

Prioritizing the Components of Good Governance in Educational Administration: A Study of Education District Managers in Hormozgan Province

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ABSTRACT

Good governance, as one of the contemporary approaches to public-sector management, plays an important role in enhancing the quality of decision-making, increasing accountability, and strengthening stakeholder trust. Owing to its strategic role in sustainable development and human capital formation, the education system requires the institutionalization of good governance components more than many other sectors. The present study aimed to identify and prioritize the components of good governance in the administration of education in Hormozgan Province based on the perspectives of experts and educational managers. In terms of purpose, this study was applied, and methodologically, it employed a mixed-methods design comprising qualitative and quantitative phases. In the qualitative phase, thematic analysis was used to extract basic and organizing themes of good governance, while in the quantitative phase, the fuzzy Delphi method was employed to prioritize the organizing themes. The study population consisted of managers and experts from the education system of Hormozgan Province, of whom 10 participants were purposively selected for the qualitative phase and 10 for the quantitative phase. The fuzzy Delphi results indicated that transparency and equity in resource allocation had the highest priority, followed by managerial accountability and responsibility and stakeholder participation and inclusion. Other components, including the information system and data quality, performance evaluation and improvement, and organizational coherence, learning, and adaptation, played supportive and reinforcing roles in achieving good governance. The findings of the study can provide a basis for improving policymaking and managerial decision-making within the education system of Hormozgan Province.

Keywords: good governance, educational administration, stakeholder participation, transparency and accountability, fuzzy Delphi, Hormozgan Province

Introduction

Good governance has emerged as a central concept in contemporary public administration and management, particularly in sectors where public accountability, distributive justice, stakeholder participation, and institutional effectiveness directly influence social development. The concept extends beyond the traditional understanding of government as a hierarchical apparatus and instead emphasizes the quality of decision-making processes,



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institutional arrangements, relationships among stakeholders, and mechanisms through which authority is exercised. Within this perspective, governance is considered “good” when decision-making is transparent, participatory, accountable, responsive, equitable, effective, and consistent with the rule of law. These principles have become increasingly important as public organizations face complex social expectations, resource constraints, rapid technological changes, growing demands for accountability, and pressures to improve service quality. Empirical and theoretical studies across various sectors have consequently highlighted good governance as a multidimensional managerial framework capable of improving organizational effectiveness, strengthening institutional legitimacy, and promoting sustainable development (1, 2). The relevance of these principles is particularly evident in public-service systems, where institutional performance is not evaluated solely on the basis of internal efficiency but also according to the fairness, accessibility, responsiveness, and legitimacy of organizational decisions.

Education constitutes one of the most strategically significant domains for the application of good governance because educational systems perform functions that extend far beyond routine service delivery. They are responsible for human capital development, socialization, cultural reproduction, social mobility, citizenship formation, and the long-term development of societies. The quality of governance within an education system therefore has consequences not only for organizational performance but also for educational equity, public trust, social cohesion, and sustainable development. Evidence from cross-national research suggests that improvements in governance may contribute to better educational outputs alongside broader social and economic outcomes (3). In this context, the governance of education should be understood as the institutional and managerial processes through which educational priorities are established, resources are allocated, policies are implemented, stakeholders are involved, organizational performance is assessed, and accountability relationships are maintained. As educational systems become increasingly complex, centralized administrative models based predominantly on formal authority and hierarchical control may be insufficient to address diverse local needs, rapidly changing educational demands, and the expectations of multiple stakeholder groups. Consequently, educational management increasingly requires governance mechanisms that combine administrative efficiency with participation, transparency, responsibility, adaptability, and evidence-based decision-making.

The movement toward good governance in educational systems also reflects a broader transition from state-centered administration toward more collaborative, networked, and stakeholder-oriented models of institutional management. Studies of higher education governance have demonstrated that traditional state-dominated structures frequently encounter limitations in responsiveness, flexibility, autonomy, stakeholder engagement, and institutional learning. The transition from state-centered governance to good governance requires reconsideration of the relationships among government authorities, educational institutions, managers, academic or professional personnel, learners, families, and broader social actors (4, 5). This transition does not necessarily imply the withdrawal of the state from educational administration; rather, it requires a transformation in the manner in which authority is exercised. State institutions remain responsible for regulation, equity, standards, and public accountability, but managerial legitimacy increasingly depends on consultation, transparency, evidence, responsiveness, and shared responsibility. In this sense, good governance represents a shift from the mere exercise of administrative authority toward the creation of institutional processes through which different actors can contribute to educational decision-making while remaining subject to clear accountability mechanisms.

The multidimensional character of good governance is especially important in education because educational outcomes are produced through interactions among numerous organizational and social actors. Managers at provincial and district levels are responsible for translating national policies into operational decisions, while school principals, teachers, students, parents, and local communities experience the practical consequences of those decisions. If these stakeholder groups are excluded from decision-making processes, educational policies may lack contextual relevance, legitimacy, and practical feasibility. Stakeholder participation is therefore not merely a normative ideal but an important managerial mechanism for improving the quality of educational decisions. Participation can provide decision-makers with contextual knowledge, reveal implementation barriers, increase acceptance of policies, and enhance institutional trust. Research on academic governance has similarly indicated that the quality of governance relationships can influence stakeholders' experiences and levels of satisfaction (6). Accordingly, meaningful participation requires more than symbolic consultation; it involves establishing structured mechanisms through which stakeholder perspectives can influence priorities, policies, implementation processes, and evaluations.

Transparency represents another fundamental dimension of good governance in educational administration. Public education systems manage substantial financial, human, informational, and physical resources, and the distribution of these resources has direct implications for educational opportunity and equity. Transparency refers to the extent to which decision criteria, procedures, allocations, performance information, and institutional responsibilities are accessible, understandable, and open to scrutiny. Transparent allocation procedures can reduce ambiguity, information asymmetry, perceptions of favoritism, and opportunities for arbitrary decision-making. They can also improve the ability of schools and stakeholders to understand why particular decisions have been made and how available resources have been distributed. In the Iranian educational context, governance research has repeatedly emphasized the importance of structural drivers associated with fairness, participation, transparency, accountability, and effective administrative arrangements (7). These dimensions are interconnected because resource transparency becomes particularly meaningful when it is accompanied by equitable allocation criteria and mechanisms that allow affected stakeholders to question or evaluate managerial decisions.

The issue of equity is inseparable from transparency in education because education systems operate across areas with different demographic, socioeconomic, geographic, and infrastructural conditions. Equal distribution of resources does not necessarily produce equitable outcomes when schools and educational districts differ substantially in their needs. Good governance therefore requires that resource-allocation mechanisms be both transparent and sensitive to actual educational needs. Recent work examining the relationship between good governance and educational justice has emphasized that governance arrangements can significantly influence the capacity of education systems to achieve more equitable educational opportunities and outcomes (8). From this perspective, transparency and equity are mutually reinforcing: transparency makes allocation criteria visible and open to scrutiny, while equity provides the normative basis for determining whether those criteria adequately address differences in need. For provincial education systems, the development of clear, evidence-based, and publicly understandable resource-allocation procedures may consequently constitute one of the most important practical expressions of good governance.

Accountability and managerial responsibility are equally central to the governance of education. Accountability refers to the obligation of managers and decision-makers to explain and justify their actions, report on performance, respond to stakeholder concerns, and accept responsibility for the consequences of decisions. In educational

organizations, accountability operates vertically through administrative hierarchies and horizontally through relationships with schools, teachers, parents, students, and the public. Effective accountability therefore requires clear responsibilities, measurable expectations, transparent reporting, complaint-handling mechanisms, and systematic follow-up of feedback. The importance of these dimensions has also been identified in Iranian studies seeking to determine the components of good governance in higher education, where accountability, transparency, participation, effectiveness, and responsiveness have emerged as interconnected governance principles (9). Without operational accountability mechanisms, formal policies may have little effect on managerial behavior because there is no systematic process through which implementation can be reviewed, shortcomings identified, or corrective measures enforced.

The significance of accountability is also evident in efforts to develop good policymaking models for educational institutions. Policy quality depends not only on technically appropriate policy design but also on institutional capacity, stakeholder engagement, implementation responsibility, monitoring, and the availability of feedback loops. Good policymaking in higher education has therefore been conceptualized as a process requiring coherent institutional structures, appropriate participation, evidence, accountability, and continuous evaluation (10). Similar principles apply to school education systems, particularly at provincial and district levels where managers must interpret general policies in light of local constraints. A governance framework that emphasizes managerial responsibility can help ensure that educational policies do not remain detached from implementation realities. It can also make managers more attentive to the consequences of their decisions for schools and stakeholders and encourage the institutionalization of mechanisms for responding to complaints, reporting outcomes, and correcting unsuccessful practices.

Access to reliable information constitutes another prerequisite for good educational governance. Modern educational administration increasingly depends on data concerning student performance, school resources, staffing, enrollment, attendance, facilities, program implementation, financial allocation, and managerial performance. The existence of data alone, however, is insufficient. Information must be accurate, complete, timely, accessible, and suitable for analysis if it is to support evidence-based decision-making. Weak information systems can generate substantial governance problems by delaying responses, undermining performance monitoring, reducing transparency, and encouraging decisions based on incomplete or outdated evidence. Contemporary educational environments also face growing demands for technological adaptation and digital forms of administration and learning. The experience of e-learning adoption has demonstrated that organizational readiness, technological infrastructure, institutional support, and policy environments can strongly shape the effectiveness of educational change (11). These observations reinforce the importance of information systems not merely as technical infrastructures but as governance mechanisms that determine the capacity of educational organizations to respond intelligently and rapidly to changing conditions.

Digitalization and e-government perspectives further demonstrate the connection between information management, organizational agility, and public-sector responsiveness. Research has indicated that e-government and organizational agility are associated with improved institutional responsiveness and may operate through mechanisms related to social responsibility and organizational performance (12). For education systems, these findings imply that high-quality information infrastructures can support transparency, monitoring, communication, and faster administrative responses. Yet technological systems can only contribute to good governance when the underlying information is reliable and when managers possess the capacity to use it effectively. An advanced digital

platform that contains incomplete, delayed, or inconsistent data does not create evidence-based governance. Consequently, information quality, access, timeliness, completeness, and analytical capability should be treated as integrated dimensions of governance rather than as purely technical issues.

Performance evaluation is another major component of good governance because governance quality cannot be sustained without systematic monitoring of decisions, policies, programs, and managerial activities. Evaluation enables organizations to determine whether planned actions have achieved their intended outcomes and whether resources have been used effectively. It also provides a formal basis for institutional learning, policy revision, and managerial accountability. Educational performance evaluation should therefore extend beyond compliance-oriented inspection and incorporate systematic assessment of program effectiveness, managerial performance, stakeholder outcomes, and the consequences of policy decisions. The use of frameworks such as the Balanced Scorecard in educational governance illustrates attempts to integrate different dimensions of organizational performance and to create more systematic approaches to governance assessment (13). Such approaches recognize that educational effectiveness cannot be assessed through a single indicator and that governance requires attention to multiple organizational dimensions, including processes, stakeholders, learning, capacity, and results.

Performance evaluation is closely associated with organizational learning. Governance systems that generate information but fail to use it for improvement remain administratively stagnant. Organizational learning refers to the ability to interpret experience, incorporate feedback, revise practices, and institutionalize lessons derived from both successes and failures. Continuous improvement requires mechanisms for collecting feedback from schools and stakeholders, examining implementation problems, reviewing outcomes, and modifying policies accordingly. The empowerment of educational personnel is also relevant in this context because employees who possess professional capacity, decision-making opportunities, and organizational support are more capable of contributing to responsive and adaptive governance. Research on educational staff empowerment based on good governance principles has highlighted the relationship between governance arrangements and the development of human resources within educational institutions (14). Good governance therefore involves not only controlling organizational behavior but also building the capacity of personnel to participate effectively in decision-making and institutional improvement.

Organizational coherence and adaptation to local conditions are particularly important in geographically and socially diverse educational systems. Central policies can provide general direction, standards, and legal consistency, but their implementation frequently occurs under substantially different local circumstances. Organizational coherence requires coordination among administrative levels, clarity of responsibilities, consistent communication, and understandable regulations, whereas adaptability requires sufficient flexibility to respond to regional and local needs. Good governance must balance these requirements: excessive centralization may reduce local responsiveness, while excessive decentralization without coordination may generate inconsistency and fragmentation. The policy implications of good governance identified in analyses of Iran's Fundamental Transformation Document of Education emphasize the importance of governance principles in translating broad educational goals into effective policymaking and implementation arrangements (15, 16). This suggests that governance reforms need to be embedded not only in abstract policy principles but also in institutional mechanisms that clarify authority, facilitate participation, and improve the alignment between policy objectives and operational realities.

International experiences likewise demonstrate that successful educational governance depends on the interaction of institutional autonomy, accountability, stakeholder participation, transparency, and effective regulatory arrangements. Comparative studies of good governance in European and North American higher education systems have identified valuable lessons regarding the distribution of authority, institutional responsibility, accountability structures, and stakeholder involvement (17, 18). Although higher education differs structurally from school education, these experiences remain conceptually relevant because both sectors must manage tensions between autonomy and oversight, decentralization and coordination, professional discretion and public accountability. Transferring international models directly into a local context may not be appropriate, but comparative findings can illuminate governance mechanisms that warrant contextual adaptation. This is particularly important in countries where educational systems have historically been characterized by strong administrative centralization and where governance reform requires gradual institutional changes rather than simple organizational restructuring.

Good governance also has an important human-resource dimension. Public-sector organizations ultimately depend on the behavior and competencies of managers and employees to convert formal governance principles into everyday organizational practices. Empowerment, monitoring, evaluation, responsibility, and managerial support can influence the quality of public services and the capacity of organizations to meet stakeholder expectations. Evidence from public-service settings indicates that human resource empowerment, good governance, monitoring, and evaluation can jointly contribute to service quality (19). In educational administration, this implies that governance reforms should not be limited to policy documents or organizational structures; they must also affect managerial practices, professional responsibilities, evaluation procedures, communication patterns, and staff capabilities. The success of governance reforms therefore depends on whether organizational actors possess both the authority and competencies required to implement them.

The growing attention to good governance in Iranian education and higher education demonstrates that the subject has become an increasingly important area of management and policy research. Existing studies have sought to identify governance components, examine governance transitions, develop policymaking frameworks, analyze structural drivers, and extract implications from national policy documents and international experiences (7, 9, 20). Collectively, these studies confirm that good governance in education is a multidimensional construct involving transparency, accountability, participation, equity, efficiency, responsiveness, institutional capacity, information quality, and appropriate policy structures. Nevertheless, the relative importance of these dimensions may differ across administrative contexts. A governance factor that is particularly urgent in one province, institution, or organizational level may be less critical in another because governance problems are shaped by local conditions, organizational capacities, demographic characteristics, resource limitations, and stakeholder expectations.

This contextual dimension is especially relevant for provincial education systems. Hormozgan Province includes educational districts operating under diverse geographic, demographic, socioeconomic, and organizational conditions. In such settings, standardized administrative procedures may interact differently with local resource needs, stakeholder expectations, staffing constraints, and institutional capacities. Effective governance therefore requires an understanding of how managers and educational experts themselves perceive the major governance deficiencies and priorities within their administrative environment. Merely importing a generic set of good-governance principles does not establish which dimensions should receive the greatest managerial attention or resource investment. Prioritization is necessary because educational managers operate under limited

administrative, financial, and human resources and cannot address all governance dimensions with equal intensity at the same time.

Moreover, several existing studies have focused predominantly on higher education, national policy frameworks, or broad structural models rather than on the operational governance priorities of provincial school education administrations. Even when relevant components are identified, fewer studies explicitly distinguish between foundational governance components and those that primarily perform supportive or enabling functions. This distinction is practically important. For example, an information system may be essential for evidence-based management, but its governance value may depend on whether managers are accountable for using the information appropriately. Likewise, stakeholder participation may be institutionally encouraged, but it may remain ineffective if participants lack access to transparent information or if their feedback is not followed by managerial action. The relationships among transparency, accountability, participation, information quality, evaluation, and organizational learning therefore require attention not merely as a list of desirable characteristics but as a prioritized governance architecture.

The use of expert-based prioritization methods is particularly suitable for addressing this problem because governance involves qualitative judgments concerning organizational importance, feasibility, and institutional need. The fuzzy Delphi method provides a structured means of capturing such judgments while reducing the ambiguity inherent in linguistic assessments and facilitating convergence among expert opinions. By combining thematic identification with fuzzy prioritization, researchers can first derive governance components from the experiences of relevant organizational actors and then determine their relative importance through systematic expert consensus. This approach is compatible with the multidimensional nature of good governance and provides a stronger basis for practical managerial recommendations than approaches that simply enumerate governance indicators without differentiating their priorities.

Accordingly, identifying and prioritizing governance components at the provincial level can contribute both theoretically and practically to educational management. Theoretically, it can clarify how established principles of good governance are manifested within a specific educational administrative context and how these principles are organized into higher-order governance dimensions. Practically, it can help managers identify areas requiring immediate intervention, design more transparent resource-allocation procedures, strengthen accountability mechanisms, improve stakeholder involvement, develop higher-quality information systems, institutionalize performance evaluation, and enhance organizational learning and adaptation. A context-sensitive prioritization framework may also support policymakers in allocating administrative attention and organizational resources according to the components that experts perceive as most consequential for improving governance quality.

Therefore, the present study aimed to identify and prioritize the components of good governance in the administration of education in Hormozgan Province based on the perspectives of educational managers and experts.

Methods and Materials

The present study is an applied, descriptive-analytical investigation conducted with the aim of identifying and prioritizing the components of good governance in the administration of education in Hormozgan Province. The study was designed within a mixed-methods framework, such that thematic analysis was employed in the qualitative phase to extract the relevant components, while the fuzzy Delphi method was used in the quantitative phase to

prioritize them. The use of this combined approach makes it possible to examine the dimensions of the subject in depth and to obtain valid and practically applicable results. In the qualitative phase, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with education district managers and were coded and categorized using thematic analysis in order to identify the components of good governance. In the quantitative phase, the extracted components were presented to educational experts and specialists, and their opinions were synthesized over several rounds using the fuzzy Delphi method to rank the components in terms of importance and priority. This method increases the precision with which expert judgments are assessed and reduces uncertainty in the decision-making process. The statistical population consisted of managers and experts from the education districts of Hormozgan Province who possessed sufficient experience and knowledge in educational administration and educational policymaking. In the qualitative phase, 10 managers were selected through purposive sampling and interviewed to obtain rich and in-depth data. In the quantitative phase, approximately 20 experts and specialists in the field of education were selected to implement the fuzzy Delphi process so that the identified components could be ranked based on their judgments and the findings could be generalized to the provincial level.

Findings and Results

The present study, which aimed to identify the components of good governance in the administration of education in Hormozgan Province, initially proceeded through a qualitative phase involving interviews with education district managers. The collected data encompassed managers' perspectives, experiences, and perceived challenges. Semi-structured interviews enabled participants to express their views freely and provide concrete examples. This approach allowed the researcher to obtain rich and tangible data concerning the dimensions of good governance in educational administration. Following data collection, the thematic analysis process was initiated. First, all interviews were fully and accurately transcribed and repeatedly reviewed so that the researcher could become familiar with the content of each interview. Subsequently, the data were broken down into meaningful statements and specific instances in order to identify key points and significant experiences. At this stage, the researcher focused on statements reflecting challenges, strengths, problems, and recommendations related to good governance in the administration of education. In the next step, these instances were categorized through initial coding. The codes were grouped according to shared concepts and semantic similarities and were gradually transformed into basic themes. These basic themes represented broad categories of challenges and opportunities within educational administration and integrated the diverse perspectives of managers into a coherent conceptual framework. The basic themes extracted in this study covered various areas, including stakeholder participation, community participation, transparency, accountability, information quality, performance evaluation, clarity and comprehensibility of regulations, responsiveness to local needs, organizational coordination, resource equity, and organizational learning. The diversity of these themes demonstrates the complexity and multidimensional nature of good governance in educational administration and reflects the broad range of perspectives expressed by provincial managers and experts. Table 1 presents examples from the interviews, the interviewee number, and the basic theme corresponding to each example.

Table 1. Basic Themes and Interview Examples

Basic Theme	Interview Example	Interviewee No.
Stakeholder participation	Sometimes decisions in the education system are made without informing teachers and school principals, and we feel that our perspectives are ignored.	1

Transparency	There is no clear and traceable process for allocating resources and budgets to schools, and information is provided in a fragmented manner.	1
Accountability	District managers do not adequately respond to schools' criticisms and suggestions, and feedback is usually left without follow-up.	1
Community participation	Parents sometimes feel that they have no role in educational programs and that decisions are made without considering their opinions.	2
Access to information	Information concerning students' education and academic progress is provided incompletely, making decision-making difficult.	2
Accountability	Some managers refer problems to other departments instead of resolving them and transfer responsibility elsewhere.	2
Stakeholder participation	Consultative meetings with teachers and experts are irregular and limited, and decisions are often made without their participation.	3
Information quality	Data on school performance are not fully recorded in the statistical system, and managers do not have access to accurate information.	3
Performance evaluation	No periodic evaluation is conducted to assess the outcomes of managerial decisions and policies.	3
Clarity and comprehensibility of regulations	Some instructions and circulars are not clearly articulated, causing confusion among school principals.	4
Adaptation to local needs	Provincial-level decisions are often made without considering the specific circumstances of each school.	4
Accountability	Teachers' feedback concerning instructional methods is not taken seriously and has no influence on planning.	4
Organizational coordination	Some educational projects are launched without coordination with school principals, creating implementation problems.	5
Resource transparency	Transparency in the allocation of personnel and educational equipment is low, leading to dissatisfaction among schools.	5
Accountability to stakeholders	There is no formal mechanism for following up on complaints submitted by students and parents.	5
Stakeholder participation	In managerial meetings, only the perspectives of senior managers are heard, while the opinions of experts and teachers are often disregarded.	6
Access to information	Educational data and reports are provided in a fragmented and irregular manner, making analysis difficult.	6
Performance evaluation	There is no formal mechanism for evaluating school principals' performance, and decisions are made without reference to performance criteria.	6
Decentralization and participation	The decision-making process at higher levels is highly centralized, and school principals have only a limited role in it.	7
Transparency	Information concerning budget and resource allocation is not transparently disclosed, resulting in mistrust.	7
Performance evaluation	There is no system for monitoring the outcomes of managerial decisions and actions.	7
Community participation	Teachers and parents have little involvement in determining educational priorities, and decisions are usually imposed from the top down.	8
Information quality	Educational data and statistics are often incomplete and delayed, creating difficulties for decision-making.	8
Accountability to stakeholders	Feedback and complaints in schools are not properly reviewed and do not receive appropriate responses.	8
Organizational coordination	Educational decisions are made in a fragmented and unpredictable manner, reducing coordination among schools.	9
Transparency	Budgetary and educational information is not provided in a timely manner, resulting in delays in planning.	9
Accountability	Managers are less likely to accept responsibility for the outcomes of their decisions, and necessary corrective measures are not implemented.	9
Stakeholder participation	Educational programs are designed without consultation with teachers and experts, and the actual needs of schools are not considered.	10
Equity and resource transparency	The allocation of financial and human resources among schools is neither transparent nor equitable.	10
Organizational learning	Feedback received from schools is not reviewed or analyzed, thereby limiting the possibility of continuous program improvement.	10

In the qualitative data analysis process, using a thematic analysis approach, the codes extracted in MAXQDA were organized into basic themes and organizing themes after the stages of open and axial coding. In this process, basic themes were identified as initial and recurring concepts within the data and were subsequently aggregated at higher conceptual levels based on conceptual similarities, semantic relationships, and common patterns, ultimately

being categorized as organizing themes. This conceptual hierarchy enabled a more coherent explanation of the underlying structures governing the phenomenon under investigation. Table 2 presents the results of this analytical process and provides a systematic representation of the relationships between basic themes and organizing themes within the framework of good governance in education. The organizing themes identified reflect key dimensions of educational governance, including stakeholder participation and inclusion, transparency and equity in resource allocation, managerial accountability, information systems and data quality, performance evaluation and improvement, and organizational coherence, learning, and adaptation. This thematic structure served as the basis for subsequent analyses, interpretation of the findings, and development of the study's conceptual framework.

Table 2. Organizing Themes and Basic Themes

Related Basic Themes	Organizing Theme
Stakeholder participation; community participation; decentralization and participation; teacher participation in decision-making; parent and student participation	Stakeholder participation and inclusion
Transparency; resource transparency; equity and resource transparency; budget transparency; clarity of allocation processes	Transparency and equity in resource allocation
Accountability; accountability to stakeholders; acceptance of responsibility for decisions; complaint handling; feedback follow-up	Managerial accountability and responsibility
Access to information; information quality; timeliness of information; completeness of educational data; information analyzability	Information system and data quality
Performance evaluation; monitoring decision outcomes; evaluation of school principals; policy review; assessment of program effectiveness	Performance evaluation and improvement
Organizational coordination; clarity and comprehensibility of regulations; adaptation to local needs; organizational learning; continuous improvement	Organizational coherence, learning, and adaptation

Organizing Theme: Stakeholder Participation and Inclusion

The organizing theme of stakeholder participation and inclusion reflects the extent and quality of the involvement of various actors within the education system in decision-making, policymaking, and program implementation processes. This theme is based on the premise that good governance in education can only be achieved when all major stakeholders, including managers, teachers, parents, students, and the local community, play active and meaningful roles in shaping educational decisions. Stakeholder participation not only enhances the legitimacy of decisions but also improves the quality of policies and facilitates their closer alignment with the actual needs of the educational environment.

Organizing Theme: Transparency and Equity in Resource Allocation

The theme of transparency and equity in resource allocation refers to the degree of clarity, fairness, and oversight in the processes through which financial, human, and material resources are distributed within the education system. This theme emphasizes the principle that equal and equitable access to educational resources requires transparent decision-making and allocation mechanisms. Transparency in this area reduces information asymmetry, helps prevent discrimination, and strengthens stakeholders' trust in the educational governance system. Within this framework, basic themes such as resource transparency and budget transparency emphasize the necessity of providing clear and understandable information concerning the quantity, distribution, and utilization of resources. Equity and resource transparency also reflect the application of fair criteria in allocating resources according to the actual needs of schools and educational districts. Finally, clarity in allocation processes highlights the importance of specifying the criteria, procedures, and responsibilities associated with resource-allocation decisions, thereby facilitating accountability and effective oversight.

Organizing Theme: Managerial Accountability and Responsibility

The theme of managerial accountability and responsibility reflects the commitment of educational managers and decision-makers to explain, justify, and accept the consequences of their decisions. This theme is regarded as one of the fundamental pillars of good governance and plays a decisive role in strengthening public trust and institutional legitimacy. Effective accountability requires mechanisms through which managers' performance can be evaluated and opportunities for scrutiny and corrective action can be provided. In this context, accountability to stakeholders emphasizes the importance of two-way communication between managers and stakeholder groups, whereas acceptance of responsibility for decisions reflects managers' willingness to acknowledge the consequences of their own decisions. Complaint handling and feedback follow-up, as basic themes, also indicate the existence of formal mechanisms for hearing criticism, correcting procedures, and learning from mistakes, thereby contributing to continuous improvement in educational administration.

Organizing Theme: Information System and Data Quality

The theme of information system and data quality refers to the information infrastructure and the quality of data used in educational decision-making. This theme indicates that effective governance in education cannot be achieved without access to accurate, timely, and analyzable data. An efficient information system provides the foundation for evidence-based decision-making and informed policymaking. Within this framework, access to information refers to stakeholders' ability to obtain relevant and necessary data, while information quality and completeness of educational data emphasize the accuracy, comprehensiveness, and reliability of information. The timeliness of information plays an important role in enabling rapid and effective responses to educational issues, while information analyzability reflects the capacity to extract knowledge and policy-relevant insights from available data. Collectively, these components constitute the foundation of intelligent decision-making within the education system.

Organizing Theme: Performance Evaluation and Improvement

The theme of performance evaluation and improvement refers to systematic processes for assessing, monitoring, and enhancing performance across different levels of the education system. This theme highlights the importance of continuous feedback and institutional learning in achieving good governance. Performance evaluation is not merely a tool for measuring the success of policies and programs but also provides the basis for their correction and improvement. In this context, monitoring the outcomes of decisions and assessing program effectiveness involve examining the actual consequences of educational policies and actions. The evaluation of school principals emphasizes the key role of management in educational quality, while policy review reflects the use of evaluation findings to modify previous decisions. This cycle of evaluation and feedback provides the foundation for continuous improvement in the performance of the education system.

Organizing Theme: Organizational Coherence, Learning, and Adaptation

The theme of organizational coherence, learning, and adaptation refers to the ability of the education system to maintain internal coordination, learn from experience, and adapt to changing environmental conditions. This theme suggests that good governance requires coherent structures, clear regulations, and organizational learning capacity that enable the system to respond effectively to emerging challenges. Within this framework, organizational coordination and clarity and comprehensibility of regulations refer to alignment among organizational units and the transparency of roles and rules. Adaptation to local needs reflects the flexibility of the education system in responding to local and contextual characteristics. Organizational learning and continuous improvement also

emphasize the use of experiences, evaluations, and feedback to enhance performance. Overall, this theme strengthens the dynamism and resilience of the education system in its pursuit of good governance.

Following the identification and extraction of the basic and organizing themes of good governance in the administration of education in Hormozgan Province during the qualitative phase of the study, it was necessary to determine the relative importance and priority of each component from the experts' perspectives. Although all identified components possessed a certain degree of importance, their effects on the realization of good governance were not equal. Therefore, scientifically prioritizing these components could provide a valid foundation for managerial decision-making, educational policymaking, and the optimal allocation of resources. Accordingly, the fuzzy Delphi method was selected as a hybrid multi-criteria decision-making technique. By integrating fuzzy logic with the Delphi technique, this method enables the incorporation of experts' subjective judgments under conditions of uncertainty, ambiguity, and complexity. The fuzzy Delphi method is particularly effective in research on educational administration and governance, where human judgment plays a central role, and is considered an efficient tool for achieving expert consensus and identifying valid priorities. At this stage of the study, six organizing themes—stakeholder participation and inclusion; transparency and equity in resource allocation; managerial accountability and responsibility; information system and data quality; performance evaluation and improvement; and organizational coherence, learning, and adaptation—were entered into the fuzzy Delphi process as the primary criteria. Each of these organizing themes was derived from five basic themes extracted through qualitative thematic analysis and represented a key dimension of good governance in the administration of education in Hormozgan Province.

Stage One: Identification of Experts and Collection of Initial Judgments

In the first stage of the fuzzy Delphi method, the focus was on identifying qualified experts and collecting their initial judgments regarding the importance of the organizing themes of good governance in the administration of education in Hormozgan Province. Experts were selected through purposive sampling based on predefined criteria to ensure the validity and expertise of the judgments obtained. The experts included managers and specialists with sufficient experience and knowledge in educational administration and governance. The expert selection criteria were as follows:

- At least five years of managerial or professional experience in the field of education;
- Familiarity with educational decision-making, planning, and policymaking processes;
- Active participation at district or provincial management levels; and
- Willingness and ability to participate in several consecutive Delphi rounds.

Accordingly, 20 experts were selected as members of the Delphi panel, comprising senior managers, education district managers, and experienced specialists.

Stage Two: Fuzzification of Data and Aggregation of Expert Judgments

In the second stage, the experts' linguistic responses collected during the first Delphi round were converted into triangular fuzzy numerical values. For this purpose, each linguistic option on the five-point scale was mapped onto a corresponding fuzzy number consisting of a lower bound, a modal value, and an upper bound. This transformation enabled the modeling of uncertainty and ambiguity inherent in human judgment. Subsequently, for each organizing theme, the fuzzy values provided by the experts were aggregated and a fuzzy mean was calculated to obtain a representative fuzzy value reflecting the collective judgment of the expert panel. After calculating the fuzzy mean values, a defuzzification process was conducted to obtain comparable crisp values. In the present study, the center-

of-area method was used for defuzzification by calculating the mean of the lower, middle, and upper values of each fuzzy number. The resulting values served as the basis for comparing and ranking the organizing themes, thereby determining the relative priority of each component of good governance in the administration of education in Hormozgan Province.

Stage Three: Assessing Convergence of Expert Judgments in the Fuzzy Delphi Process

Following the fuzzification of the data and calculation of the defuzzified values of the organizing themes in the first Delphi round, it was necessary to assess the degree of convergence and consensus among the experts' judgments. Because one of the principal objectives of the fuzzy Delphi method is to achieve collective agreement among experts, examining the magnitude of differences in judgments across consecutive rounds plays a decisive role in establishing the validity of the findings. Without confirmed consensus, the resulting priorities cannot provide a sufficiently reliable foundation for analysis and decision-making.

Table 3. Experts' Judgments in the Fuzzy Delphi Process

Code	Organizing Theme	First-Round Defuzzified Value	Second-Round Defuzzified Value	Difference Value (Δ)	Consensus Status
C1	Stakeholder participation and inclusion	0.77	0.79	0.02	Consensus achieved
C2	Transparency and equity in resource allocation	0.83	0.84	0.01	Consensus achieved
C3	Managerial accountability and responsibility	0.81	0.82	0.01	Consensus achieved
C4	Information system and data quality	0.73	0.72	0.01	Consensus achieved
C5	Performance evaluation and improvement	0.70	0.71	0.01	Consensus achieved
C6	Organizational coherence, learning, and adaptation	0.68	0.69	0.01	Consensus achieved

The results of the fuzzy Delphi analysis indicate that the organizing themes of good governance in the administration of education in Hormozgan Province have different levels of priority from the experts' perspectives. Based on the defuzzified values, transparency and equity in resource allocation achieved the highest score and ranked first. This finding indicates that, according to the experts, transparency in budgeting processes, human resource distribution, and the allocation of educational equipment constitutes a fundamental basis for achieving good governance within the provincial education system, and its absence may seriously undermine stakeholder trust and the effectiveness of managerial decisions. Managerial accountability and responsibility ranked second, indicating that the experts placed considerable emphasis on accepting responsibility for decisions, following up on feedback, and effectively addressing complaints. Stakeholder participation and inclusion ranked third, highlighting the importance of involving teachers, parents, and school administrators in decision-making processes. The remaining themes—information system and data quality, performance evaluation and improvement, and organizational coherence, learning, and adaptation—occupied the subsequent rankings. Although these components were also considered highly important, the experts perceived them primarily as supportive and reinforcing factors relative to transparency and accountability.

Stage Four: Determination of Priorities

The fuzzy Delphi findings demonstrate that, among the organizing themes of good governance in the administration of education in Hormozgan Province, transparency and equity in resource allocation ranked first, with the highest second-round defuzzified value of 0.84. This ranking indicates that the experts regarded

transparency in budgeting processes, human resource allocation, and the distribution of educational equipment as the most foundational component of good governance. From their perspective, clarity in allocation criteria and equitable access to resources not only reduce educational inequalities but also strengthen stakeholder trust in managerial decisions. The high level of expert consensus regarding this theme suggests that any weakness in allocation transparency and equity may adversely affect the effectiveness of the entire educational governance system. Managerial accountability and responsibility ranked second, with a defuzzified value of 0.82, indicating the considerable importance attributed to this component by the experts. This finding suggests that the mere existence of adequate policies and resources is insufficient for realizing good governance; rather, educational managers and decision-makers must also be accountable for the consequences of their decisions. The emphasis on complaint handling, feedback follow-up, and acceptance of responsibility indicates that the experts regarded accountability as a key mechanism for enhancing operational transparency, reducing managerial errors, and strengthening public trust. This theme effectively complements resource transparency, because transparency alone cannot lead to improved governance in the absence of accountability.

Stakeholder participation and inclusion ranked third, with a defuzzified value of 0.79, indicating the considerable importance of involving teachers, parents, students, and the local community in educational decision-making processes. However, the placement of this theme after transparency and accountability suggests that experts view participation as most effective within an institutional environment in which transparency and accountability have already been established. From this perspective, participation becomes effective when stakeholders have access to transparent information and confidence in managers' accountability. Stakeholder participation therefore serves a facilitating and reinforcing role in the realization of good governance.

The themes of information system and data quality, performance evaluation and improvement, and organizational coherence, learning, and adaptation occupied the subsequent rankings. Although these themes were considered highly important by the experts, they were primarily regarded as supporting components of good governance. They provide the necessary infrastructure for evidence-based decision-making, policy revision, and organizational learning, and without them the sustainable realization of transparency, accountability, and participation would be difficult. In other words, these components play a reinforcing role and contribute to the institutionalization and continuity of good governance within the education system, even though their priority was assessed as lower than that of transparency and accountability.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study was conducted to identify and prioritize the components of good governance in the administration of education in Hormozgan Province. The qualitative findings resulted in six organizing themes: stakeholder participation and inclusion; transparency and equity in resource allocation; managerial accountability and responsibility; information system and data quality; performance evaluation and improvement; and organizational coherence, learning, and adaptation. The quantitative fuzzy Delphi analysis further demonstrated that these dimensions did not have equal priority from the experts' perspectives. Transparency and equity in resource allocation achieved the highest second-round defuzzified value and ranked first, followed by managerial accountability and responsibility and stakeholder participation and inclusion. Information system and data quality, performance evaluation and improvement, and organizational coherence, learning, and adaptation occupied the subsequent positions. Overall, the findings indicate that good governance in educational administration is a

multidimensional phenomenon in which transparency, distributive equity, accountability, and participation constitute the most salient governance priorities, while informational, evaluative, and organizational capacities provide the infrastructure required for their sustained implementation.

The first and most important finding was that **transparency and equity in resource allocation** ranked as the highest-priority component of good governance. This finding suggests that educational managers and experts consider transparency in financial allocation, staffing decisions, budget distribution, and educational equipment provision to be fundamental to improving governance quality. The result is understandable because resource allocation is one of the most visible manifestations of managerial authority within an education system. Schools directly experience the consequences of decisions concerning staffing, financial support, facilities, and instructional resources; consequently, ambiguity or perceived unfairness in such decisions can quickly weaken institutional trust. When allocation criteria are clearly defined, publicly understandable, and based on documented educational needs, managers can reduce perceptions of favoritism and arbitrary decision-making. Conversely, when information about resource distribution is fragmented or inaccessible, even technically appropriate decisions may be perceived as inequitable.

This finding is consistent with previous studies emphasizing transparency, fairness, and appropriate resource governance as central dimensions of good governance in educational systems. Research on good governance in the Iranian higher education system has identified transparency and justice among the principal features required for effective institutional governance (9). Similarly, structural analyses of good governance in Iran's education system have highlighted the importance of institutional mechanisms that promote transparency, fairness, participation, and effective allocation of organizational resources (7). The finding is also compatible with studies linking good governance to educational justice, which indicate that governance mechanisms influence the extent to which educational opportunities and resources are distributed in accordance with differential needs (8). From this perspective, transparency and equity should not be regarded as independent managerial virtues. Transparency makes resource-allocation decisions visible and open to scrutiny, whereas equity determines whether these decisions adequately address real disparities among schools and educational districts. Their combination therefore constitutes a central mechanism through which governance can contribute to educational justice.

The prominence of transparency and resource equity can also be interpreted in light of good policymaking principles. Effective educational policymaking requires that allocation decisions be grounded in explicit criteria, accurate information, stakeholder needs, and mechanisms for monitoring implementation. Studies developing good policymaking models in higher education have similarly emphasized that policy quality depends on clear institutional processes, evidence, accountability, and stakeholder-oriented decision-making (10). Policy analyses of good governance within Iran's Fundamental Transformation Document of Education have also underscored the necessity of incorporating governance principles into resource management, decision-making, and implementation processes (15, 16). Thus, the high priority assigned to transparency and equity in the present study may reflect managers' recognition that governance becomes tangible at the operational level primarily through the manner in which scarce educational resources are distributed.

The second-ranked component was **managerial accountability and responsibility**. The experts placed considerable importance on managers' willingness and institutional obligation to accept responsibility for decisions, respond to stakeholders, address complaints, and follow up on feedback. This finding demonstrates that transparency alone is insufficient for good governance unless managers are also answerable for the decisions

made within transparent systems. Accountability transforms information disclosure into managerial responsibility because it establishes a relationship between organizational authority and the obligation to explain outcomes. In educational administration, where managerial decisions affect teachers, students, parents, and schools, an absence of accountability may generate dissatisfaction, weaken confidence in administrative structures, and allow ineffective practices to persist without correction.

The finding corresponds with the literature identifying accountability as a core principle of good governance in education and public administration. Research on governance in Iranian higher education has consistently placed accountability alongside transparency, responsiveness, participation, and efficiency as a key governance dimension (9, 20). Studies examining the transition from state-centered governance toward good governance have likewise suggested that the movement away from purely hierarchical administration requires stronger accountability relationships among governmental actors, institutions, managers, and stakeholders (4, 5). From this perspective, managerial accountability represents one of the principal mechanisms through which governance shifts from command-oriented administration toward a system characterized by mutual responsibility and institutional legitimacy.

The emphasis placed on accountability can also be explained by its close relationship with monitoring and evaluation. Managers cannot be meaningfully held accountable if their performance, decisions, and outcomes are not systematically assessed. Research in public-service contexts has demonstrated that good governance, human resource empowerment, monitoring, and evaluation collectively contribute to service quality (19). Similarly, the use of performance-management approaches in educational governance indicates that institutional effectiveness improves when managers receive structured information concerning performance and are expected to respond to the findings (13). Accordingly, the present finding suggests that accountability should be institutionalized through complaint-handling procedures, feedback systems, performance reporting, and clearly defined managerial responsibilities rather than being treated merely as an ethical expectation.

The third-ranked component was **stakeholder participation and inclusion**. The qualitative findings showed that teachers, parents, students, experts, school principals, and local communities should have meaningful opportunities to participate in educational decision-making. The fuzzy Delphi results confirmed the high importance of this dimension, although experts ranked it below transparency and accountability. This ordering suggests that participation becomes most effective when stakeholders have access to reliable information and when managers can be held accountable for responding to participatory input. Participation without transparency may be poorly informed, while participation without accountability may become symbolic because stakeholder views can be solicited without influencing managerial action.

The importance of participation is strongly supported by previous studies on educational governance. Research on the transition toward good governance in higher education has shown that more effective governance requires moving beyond exclusive state control and creating mechanisms that allow universities, managers, academics, students, and other stakeholders to contribute to decision-making processes (4, 5). Comparative studies of good governance experiences in European and North American higher education have similarly indicated that stakeholder involvement, institutional autonomy, accountability, and shared responsibility constitute important elements of contemporary governance systems (17, 18). In addition, the relationship between governance quality and stakeholder satisfaction reported in academic settings reinforces the idea that inclusion in governance processes can improve perceptions of institutional legitimacy and responsiveness (6). Thus, stakeholder

participation may contribute not only to better decisions but also to stronger trust and acceptance of educational policies.

The fourth component, **information system and data quality**, was identified as an important supporting dimension of good governance. The findings indicate that access to accurate, complete, timely, and analyzable educational information is necessary for effective managerial decision-making. Educational organizations generate large volumes of data related to students, staffing, finances, school performance, resources, and program implementation, but the governance value of such information depends on its quality and usability. Fragmented, delayed, or incomplete information weakens evidence-based management, reduces the effectiveness of planning, and limits managerial capacity to respond promptly to emerging problems.

This result can be explained through the increasing importance of digital infrastructure and information-based management in contemporary educational systems. Research on the adoption of e-learning has demonstrated that technological readiness, institutional support, infrastructure, and appropriate policy conditions influence the success of educational change (11). Likewise, research connecting e-government and organizational agility suggests that digital governance systems can enhance responsiveness when they are integrated with appropriate organizational capacities and social responsibility (12). Therefore, the relatively high priority assigned to data quality in the present study is consistent with the broader movement toward data-informed administration. Nevertheless, its lower ranking compared with transparency and accountability may indicate that technology and information are perceived as enabling mechanisms rather than ends in themselves. High-quality data can improve governance only when managers use those data transparently, responsibly, and in accordance with stakeholder needs.

The fifth organizing theme was **performance evaluation and improvement**. The findings revealed the importance of monitoring decision outcomes, assessing school principals, evaluating program effectiveness, and using evaluation results to revise policies. This dimension demonstrates that good governance must include mechanisms for institutional self-correction. Educational organizations operate in changing environments, and policies that appear appropriate at the design stage may produce unintended effects during implementation. Systematic evaluation allows managers to identify such discrepancies and adjust policies accordingly.

This finding aligns with research emphasizing monitoring and performance evaluation as essential elements of governance quality. The Balanced Scorecard framework applied in educational governance demonstrates the value of multidimensional performance assessment rather than relying exclusively on administrative compliance or single performance indicators (13). Likewise, evidence from public organizations indicates that monitoring and evaluation strengthen service quality when they are combined with good governance and empowered human resources (19). The result is also consistent with studies of educational staff empowerment, which emphasize that governance structures should facilitate feedback, professional development, participation, and continuous organizational improvement (14). Therefore, performance evaluation should be viewed not as a punitive mechanism but as a learning-oriented governance process that generates evidence for managerial correction and institutional development.

The sixth component was **organizational coherence, learning, and adaptation**. Although it received the lowest relative priority among the six organizing themes, the experts nevertheless regarded it as an important component of good governance. This dimension encompasses organizational coordination, clarity and comprehensibility of regulations, responsiveness to local conditions, organizational learning, and continuous improvement. Its ranking suggests that experts perceive these elements primarily as enabling conditions that stabilize and sustain other

governance practices. Without organizational coherence, transparency policies may be implemented inconsistently; without organizational learning, accountability mechanisms may repeatedly identify the same weaknesses without producing improvement; and without adaptation to local needs, standardized policies may fail to address the specific circumstances of individual schools or districts.

The importance of organizational adaptation is consistent with studies that conceptualize good governance as a transition from rigid, centralized forms of administration toward more flexible and responsive structures (4, 5). It is also compatible with research highlighting the role of organizational agility in improving institutional responsiveness under changing environmental conditions (12). Policy-oriented studies in Iranian education further suggest that broad educational transformation requires governance arrangements capable of translating national policy objectives into coherent and contextually appropriate operational practices (15, 16). Accordingly, adaptation to local educational needs should not be understood as deviation from national policy but rather as an institutional capacity to implement broader policies in ways that are sensitive to contextual differences.

Taken together, the findings support a hierarchical interpretation of good governance in educational administration. Transparency and equity establish the visible and distributive foundation of governance; accountability ensures that managerial authority is exercised responsibly; participation creates channels through which stakeholders can influence decisions; information systems provide the evidence required for rational decision-making; performance evaluation enables corrective action; and organizational learning and adaptation sustain improvement over time. These dimensions therefore operate as an interconnected governance system rather than as isolated organizational characteristics. This interpretation is compatible with previous research showing that good governance is multidimensional and requires the simultaneous development of participation, accountability, transparency, efficiency, institutional capacity, and responsiveness (7, 20). It also supports broader evidence that good governance is associated with improvements in educational and developmental outcomes (3).

The findings additionally suggest that governance in education should be understood as both a structural and behavioral phenomenon. Formal procedures concerning resource allocation, data management, performance evaluation, and complaint handling are essential, but their effectiveness depends on managerial behavior, ethical responsibility, participation, and institutional culture. Studies examining governance in diverse organizational contexts have shown that formal governance structures alone are insufficient when they are not supported by responsible managerial practices and appropriate organizational mechanisms (2). The relevance of ethical and regulatory dimensions to sustainable governance has also been emphasized in other public and social contexts (1). Consequently, the development of good governance in Hormozgan Province requires simultaneous attention to administrative structures, managerial competencies, ethical responsibility, organizational culture, and stakeholder relationships.

Ultimately, the convergence between the present findings and previous national and international research suggests that the six identified dimensions provide a coherent framework for understanding good governance in provincial educational administration. At the same time, the prioritization results add an important contextual contribution by demonstrating that educational experts in Hormozgan Province place particularly strong emphasis on transparent and equitable resource allocation, managerial accountability, and stakeholder participation. These priorities may reflect the practical governance challenges experienced at the district and provincial levels, where decisions regarding resources, staffing, communication, and responsiveness directly shape school functioning. The

findings therefore provide an empirically grounded framework that can assist educational administrators in directing governance reforms toward areas perceived as most critical by experienced managers and experts.

The present study had several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the qualitative and fuzzy Delphi phases relied on relatively small purposively selected samples of managers and experts, which was appropriate for obtaining specialized judgments but may limit the representativeness of the findings across all educational personnel in Hormozgan Province. Second, the data were primarily based on participants' perceptions and professional experiences and were therefore susceptible to subjective interpretation and social desirability. Third, the study focused on managers and experts and did not directly incorporate the perspectives of teachers, students, parents, or other community stakeholders, although stakeholder participation emerged as a major governance dimension. Fourth, the research was conducted in a single province, and the administrative, demographic, socioeconomic, and geographic characteristics of Hormozgan may differ from those of other provinces. Finally, the prioritization reflects expert judgments at a particular point in time and may change as educational policies, technologies, organizational conditions, and resource constraints evolve.

Future studies should replicate the proposed framework in other provinces and compare the relative importance of good-governance components across different geographical, socioeconomic, and administrative contexts. Larger quantitative studies could develop and validate a standardized measurement instrument based on the six organizing themes and examine their relationships with outcomes such as organizational effectiveness, educational justice, teacher satisfaction, public trust, school performance, and managerial effectiveness. Future research should also include teachers, parents, students, school principals, and community representatives in order to compare governance priorities across stakeholder groups. Longitudinal designs would be useful for determining whether changes in governance practices are followed by measurable improvements in educational and organizational outcomes. Researchers may also apply structural equation modeling, analytic hierarchy process, DEMATEL, interpretive structural modeling, or other multi-criteria decision-making techniques to investigate causal or hierarchical relationships among governance components. Finally, qualitative case studies of high-performing education districts could provide deeper insight into the mechanisms through which transparency, accountability, participation, information quality, evaluation, and organizational learning are successfully institutionalized.

Educational authorities in Hormozgan Province should prioritize the establishment of transparent and equitable mechanisms for allocating financial resources, personnel, facilities, and educational equipment, with clearly defined criteria that can be communicated to schools and relevant stakeholders. Formal accountability systems should be strengthened through regular managerial reporting, complaint-handling mechanisms, structured feedback procedures, and explicit responsibility for the consequences of decisions. Education districts should create institutional channels for the meaningful participation of teachers, school principals, parents, students, and local communities in planning and decision-making rather than limiting participation to occasional consultation. Integrated information systems should be developed to ensure that educational data are accurate, complete, timely, accessible, and suitable for managerial analysis. Performance evaluation should be conducted regularly and linked directly to policy revision, professional development, and organizational improvement. Finally, greater coordination among provincial authorities, district offices, and schools should be promoted, while sufficient flexibility should be granted to managers to adapt policies and resource decisions to local educational needs, thereby creating a governance system that is simultaneously transparent, accountable, participatory, evidence-based, coherent, and responsive.

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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.

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