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## Perceptions and Experiences of the Teachers and Educational Administrators of the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Professional Rankings Plan of Teachers

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to identify the perception and experience of teachers and educational managers about the implementation of the professional ranking plan of teachers in the education system of the Iran. **Methodology:** The method of this research is a qualitative exploratory research which has been conducted in an interpretive analysis method. The data gathering tool was a semi-structured interview, with interviews with 15 experienced teachers, principals, and executives of the project. Sampling was done using purposeful snowball method. For data analysis, coding was used in both open and axial coding. **Findings:** The results of the research showed that the teacher ranking plan has legal, scientific, professional and managerial requirements for its implementation. The main strengths of the plan include increasing teachers' motivation, improving teachers' skills, reducing teachers' livelihood issues, improving student achievement and reducing inequality. The weaknesses include lack of comprehensiveness of the plan, lack of transparency, the ability to apply personal opinion, the length of the process, high emphasis on seniority, weakness in information and lack of implementation. **Discussion:** The most important solutions identified for improving the design are: having a professionalism approach to teachers, paying attention to improving teachers' livelihoods, teamwork and continuous evaluation, holistic approach, and bureaucracy reduction.

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## 1. Introduction

Teachers play a key role in promoting the quality of education. In fact, it can be said that the ability and capacity of any education system is a function of its teachers' ability. If teachers have the knowledge, skills, and attitude they deserve, then one can expect to use the other sources of the educational system as desirable and the goals of education can be realized; conversely, if the teachers do not have the necessary ability or motivation, all efforts in other subsystems of the educational system will remain intact. Gige (2000), in the book "The Basics of the Art of Teaching," says: "No doubt, no one other than a teacher can have more influence on what is being offered at school. Teachers can turn education into a process of enjoyment, success, or a defective process. The success of any educational system depends to a decisive extent on the professional knowledge and skills of the teacher. The suitability of any educational system is as great as the Competence of its teachers". Therefore, it can be said that the teacher is the most important element of the educational system in the process of teaching and learning and the main architect of the educational system (Daneshpajoo and Farzad, 2006). Therefore, employing and retaining the most competent people for the teacher's profession is the most important issue one of the most important issues that affect the motivation and professional development of teachers is the assessment and ranking of the teachers. Evaluation and ranking of teachers is a strong and important strategic education policy to improve the student education in order to improve the academic achievement. (Jafarnejad, Zeynabadi and Abedi Koushki, 2016).

Considering the importance of the role of evaluation in the professional development of teachers, in different countries, a great deal of effort has been made to plan an evaluation system to enhance the academic achievement, quality, and equity (Greaney & Kellaghan, 2008), but there are still no comprehensive and effective methods for assessing the effect of corrective efforts on the student's learning environment. Therefore, considering the importance of teaching and learning, high-quality teacher as an educator and an influential factor on student learning has become one of the major goals of educational policy in the 21st Century. (Mangiante, 2011).

Teacher evaluation has two main functions: 1. Functional improvement function and 2. Responsiveness function. The teacher's assessment focuses on improving the presentation of useful feedback to improve teaching practice. In this way, teachers are encouraged to think about their performance, learn about it and improve it. Responsiveness function focuses on teachers' responsibility to their performance outcomes. It is a stimulus for teachers to showcase their best performances (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2009).

Teachers' performance evaluation by different researchers has been considered as a solution to several goals that are: Improving teachers' judgment, judging them, and eliminating inefficient teachers (Avalosa & Assael, 2007). Paying salaries and benefits, understanding how directors decide on teachers' performance (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009), improving the effectiveness of teachers and supporting their professional development (Denilson, 2001; Tuytens & Devos, 2011). There is, of course, a widespread dissatisfaction among school principals and teachers about how teachers are valued (Denilson, 2001). Tuytens & Devos (2011) argue that if teachers themselves do not receive accurate and useful feedback from their education, they will not care about feedback, and will not be responsible for professional learning and for changing their teaching method.

Different countries have different ways to assess the teachers or to award professional teacher Competencies. In countries such as Germany and the United States, entering and staying in the profession of teaching is subject to specific performance tests and assessment of teaching performance. In other countries such as Canada and Spain, admission to profession of teaching is subject to post-graduate examination.

In Iran, the ministry of education in September 2015 has passed the professional ranking ratings for the classification plan of teaching to implement from the beginning of 2015-2016 academic year to the provincial education departments. The purpose of this plan is to provide incentives for improving the quality and performance of teachers' work to fulfill the mission of the education system, to promote the academic achievement and education of students, improving the quality and improving the internal and external efficiency of education, as well as providing more economic means and raising the living standards of the educators (Ministry of Education, 2015). Of course, its executive guideline was reviewed in 2016 and its indices were revised. According to this guideline, teachers' rankings are as follows:

A) Professional background: At least 6 years of experience, 180 hours of in-service training, at least 75 performance evaluation points, and at least 60% professional and general Competencies.

Professional Seniority: Having at least 12 years of experience, having 150 hours of in-service training during the period between two rankings, earning at least 80 points from the performance evaluation of the previous year, and obtaining at least 65% of the grade of general and professional Competencies.

C) Professional Certified: Having at least 18 years of experience, 120 hours of in-service training during the period between two rankings, obtaining at least 85 points from the previous year's performance evaluation, obtaining at least 75% of the general and professional Competencies.

D) Professional excellence: having at least 24 years of experience and at least three-year standoff in certified ranking, passing 100 hours of in-service training during the period between two rankings, earning at least 90 points of performance evaluation in the academic year and earning at least 85% of the grade of general and professional qualities.

In this plan, the Competencies of teachers are evaluated in two main categories of general (4 indices) and professional (including 7 indices for knowledge Competencies and 11 indices for skill Competencies) whose total score is 100 points.

Throughout the time of approval and implementation of this plan, the plan has always been accompanied by criticisms and support. To help improve this plan, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are the requirements for the implementation of the Professional Ranking Plan for Teachers?
- 2- What are the strengths of teacher rankings?
- 3- What are the weak points of teacher ranking plan?
- 4- What are the strategies for optimal implementation of teacher ranking plans?

Educational pundits have expressed different views on the concept of professional Competencies of teachers and the definition of an effective teacher varies from viewpoint of different people. Warring (2015), in a study on teachers' evaluation, found that there is a difference between the views of students and teachers regarding the teacher Competencies. Students believe a good teacher is someone who is kind and helpful, while teachers introduce a good teacher as a person with good character and can communicate with the students. We know, of course, that there is no factor in this field; it is a complex combination of factors that makes a good teacher. Wilgand and Riemers (2007) also considered the role of teacher's professional skills in

changing the educational system, and in this regard, they studied the components of "new teaching methods, educational technology, and evaluation". Mehrmohammadi believes in the abilities of teaching and evaluation methods and teachers' use from the educational technology. Melki (2005), refers to the teacher's practical skills and abilities in the learning process, such as "skills in preparing lesson plans, implementing new teaching methods, education plan ing and evaluating" and Shabani, Nowroozi and Aghazadeh, as well as believe in teachers' familiarity with the "teaching method, education plan ing and evaluation" as the teachers' professional skills. Therefore, with examining different theories of scholars, various Competencies for teacher's work can be identified, but it is important to note that these concepts are related to the concept of an effective teacher (Mehrmohammadi, 2000).

With examining the views expressed in this regard, it can be said that the teaching Competencies are a collection of cognitions, tendencies and skills that a teacher can acquire in the education, physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual course. Students help (Shahmohammadi, 2014). These Competencies can be categorized in three areas of cognitive competence, affective Competence and skill competencies. The purpose of cognitive competencies is a set of knowledge and skills that will enable the teacher to identify and analyze questions and issues related to the education. The affective competencies are a set of the teacher's tendencies and interests related to the education issues, and the skill competencies of the teacher are related to the skills and abilities of the teacher in the learning process (Maleki, 2005, pp. 11-14). Huntley (2008) also classifies the teachers' capabilities in three areas of professional knowledge, professional practice, and professional commitment.

Professional competencies in the world of teaching today have the great importance. Today's society has moved from compulsory education to focus on the quality of education and new curriculum modifications emphasize the development of learner skills, learning how to learn, developing curriculum, and using the various teaching strategies; such changes involve changing the role of the teacher (Lee, Wing and Yuk, 2003). The role of the teacher changes from the information transmitter to the learner's help, guidance, and compilation. This new role does not diminish the importance of the teacher's position, but requires new knowledge and skills. In such an environment, the student takes on greater responsibility in the process of learning, because they take on the responsibility for learning (Karimi, 2008).

Today's teachers have found new roles in the educational system. Learning is the main factor, especially in today's society, which is referred to as the information society, the knowledge society and learning community and rapid changes in knowledge and information affect the professional development. Teachers should re-create their knowledge of ongoing changes in the teaching-learning process (Vaillant, 2007). Deep changes in the structure, curriculum and type of students have hit the crisis the teachers' professional identity. The lack of relevant competencies to deal with this new position has led many teachers to see their professional identity at risk. Therefore, the professional identity of teachers is in urgent need of rebuilding (Moreno, 2007).

The professional competencies of the teacher are important in order to achieve the effectiveness. There have always been many answers to who is an effective teacher, what is effective teaching! In the culture of educational science, effectiveness has been interpreted as "the extent to which the goals are fulfilled and successful mission accomplishment". In other words, effectiveness is "good performance and efficiency in resource allocation" (Farahani Farahani, 1999). In this regard, effective teachers must have the knowledge, skills, and motivation necessary to achieve the desired goals, and can also apply them at the right time in the

desired manner. According to Midly (1982; quoted from Shahmohammadi, 2014), the acquisition of different knowledge and skills as a teacher's competence is considered, and the application of the knowledge and skills is considered to be the professional activity of the teacher. The professional teacher will appropriately match the goals that are directly or indirectly related to the learner's learning.

The professionalization of teachers is focused on the technical and professional aspects of teaching and promoting the social status of the teacher's profession. Professional teachers should have a deeper understanding of content knowledge, child development, learning methods, teaching strategies and a set of values, along with the respect for individual differences, collaboration with colleagues, and continuous feedback from teaching, guidance, changeability and communication (Karimi, 2008). New approaches in continuing education and training of teachers, based on the development of the concept of a systematic approach to teaching, have led to teaching as professional activities and policies that support professional development, and to educate the continuing need for professional teachers (Vaillant, 2007). Injury and barriers related to choosing the teacher, status, responsibilities of teachers, maintenance, promotion and welfare of teachers, professional levels of teachers and in-service training, include:

- The lack of principled policies for the maintenance and quality and career development of human resources, including teachers in education ministry
- Selection and recruitment of forces with a weak scientific, specialized ability, and even inappropriate cases
- The weakness of teachers in professional skills and new teaching methods
- Low level of academic and professionalism level in the management and leadership of the classroom
- Lack of continuous education and the lack of suitable background for continuous learning and the exchange of information and experiences with colleagues
- Resistance to modern educational methods due to lack of necessary training (Safi, 2006, p. 78)

In our education, teachers went to the classroom after being hired and their competencies are less evaluated from professional and specialized dimensions and human relationships and only short-term training based on changing the content of some books or long-term training of in-service course with bulk content, inefficient, inadequate to the needs of the students, are provided (Shabani, 2004, p. 125). In today's world, the advances made in ICTs, have created a huge change in education. Learning is out of the traditional forms and lifelong learning is proposed. Today, formal education is not enough to meet the individual's needs throughout life. Due to the change in the volume of information and the development of knowledge, the education must continue throughout life (Zamani, 2005). To have an efficient teaching system, professional competencies of teachers should always be investigated.

## 2. literature Review

In connection with the evaluation of professional competencies of the teachers, some researches have been done both at home and abroad. Some of these studies are referred to below.

Daneshpajoo (2003), investigating the professional skills of secondary school teachers, concluded that the teachers in question, despite the fact that they have a relative skill in general teaching, are faced with some serious failures in teaching important lessons.

Daneshpajooch and Farzad in a research with the aim of assess the level of professional skills of elementary school teachers in Tehran, the researchers concluded that the teachers in classroom teaching activities were less interested in learning objectives than in the fields of knowledge and attitudes. The study also found that the teachers studied had a relative skill in general teaching, but faced with serious educational issues or some serious failures .

Karimi (2005), says that the performance status of Iranian students (elementary fourth grade) in this comparative study indicates the relative weakness of the educational system and the students' low ability to read in reading comprehension. In analyzing the results, he points out the need for a revision of the teaching-learning process, teaching methods and professional competencies of teachers .

Abedi (2003), categorized the necessary competencies of teaching in four categories: 1. Attraction and Attention, 2. Presentation of the course, 3. Evaluation, 4. Classification. His research results showed that Teacher Education Teaching Books had only gesture pointing to a small part of teaching abilities. Teacher Training Course' graduates had poor performance in important teaching components and basic teaching abilities have not been implemented due to the weakness of curriculum and other conditions .

Findings of the research done by Kiyamanesh (1998), showed that the performance of Iranian students is inappropriate in thesis studies. He has reported the cause of the problem in teacher teaching methods. The results of this study show that teachers use the book as the main axis of teaching, and their teaching methods often have a descriptive aspect .

Hematinejad et al. (2010), in their research found that the performance evaluation system of teachers is not effective in about the physical education teacher and cannot show the difference between teachers' performance.

Sobhaninejad and Tazdan (2015), found that the professional competencies of educators can be classified into three aspects: personal competencies, professional competencies (knowledge, insight and skills), and social competencies. One of noteworthy points in this study is that, contrary to the perception, professional competencies are not the most important type of competencies. In this research, ethical competencies have the particular importance .

Niknami and Naderi (2009), identified 99 competencies of teachers in the research aimed at "Professional Competencies of Teachers in Public Education and the Provision of Appropriate Perceptual Frameworks" in 8 components (behavioral, social, educational, personality, intellectual, managerial, creative, professional development and technology). The results of this research also showed that the difference between the present and desired status of teachers' competencies is significant in all major components .

Yavarifar (2010), in a research aimed at examining the views of Lahijan secondary school teachers regarding the observance of justice in each of the different parts of the evaluation form showed that according to the participants in the survey, the teachers do not have equal opportunities to earn points in the annual evaluation plan, the criteria for ethics and job descriptions. In general, the observance of justice in the form of assessment of teachers in terms of teachers in Lahijan was less than average. Studies show that the plan of the evaluation form did not take into account the constraints and conditions of the teachers of different educational groups.

Abdollahi (2012), identified 140 competencies for effective teachers in a study entitled "Identifying and Validating Professional Teachers' Competencies". After examining these competencies by some experts and

testing the teachers, the number of competencies was reduced to 98, which were categorized in 7 dimensions or main components. Among the aspects identified in this study, the teacher's prerequisite aspect (verbal ability, sufficient mastery, clear communication, resource utilization, awareness of all resources and the search for new sources) is the first. Next aspects of the competencies of effective teachers are to monitor students' progress and potential. This aspect includes 15 competencies related to skills such as feedback to students, assignments, and responses to needs and abilities. The most important competency in this aspect is to explain the assignments to the student in a simple way. In relation to the competencies of this aspect, effective teachers are teachers who have the necessary knowledge of the students' academic ability and achievement and are grouping the students using different strategies. The third dimension of Competencies is professional responsibility. This aspect includes competencies in relation to communication with parents, professional development of the teacher, participation in the professional community, and reflection on teaching.

Karimi (2008), identified the professional competencies of elementary teachers in nine main components in a study entitled "Studying Professional Competencies for Elementary Teachers", including the educational, scientific, personality, social, intellectual, managerial, ethical, professional and technological competencies. This research showed that there is a difference between the existing and desirable competencies of teachers and is significant in all major components. The existing competencies of teachers in terms of technology, lifelong learning, professionalism, performance, and teaching were less than average.

Huntley (2008), classifies the teachers' capabilities in three fields of professional knowledge, professional practice, and professional commitment. Professional knowledge includes content knowledge, student recognition, and knowledge of teaching and learning. Professional practice consists of learning plan, creating a learning environment, and measuring and evaluating learning and professional commitment includes the professional learning of participation, leadership, values, communication and ethics.

Koster et al. (2005), divide the teachers' professional competencies into five main categories and subcategories: 1. specialized knowledge including having the necessary knowledge in the field of specialized knowledge, developing and updating it, 2- communications involve communicating with the students with the different backgrounds, guiding tasks, analyzing and clarifying the views of students, 3- organizing involves setting the student performance system, managing time and setting a curriculum in accordance with the organizational goals, 4- pedagogy that includes four factors: Helping students, and determining learning needs, setting curricula based on the needs of different students, planning activities to facilitate learning and learners and the use of information technology in teaching, 5. Behavioral Competence includes having a democratic approach, experiential attitude, curiosity about updates, honesty and integrity .

Huntley (2003), has introduced qualitative competence of teachers in six categories: proper preparation (classroom planning and organization, having a deep knowledge base to facilitate learning, using different management strategies for learner behavior, communicating effectively with school beneficiaries, acting professionally with self-awareness.

Hong et al. (2008), examined the inconsistency between pre-service teacher training competencies and the competencies required for in-service teacher training. In this study, teacher competencies were identified in six main categories: Intellectual ability, value system, interpersonal skills, management ability, professional ability, and personality traits. The results of this study did not show a significant difference between the

teachers' opinion about the competencies of pre-service teachers and the job requirements of teachers at the service.

### 3. Methodology

In this research, the methodology of phenomenological research has been used to identify the educators' perceptions about the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher ranking plan. For this purpose, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 teachers and principals in the implementation of the teacher in Mashhad, and analyzed. The interviewees were selected through purposive sampling and in a snowball method. In order to analyze the data from the interviews, the theme analysis method was used during both open and axial coding stages. During the first stage, after implementing and studying the several interviews, it was tried to extract the codes (concepts) related to the subject of research (requirements, strengths and weaknesses of the ranking plan) by the teachers and principals' words. In the second stage, the main categories were extracted by categorizing the original codes. In order to ensure the credibility of the results, the data analysis report and the results were again available to a number of interviewees and the results of the research report were approved by them. Also, four professors in the major of educational science in the field of educational management and curriculum development, confirmed the research process and the results.

### 4. Finding

The results of research data analysis are presented in the form of research questions .First question: What are the requirements for implementing a professional ranking plan for teachers? In the response to the question of how the teacher ranking plan is being implemented and why, the most interviewees emphasized the need for serious attention to the professional competencies of teachers. One of the teachers said: "planning a system for evaluating and ranking the professional competencies of teachers is one of the requirements of the fundamental transformation of the education. Therefore, education officials must implement it, but its implementation can be different". In another interview, one of the teachers said: "This plan has been created to bring justice and equality among the teachers". In another interview, the interviewee one of the ranking plan executives, pointed to raising salaries for teachers, saying "The ranking plan aims to raise the teachers' salaries and motivate them", in other words, solving major disputes in the area of pay and benefits among the education staff and other ministries. In other interviews, the interviewees also noted the common points, for example, the purpose of this plan is to increase the scientific knowledge of teachers and increase their specialized skills. It should be noted that one of the deputies of the implementation of this plan, which is from the interviewees, stated: "The aim of the teacher ranking plan is to assess the competence of teachers to carry out their responsibilities in the field of specialization. In table 1, the requirements for the implementation of the teacher ranking plan have been extracted from interviews with the teachers.

**Table 1.** The teachers and executors' perception of the need to implement the teacher ranking plan

Categories	Concepts (codes)
Legal requirements	Requirement for Education Transformation Document, upstream Education Documents, Education Approved Laws
Scientific requirements	Scientific progress, the experiences of the other countries, specialized knowledge, the need for continuous development, contemporary change and transformation, educational changes and innovations, the advancement of theories and new scientific methods

Professional requirements	Teaching professionalism, enhancing teacher skills, guiding professional development, motivating the motivation, professional Competence development, determining the professional development path of teachers
Management requirements	Reducing livelihood issues, organizing human resources, restoring teachers' payment, organizing salaries and benefits, creating healthy competition, feeling to be seen, rationalizing salary increasing, evaluating Competencies, performance-based evaluation

As table 1 shows, the most important requirements for implementing a teacher ranking plan are in four main categories: legal requirements, scientific requirements, professional requirements and management requirements. The codes identified from the text of the teachers' interview show that the implementation of this plan is highly necessary. Almost none of the interviewees, who were satisfied with the outcome and who did not agree with their own ranking results, did not hesitate about the importance of teachers' ranking and professional development.

Second question: What are the strengths of teacher ranking plan? In response to the second question as the first question, result of interviews with teachers and prinipals was analyzed. The interviewees mentioned the several strengths. The most significant of the strengths of implementing the teacher ranking plan, are summarized in table 2. In this regard, one of the experienced teachers pointed out that "this plan will have some troubles for teachers in the short term, but will have a positive effect on the lives of teachers in the long time". Other interviewees expressed the most important points: "Creating healthy competition and promoting motivation can be called as the strength of the plan". It increases the quality of the work of the staff. Also, one of the prominent teachers said: "The ranking plan will create the integrity and order in the structure of the educational system and reduce the legal differences among the staff of the ministries. Other statements from the interviewees on the strengths of the plan include the efforts of teachers to attend in-service plans to improve their knowledge.

**Table 2.** The teachers and executors' perception of the strengths of the teacher ranking plan

Categories	Concepts (codes)
Motivating the teachers	Motivating teachers, creating hope for teachers, increasing the dynamics and mobility of teachers, increasing motivation for more work, increasing motivation for teachers to progress in their work, increasing the desire of elite individuals to employ in education system
Teachers' Skills Improvement	Updating and increasing the teachers' skills, the requirement for teachers to grow professionally, increasing the participation of teachers in in-service training and, as a result, increasing their skills, the teachers' efforts to enhance their own abilities
Reducing the livelihood issues	Improving the educators' financial status, relative improving the teachers' livelihood, reducing livelihoods issues, positive effects on the teachers' lives, helping to solve livelihood issues, increasing the calm and safety of teachers, reducing teachers' concerns
Increasing the students' academic achievement	More teacher's effort to improve the performance of students, pay attention to the quality of teacher work, pay attention to the results of teachers' activities
Reduce the feeling of inequality	Establishing justice, reducing the disparity between the payment of educators and other businesses, getting close to the coordinated system of pay, reducing the feeling of injustice towards employees of the other organizations, restoring the educators' payment

According to the analysis, the main strengths of implementing the teacher ranking plan are: its impact on teachers' motivation, teachers' skills development, teachers' livelihood reduction, increasing student achievement and reducing inequity of feelings towards employees of other the organizations. Therefore, it

can be seen that the implementation of this plan is potentially, or in some cases, actual, with many strengths that can best be implemented in these areas.

Third question: What are the weak points of teacher ranking plan? In response to the question of what the weaknesses are, the interviewees referred to several points. As reflected in table 3. Interviewees reported a lot of criticisms of the plan and expressed a lot of weaknesses for that. Of course, a significant number of these critiques are referring to the implementation of the plan, not the plan itself. Compared to the strengths of the plan, the interviewees were more likely to talk about its shortcomings and weaknesses, and list a fairly large number of weaknesses. For example, they say: "This plan will lead to negative competitions and personal judgments, and a fair and logical system degradation" Or "teachers' efforts are ignored in this plan, and there is not even a credible document for proving these activities in terms of education and practice". Some interviewees also expressed their dissatisfaction in this way: "In the educational system, more attention is paid to the service record, and the lack of attention to the ability and quality of the teacher' work faces a serious challenge". Also, the lack of proper informing to eliminate the ambiguity of the ranking plan and the non-comprehensiveness of the plan are the ones mentioned in the interviews. Table 3 presents the weaknesses of the teacher ranking plan.

**Table 3.** Teachers and executors' perception of the weaknesses in the implementation of teacher ranking plan

Categories	Concepts (codes)
Insolubility of the plan	The inability to document some of the teachers' activities, the lack of attention to all the activities of teachers, the limited evaluation indices, the emphasis on some aspects of the teaching profession, much documentation, the importance of the company's role in in-service training to upgrade the teacher's ability, inefficiencies in some of the requested activities, the possibility of visualization (e.g. researches done formally)
Lack of transparency	The lack of objectivity in some indices, the comprehensibility of some indices, the lack of transparency and objectivity, the lack of transparency and confusion of teachers, the lack of clarity on the exact amount of payment per rating
Possibility to apply personal opinion	Applying the personal judgments in assessments, failure to comply with justice, enforceability or strictness by principals, negative competition, the possibility of hostility and annoyance in colleagues
Long work process	Creating additional work for teachers, the timing of the process of reviewing the case, to be long the process of reviewing the activities carried out, the need for repeated follow-up by the teacher, the high bureaucracy, the wasting of teachers' time
Emphasize the experience to the specialty	The greater the effect of the experience to the efforts and creativity, the lack of utilization of younger people from the benefits of the plan, the greater the impact on people with more experiences, less importance of the degree, and thus reducing the motivation of teachers for the education improvement
poor informing	lack of clarity of some criteria for teachers, lack of justification of teachers, lack of clarity, lack of accountability of officials, poor informing, lack of transparency, lack of sufficient information on plan details, information rendering
Defect in implementation	Failure to implement, the probability of not allocating necessary credit, lack of adequate training of principals, the likelihood of impact on the evaluation and rating, discrimination against the other occupations, the creation of additional work on the teachers, the constant change of evaluation criteria

As presented in the table above, the main weaknesses of this plan include the lack of comprehensiveness of the plan, the lack of transparency of some of the criteria and indices, the possibility of applying personal opinion in evaluations, the length of the ranking process and the need for frequent preventions, more emphasis on experience and record of service to the specialty and education degree, weakness in the full informing of the general public and the lack of complete implementation of the plan.

Question Four: What are the strategies for optimal implementation of teacher ranking plan? In response to the question of what are the solutions for the proper implementation of teacher ranking plan, the interviewees also referred to some issues. Some of these solutions are ideas that can help to improve the plan or eliminate their defects or reduce the teachers' dissatisfaction. Some of these suggestions have already been seen in the bill, but they are either not implemented well or have not been properly communicated to the teachers. One of the leaders in the education area said: "An important solution is to create a structured structure for teacher assessment. That is, we select a valid criterion for evaluation in order to reduce the ambiguities among the teacher's community". To authors, one of the subjects of this plan: "Increasing competitiveness and motivation in all aspects of education can be a solution to the strength of this plan. This will increase the horizons of the teachers in all aspects and lead them to progress". Table 4 illustrates a set of solutions presented by interviewees to improve the plan.

**Table 4.** Suggested strategies for implementing teacher ranking plan

Categories	Concepts (codes)
Professionalism approach to teacher	Teacher assessment in all aspects of teaching profession, assessment of teachers by their colleagues, use of the experiences of the other countries, creating a positive attitude towards teachers, fulfilling all the promises given, specializing in assessment at different levels and courses
Pay attention to the improvement of teachers' livelihoods	Improving the teachers' livelihood, matching the teachers' payments with the other businesses, attempt to solve the teachers' problems
Teamwork and continuous evaluation	Teachers' evaluation by a specialized team, continuous evaluation, no change in criteria and indices over the time, the possibility of planning for years to come
Holistic	Overall assessment of teachers' activities, qualitative and quantitative evaluation of teacher's work, attention to teacher's creativity and management
Reduce bureaucracy	Using the electronic systems to track files, keeping the plan out of political challenges, creating a systematic structure for evaluation, informing all the rules transparently for teachers

As presented in the table above, there are several ways to promote a teacher ranking plan by the participants in this research. The emphasis is on the professionalism rather than management in the assessment of teacher competencies, the promotion of the actual impact of the plan on the lives and livelihoods of educators, the continuity in the implementation of the plan, the avoidance of continuous and cross-sectional changes, and the reduction of the bureaucratic ethics are the most important of these solutions.

## 5. Discussion

Today changing world requires more people who are capable of self-direction, take on the wheel of development and plan their own development flow (Karimi, 2008). Due to the type of work that teachers do, it's important to develop their professional competencies than any other profession. Given the central role of the teachers' ability to improve the quality of the learning-teaching process, any plan or tool that can help teachers in their professional development path will have a major impact on the education system function. Assessing the professional competencies of teachers is one of the tools that helps them determine the path to professional development. There are also plans for Supervision and guidance of the teachers in all developed world educational systems.

In the education system of Iran, the professional ranking of teachers has been implemented over the last few years, but it has always been accompanied by dissenting views and opinions, and there have been some criticisms on it, especially from the teachers. The purpose of this study was to rethink the results and impacts of this plan and, by identifying its strengths and weaknesses, attempted to provide a better basis for its evaluation. The results of this study showed that the implementation of this plan was very important for the teachers and principals. In order to evaluate and guide the professional Competencies of teachers, there must be a coherent and targeted plan. In this regard, four categories of requirements for the implementation of the plan were identified: Legal requirements, scientific requirements, professional requirements and management requirements. It also has many strengths. The implementation of this plan has increased the incentive for teachers to work more and better, encourages the teachers to improve the professional skills, reduce the teachers' livelihood problems, increases the students' academic achievement as a result of the greater efforts of teachers and reduces the feeling of inequality in receiving payment of the teachers to the other occupations. The teachers and custodians of the plan believed that the teacher ranking plan was associated with weaknesses, like that indices and criteria for comprehensive assessment are not sufficiently developed because it ignores some aspects of teacher work that is not evident and documented, in some cases, such as raising salaries as a result of raising the ranking with lack of transparency, it is possible to apply the evaluator's personal opinion, its implementation process is long and requires repeated follow-up on the part of the teacher personally, it emphasizes on the career experience more than the expertise, no detailed information was provided to teachers about it and how implementation is along with the restrictions such as budget funding, and it imposes additional works on the teachers.

The interviewees also suggested some suggestions to improve and enhance the teacher ranking plan, which were categorized in the general title. These solutions are: 1. Applying the professionalism approach to the teacher, which means that the assessment of teachers' Competencies is removed from the office state and performed as a professional work with specialized indices, 2. Paying attention to the improvement of teachers' livelihoods means that the implementation of this plan should provide the field of the restoration of the teachers' received payment status and actually improve their livelihood, 3. Teachers' evaluation will be done with a team of experts and teachers continuously over the years, 4. A comprehensive approach will be taken in assessing teacher Competencies, and all aspects of teacher work will be evaluated, and 5. Reduced bureaucracy, frequent documentation, and multiple administrative procedures.

The transformation in the information field and the acceleration of the knowledge production and the abolition of the current knowledge requires the development of a researcher's spirit and lifelong learning,

comparative studies, the use and utilization of the day technologies and intellectual and creative thinking. With increasing the amount of information generated and the speed of technological change, there is no need to fill and accumulate information in the brains of the students. In such situation, the most important task of the teacher is to help the learners in identifying information needs and choosing the appropriate resources in this regard among a wealth of information and resources.

The teacher is one of the key components of the education system. These are the teachers who make an educational system effective or non-effective. Therefore, attention to the key component of the educational system and his promotion of knowledge, attitude, and skill is essential. The teacher will be able to accompany the changes, in the case that the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitude would be providing for him. Teachers' ranking plan, if its limitation would be removed, can act as a framework for guidance of the teachers' development.

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