous role. The program is a long-term course which prepares experts or managers to play an efficient and effective role in their new managerial positions (vertical movement). Candidates for training are selected based upon succession planning in the organizations. Succession planning is an ongoing process of systematically identifying, assessing and developing talent to ensure the leadership continuity for all key positions in an organization (Kransdorff, 1996). The course includes the following main elements, which are specified in brief:

3.1. Objectives

The program focuses on the development of the public administrative, organizations and their managers. For the public sector organizations the objectives are related to the creating characteristics of good governance. For the managers the program should strengthen their competence in terms of knowledge, attitude, and skills.

3.2. Participants

The specific target group for the training model is managers of public sector or candidates for managerial posts.

Additional criteria should be put forward for the managers/candidates such as:

- Managers should have a strong motivation to participate.
- Managers should have the capacity of learning.
- Managers should be development/growth oriented.
- A maximum of 20 years experience as managers in the public sector.

3.3. Trainers/ instructors

The selection of trainers/instructors should be based on a set of criteria:

- Pedagogical and communication skills.
- Practical experience in and/or knowledge of the public administration.
- The trainers/instructors should participate in a training program (TOT) before attending the preparatory course. This program should include, among other things, theories of adult learning and basic methods of teaching.
- Ability to adapt new technology/new media to traditional learning.

3.4. Training process

The training program should focus on learning from experience, this supports an action-learning approach or learning by doing (Revans, 1983) as a basis for the training model. The Entrepreneurial Approach chosen as framework for the training model implies that the Preparatory-training Model will be based on the following methods in a learning situation:

- Participation/class discussion: to discuss and deepen concepts
- Seminar: to increase presentation skills
- Workshop: a thorough organization analysis is performed in each of the workshops. to responsive to needs and problem solving.
- Group Assignment: to enhance team working
 - » Case-approach; using life case studies of participants
- Role-play: to practice theoretical aspects
- Self-study; to save and lower the time needed for the course sessions
- Virtual training: to use web-based learning as a complementary method

3.5. Training structure

The Preparatory-training program is a comprehensive, holistic training course, which will be based on a combination of self-study and training sessions. The instructor will act as facilitators in the learning process of the individual managers, and secure that the learning is transferred to proper actions in the organizations

The duration of the program should in total be 12 ~ 18 months- This gives a possibility for a follow up of the activities put forward in the case writing for each individual organization by participants. The scheduling of the training sessions during the week could a combination of working hours and outside working hours.

Self-study should be used for the introduction to new subjects before the training sessions, but also for repetition and actively applying the new knowledge on own situation after the sessions. There is a need for concrete and practical guidelines for these activities. The Web-based training, of the training program could be used as a teaching/learning tool for the self-study part. There should also be a possibility of establishing discussion groups on the Internet. The advantage of using the Internet is that the individual manager can engage when he/she has the time to do so, and that there are less costs of time and resources involved compared to meeting physically.

3.6. The Main Topics

The Preparatory-training program has a modular structure (Each module was to act as a "stand alone" unit for professional development) with three courses and topics. The training program is a combination of courses within five key areas of importance for promoting development of public sector managers/managerial candidates:

1. Job Level: to do managerial functions in an effective and efficient way.
2. Organizational Level: to crystallize characteristics of good governance in the organizations
3. State level: to reinvent good governance at public sector.

The key area "Job level" is related to the management functions (top-middle-operational). The others areas are related to the special functions of the managers of public sector organizations.

The specification of topics for each of the courses is based on suggestions made by the members of the "Committee on Training System for Management Development" at the State Management Training Center in Iran. The committee suggestion was the result of analysis of existing "best practice program" in other countries and analysis of trends and relevant literature. The topics should be relevant to development of public sector organizations in general, and to the individual managers specifically. The specification follows below (table 1).

Table 1. Main topics in preparatory course for triple managerial levels

	Operational Manager	Middle Manager	Top Manager
General topics (State Level)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employment law 2. Competition in global economic 3. Operational Budgeting 4. Public Accounting 5. Islamic Ethics 6. Macroeconomic 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public Budgeting 2. Policy Design and Implementation 3. Managerial Accounting 4. Managerial Economic 5. Issues in the Iranian Public Administration 6. Public Ethics 7. Comparative Administrative Systems 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Managerial Accounting 2. Constitutional law 3. Philosophy of administrative ethics 4. Public administration & globalization 5. Political economic 6. Issues at national and ultra-national level
Capstone Topics (Org. Level)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. System analysis 2. Information Systems 3. Human resource management 4. Re-engineering 5. Suggestion system 6. Research method 7. Statistical analysis 8. Workplace health 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organizational development 2. Internal Audit & program evaluation 3. Organization & IT 5. Strategic Management 6. Participatory Management 8. Seminar in human resources 9. Organizational Design 10. Managing information systems 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. corporate strategy 2. strategic change management 3. R&D management 4. Evaluation & Organizational audit 5. Environmental conservation management 6. Building information-age organization 7. Strategic information system 8. Organizational culture management 9. Strategic HRM 10. Managerial styles
Specific Topics (Job Level)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Essentials of Management 2. Managing group work 3. Mathematics in management 4. Computer in management 5. Operational research 6. Stress management 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organizational Behavior 2. Org. Communication 3. Time Management 4. Project Management 5. Quality Management 6. Conflict Management 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Managing social communications 2. Social psychology 3. Knowledge management 4. Crisis management 5. Entrepreneurial management 6. Strategic quality management

3.7 Teaching material

Within this project also training material will be developed for the training program, including a users' manual, a teachers' manual and a web-based training version. The users' manual will include mostly the same material as the web-based, for use by the participants that do not have access to a PC. The web-based training version will mainly include interactive exercises, checklists, short video presentations and examples of practical implementation of the topics. The intention is that the teaching material will allow the manager to study whenever he or she has the time to do so.

The material will be developed together with personnel with expertise in adult education in order to ensure that it will be based on the pedagogic principles.. The cooperation with a multi-medium producer throughout the development process should secure that we make use of the interactivity and presentation possibilities posed by the new information technology.

3.8 Evaluation

The Management Training Program should be subject to continuous evaluation, both internal and external. The evaluations should be based on the objectives set forward for the program, and be performed both for the program, the participants and the trainers/instructors. The external evaluation should be performed at a national basis, e.g. by State Management and Planning Organization with good knowledge/skills of the target group.

A number of models (burden and Proctor, 2000) have been developed to evaluate training which include: 1) The Kirkpatrick (model; 2) Bell system model; 3) Warr, Bird and Rackham model; and 4) CIPP model. The evaluation method was developed based on a combination of these models to cover reactionary evaluation, immediate evaluation, and ultimate evaluation.

Conclusion

The history of training in Iran in the post-revolution years is one of gradual evolution. There has always been a recognition of the value of training to the management development, however, this trend can be categorized to three decades, At first decade (1979-89), the attention was to respond to management skill shortages at national level- But there was a tendency among educators to look to the West for know-how and technology. As Han-Siu Chow (1995) noted not all the training programs were locally developed and there was a heavy reliance on the West for teaching materials. Second decade (1989-99), started with expanding management training schemes to provincial levels. In practice, we found that formal education principles would tend to have the least immediately successful application in training settings with public sector managers. And, management development must reflect the training needs in the public sector. The perception that training programs had become inadequate with regards to changing environments, and globalization was emerged at third decade (1999 and beyond). It was recognized that a more competitive and turbulent environment dictated a more strategic approach to management development and ongoing training improvement.

The promise of a strategic approach is that different training program is more amenable to effective management of the public sector. This necessity stems from this fact that turbulent environment demands reskilling managers, to carry out changed roles and functions. Training was linked to popular management functions and roles at governmental, organizational, and job levels. One of these new roles is thinking and acting based on good governance approach.

Although many organizations recognize the need for training, not all of them link training with establishing and maintaining a

good governance approach. Even fewer try to assess the effectiveness of training programs in the light of facilitating the achievement of good governance characteristics.

This study highlighted that during periods of recent decades, job-oriented training tended to overshadow organizational-oriented training. This was in spite of the assumption that people-management training courses involving social skills are the crucial factor in organizational performance, especially in a turbulent environment of increased competition. This paper provides a brief description of the conceptual basis underpinning a management training program. The program was developed on the basis of good governance approach for management development in Iran. Adopting such an approach stems from this fact that the ability of a country to fulfil its development goals is dependent upon the quality of governance. It means good governance is a central factor in achieving development.

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