

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRATEGIC  
LEADERSHIP, ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND  
SELF-RENEWAL STRATEGY IN INTEGRATED  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH OF IRAN

BY

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## ABSTRACT

This study attempts to examine the relationship between strategic leadership (STRL), organizational culture (OC) and self-renewal strategy (SRWSTR). The final underlying factors of strategic leadership are strategic conversation and dialogue (PSTRCD), strategic management (STRM), problem solving approach (PSA) and effective communication skill (ECS). The components of organizational culture are trust and sense of ownership (SOWN); and lastly self-renewal strategy focus on learning organization, creativity and innovation. The study employed a cross-sectional design for the collection of survey data from 332 respondents to answer the research questions of the study. This study proposes an integral model, designed to capture the interdependencies between the theory's central concepts as a whole. Data analysis involves two stages, EFA and descriptive analysis using SPSS and CFA and hypothesis testing using SEM-AMOS. Eight hypotheses were tested. The general model of strategic leadership was found to have positive influence on self-renewal strategy. In regard with dimensions of strategic leadership, strategic management, problem-solving approach, and effective communication skills also had significant and positive influence on self-renewal strategy. While the participation in the strategic conversation and dialogue was not reliably associated with self-renewal strategy. The general model of strategic leadership had a significant and positive influence in building sense of ownership. Strategic management and problem-solving approach also were found to have significant and positive influence in building a sense of ownership. Whereas participation in strategic conversation and dialogue as well as effective communication skills were not positively related to a sense of ownership. Trust and sense of ownership had significant and positive influence on self-renewal strategy. In terms of indirect relationship between strategic leadership and self-renewal strategy through sense of ownership; the study showed that strategic leadership, in general, has a positive influence on self-renewal strategy through sense of ownership. Furthermore, the results indicated that two specific factors of strategic leadership, namely strategic management and problem-solving approach indirectly and positively influence self-renewal strategy through sense of ownership. However; participation in strategic conversation and dialogue and Effective communication skill failed to influence self-renewal strategy through sense of ownership. Results of the study contribute to understanding that self-renewal strategy by strategic leadership and organizational culture to adapt to the change. The thesis concludes by offering several implications, contributions, and recommendations for the future research.

## ملخص البحث

تحاول هذه الدراسة فحص العلاقة بين القيادة الاستراتيجية (STRL)، والثقافة التنظيمية (OC) واستراتيجية التجديد الذاتي (SRWSTR). والعوامل الأساسية النهائية للقيادة الاستراتيجية هي المحادثة الاستراتيجية والحوار (PSTRCD)، والإدارة الاستراتيجية (STRM)، ونهج حل المشكلات (PSA)، ومهارات الاتصال الفعال (ECS). وأن مكونات الثقافة التنظيمية هي الثقة والشعور بالملكية (SOWN)؛ وأخيراً تركز استراتيجية التجديد الذاتي على تنظيم التعلم والإبداع والابتكار. واستخدمت الدراسة تصميماً مقطوعياً لجمع البيانات من ٣٣٢ مستجيباً للإجابة على أسئلة الدراسة. وتقترح الدراسة نموذجاً متكاملًا، مصممًا لالتقاط الترابط بين المفاهيم المركزية للنظرية ككل. وقد تضمن تحليل البيانات مرحلتين، EFA والتحليل الوصفي باستخدام SPSS و CFA واختبار الفرضيات باستخدام SEM-AMOS. تم اختبار ثنائي فرضيات. وتبين أن النموذج العام للقيادة الاستراتيجية له تأثير إيجابي على استراتيجية التجديد الذاتي. وفيما يتعلق بأبعاد القيادة الاستراتيجية، والإدارة الاستراتيجية، ونهج حل المشكلات، ومهارات الاتصال الفعال لها أيضًا تأثير كبير وإيجابي على استراتيجية التجديد الذاتي. بينما المشاركة في الحوار الاستراتيجي والحوار لم تكن مرتبطة بشكل موثوق باستراتيجية التجديد الذاتي. وكان للنموذج العام للقيادة الاستراتيجية تأثير مهم وإيجابي في بناء الشعور بالملكية. كما تبين أن الإدارة الاستراتيجية ونهج حل المشكلات لهما تأثير هام وإيجابي في بناء الشعور بالملكية. في حين أن المشاركة في المحادثة الاستراتيجية والحوار وكذلك مهارات الاتصال الفعال لم تكن مرتبطة بشكل إيجابي بشعور الملكية. وكان للثقة والشعور بالملكية تأثير كبير وإيجابي على استراتيجية التجديد الذاتي. ومن حيث العلاقة غير المباشرة بين القيادة الاستراتيجية واستراتيجية التجديد الذاتي من خلال الشعور بالملكية؛ أظهرت الدراسة أن القيادة الاستراتيجية بشكل عام لها تأثير إيجابي على استراتيجية التجديد الذاتي من خلال الشعور بالملكية. علاوة على ذلك، أشارت النتائج إلى أن عاملين محددتين للقيادة الاستراتيجية، هما الإدارة الاستراتيجية ونهج حل المشكلات، يؤثران بشكل غير مباشر وإيجابي على استراتيجية التجديد الذاتي من خلال الشعور بالملكية. ومع ذلك؛ المشاركة في المحادثة والحوار الاستراتيجي ومهارات الاتصال الفعال فشلت في التأثير على استراتيجية التجديد الذاتي من خلال الشعور بالملكية. وتساهم نتائج الدراسة في فهم استراتيجية التجديد الذاتي من خلال القيادة الاستراتيجية والثقافة التنظيمية للتكيف مع التغيير. وتختتم الدراسة بتقديم العديد من الآثار والمساهمات والتوصيات للبحث المستقبلي.

## APPROVAL PAGE

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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*To*

*My beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the greatest role model human  
race even known, who sacrificed his life guiding mankind,*

*My beloved parents and; al-Marhum Ahmad bin Othman Rahimi, Fatemeh Rahmani  
as well as my siblings for their unconditional love*

*My beloved wife; Fayezeh Eslami for her support, courage, love and patience*

*My dear kids; Selma and Ali*

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In recent years, business and educational organizations throughout the world are facing a wide variety of theatrical changes. Some encountered federal regulations, whereas others experienced deregulation; some are more fractured, while others combine; some find their market shirking, while others find themselves thrown audaciously into a global marketplace. Many organizations have experienced mergers or aggressive takeovers, though others have executed destructive downsizing programs creating wrenching psychological and economic effects on their workforces (Newstrom, 2015). Similarly, integrated secondary schools in the south of Iran have encountered a wide variety of dramatic changes.

Integrated secondary schools are established under the Supreme Council of Schools for Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah in the South of Iran (SCSAJSI). It aims to transfer the heritage and tradition of Islam to a new generation of Muslim Ummah while teaching them modern sciences. An attempt to nurture good men and adapting *Shari'ah* laws in the society can be indicated as other educational aims. Accordingly, students have been taught subjects related to Islamic revealed knowledge, such as Quran recitation and interpretation (*qiraat* and *tafsir*), Arabic grammar (*sarf* and *nahv*), Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and Islamic tradition (*sirah* and *hadith*) as well as modern sciences according to the national education of the country. Although these schools have valuable efforts and glory achievement, they also encountered different changes. For instance, the intake rate of integrated secondary schools from 2006 has

decreased because of the changes in the demographics and social phenomena (Figure 1.1). These changes were originated by the external and internal environmental changes.

The external environment changes that impact the integrated secondary schools in the south of Iran include the demographic change, social phenomenon, entertainment media, and global financial crisis. In addition, some internal deficiencies related to the curriculum, staff competency, and school management and leadership contribute to the changes. In this regard, policymakers, leaders and teachers of the organizations have been struggling to adapt to the changes.

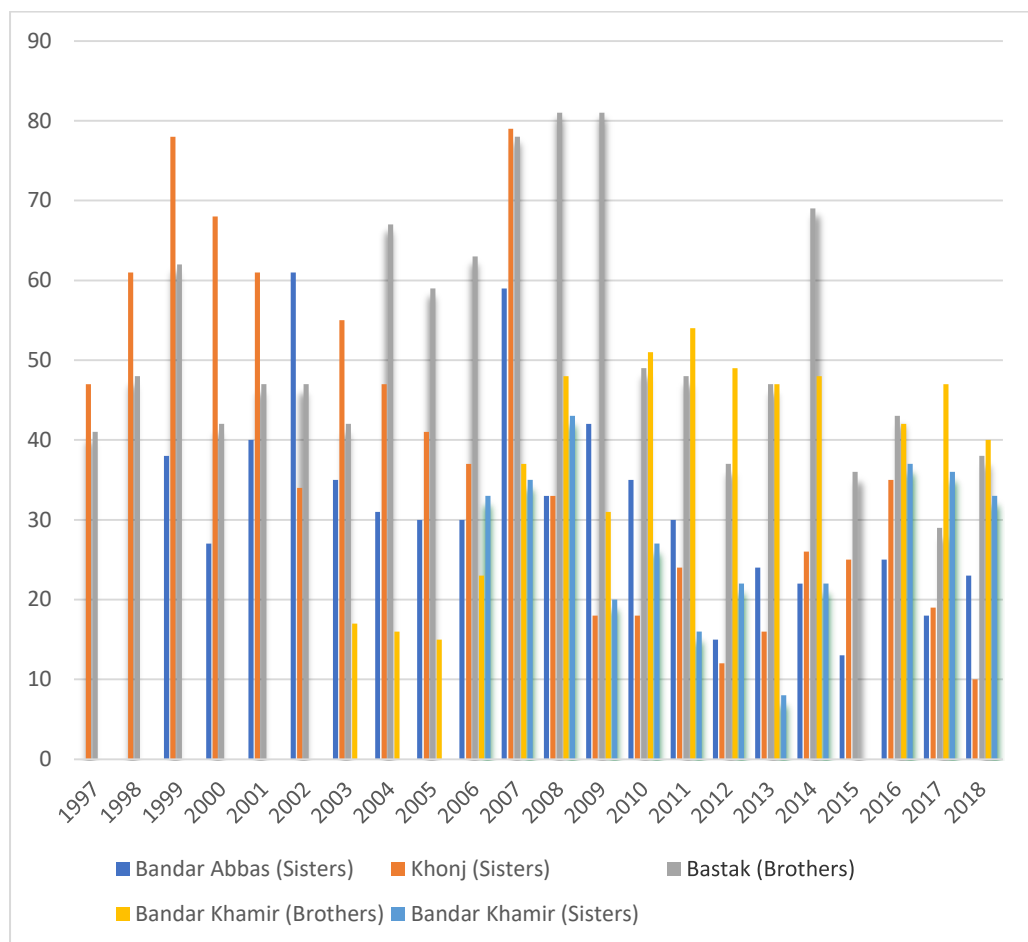


Figure 1.1 The Intake Rate of Some Integrated Secondary Schools from 1997 to 2018

The demographic changes affected the integrated secondary schools negatively have reduced the country's population size, especially the migration from rural to urban areas with an abundance of educational facilities. Based on the Statistical Centre of Iran (<https://www.amar.org.ir>), the age population between 15 to 19 years old in Iran from 2006 to 2016 has been declined. According to the data, the total population of the country in 2006 was 70,495,782. The number has increased in 2016 and became 79,926,270. Although the total population for ten years has raised up to 13.37 per cent, the population of the age group between 15-19 years old has been decreased by 37.5 per cent (Figure 1.2 and Figure 1.3).

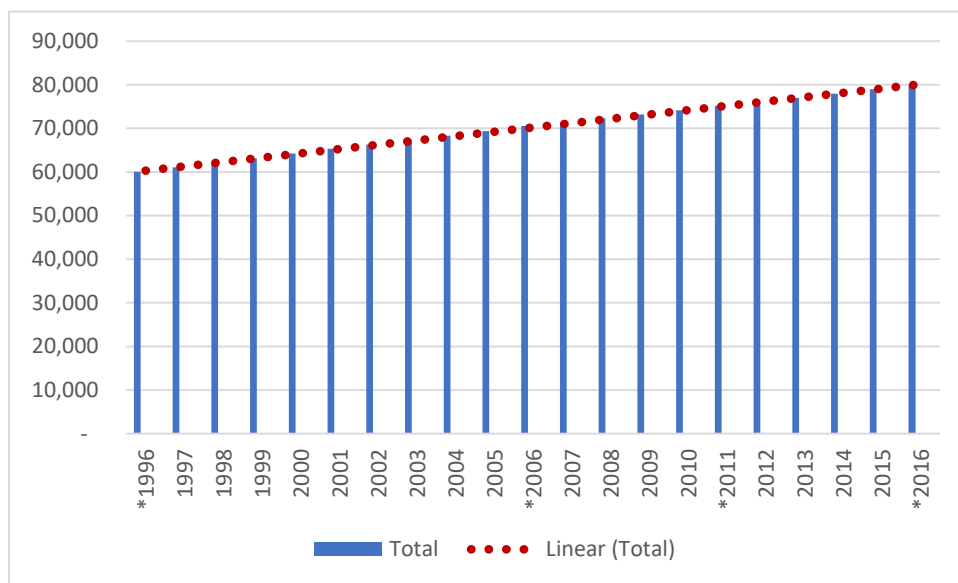


Figure 1.2 The Total Population of Iran from 1996 to 2016

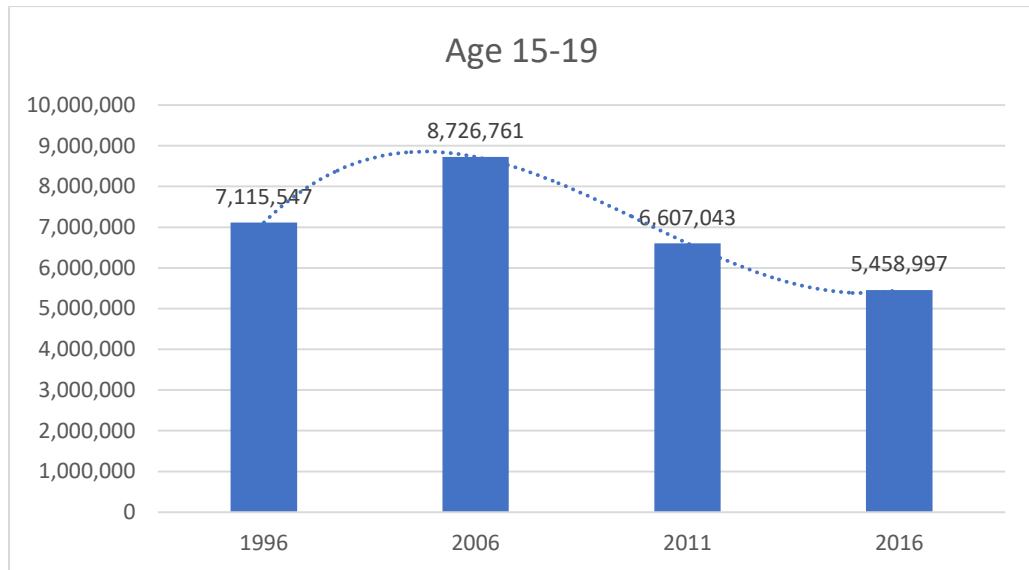


Figure 1.3 The Population of the Age Group between 15-19 from 1996 to 2016

The number of age group between 15-19 years old in Iran during 2006 was 8,726,761, whilst in 2016 it has reduced to 5,458,997 (Statistical Centre of Iran; <https://www.amar.org.ir>). This sharp decline among the young population was throughout the country including in the three southern provinces (Fars, Boshehr and Hormozgan) where the integrated secondary schools are located. Because of this decline, integrated secondary schools and formal educational institutions are encountering the troublesome.

The changes in a social phenomenon also affected the number of candidates who want to study at the integrated secondary schools. Besides the inner interest of the people for enrolling their children at the boarding integrated secondary schools to learn Islamic revealed knowledge with formal education, the shortage of secondary schools in many villages was another reason. In previous decades, there were not enough secondary schools in many rural areas as students must go to the nearest available schools in another city or village. These schools were daily public schools or

dormitory schools. To study at daily schools, students must transit every day between their hometown and another city, which was dangerous and gruelling.

Therefore, people prefer to send their children to one of the integrated boarding schools for safety reasons, especially from dangers and exhaustion resulting from daily transit between village and city. At the same time, students will have an opportunity to grow up in a spiritual environment at the integrated schools. However, 15 years ago, many villages have started to establish public schools for their children with help from the government. Hence, a significant number of students keen to study at their hometown instead of going far away as the General Secretary of Integrated Secondary Schools Council explained through a mailing interview. As a result, a significant number of villagers also migrated to the countryside and cities.

Moreover, the integrated secondary schools in the south of Iran faced another problem of the reduction of the population of rural and village in the last decade. The Statistical Centre of Iran released that in the year 2016, 13 per cent of the rural population in Iran has decreased and the city crowd has risen up to 13 per cent compared to the year 1996 (<https://www.amar.org.ir>). This indicates a noteworthy number of people migrated from rural to urban areas as shown in Figure 1.4.

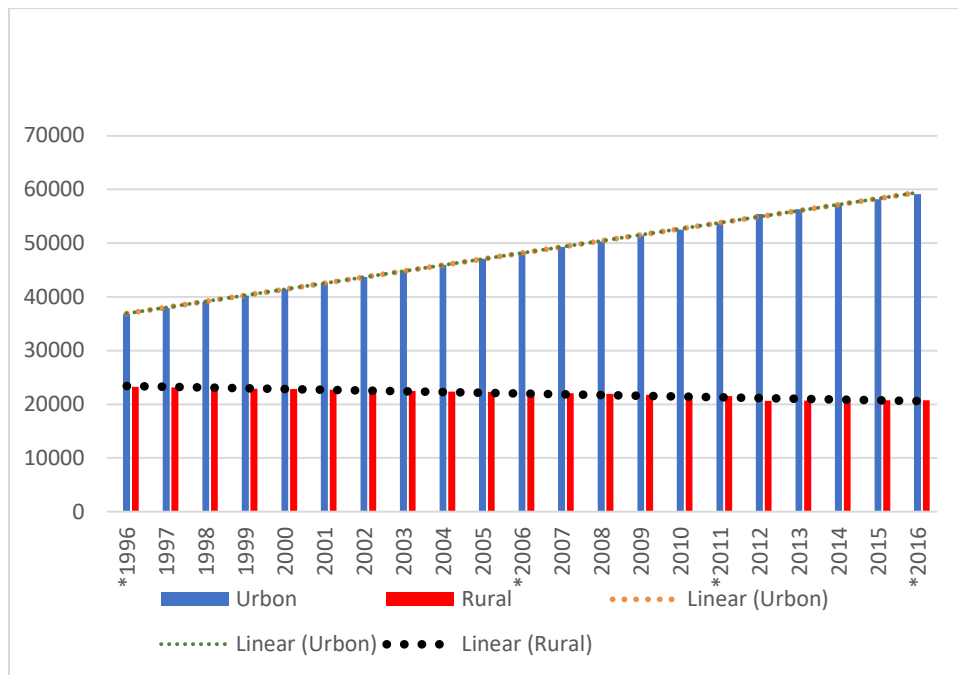


Figure 1.4 The Rate of Rural Migration to Urban Areas

The tendency to migrate has a direct impact on the number of students of the integrated secondary schools. Since children are living in the city and a public or private secondary school is in their neighbourhood with the standard quality of educational system and facilities, they do not show any interest to go far from their hometown and study two different curriculums as in the integrated schools. Moreover, urban people are interested more in studying pure science rather than integrated subjects as explained by the principal of integrated secondary schools and mentioned by the General Secretary of Integrated Secondary Schools Council through a mailing interview.

Nowadays, media and entertainment media bring a negative effect on students' performance and achievement around the world. The media and entertainment include TV shows, music, video games, texting, cell phone games, social networking's sites and apps, computer programs, online video, and websites that students use for fun.

The charm of open flow information and facilities that new technology provides for vast community breaks the initial resistance and bring about the challenges in cultural, political and social spaces for people as well as the governments. One challenge caused by social networking is Internet addiction which has a crucial influence on the daily routine, school performance, and teacher and parental relations. Students become the main victims resulted in abnormal personality disorders such as shyness, depression, and low self-esteem (Yang & Tung, 2007). The increased adolescents' addiction to the Internet is because of their inclination to have freedom, communicate effortlessly, create simple character, and grow meaningful personal relationship (Aydin & Sari, 2011).

Many studies revealed the negative effect of the Internet and social networking among teenagers in Iran. Like other countries, it is indicated that students in Iran become addicted to the Internet and social networking as it prevents them to manage their routine life like eating and studying. In addition, it makes them unenthusiastic to education and escape from the school and educational environments. Students are being lazy with poor performance in the classrooms and do not read books. Rather, they prefer the easiest way to find scientific contents without thinking. The entertainment media is going to undermine the moral foundation of students in which causes sexual deviation, family conflicts, and hostile behaviour among them (Mohammad Javad Rezaea & Parisa KeihanZadeh, 2016).

Based on the interview with the General Secretary of Integrated Secondary Schools Council, the entertainment media like TV shows and episodes have a negative effect on students' performance. The growing tendency among children and teens to the absurd movies shown through the satellite undermines the academic ability of students. Consequently, when students enter an integrated school, it is difficult to