Rural Administration Performance as Perceived by Rural Administrators in Baladarband Rural District, Kermanshah Township: A qualitative study

Lida Sharafi*  
Ph.D. Candidate of Agricultural Development, College of Agriculture, Razi University of Kermanshah

Hossein Agahi  
Associate Prof. and Member of Socio-economic Research Center, College of Agriculture, Razi University, Kermanshah

Khadijeh Moradi  
Ph.D. Candidate of Agricultural Development, College of Agriculture, Razi University of Kermanshah

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Expanded Abstract

Introduction
Rural management is process of rural society organizing and leading through shaping to organizations and institutions. These organizations and institutions are tools for achievement to objectives in rural community (Nemati and Badri, 2007). In line with, local institutions are organized as local administrators in Iran. These indigenous self-help groups have been around since 1998 with the Act of Establishing Self-sufficient local administrators across the country (Farahani and Rostam Kiani, 2011). According to the latest statistics, Kermanshah province rank second in number of local institutions across the country. Interestingly, Khorasane-Razavi holds the largest number of local institutions in the country. There are several activities set for local administrators by government body. For example, different domains of activities may range from social, economical, cultural, and environmental issues but it may even go beyond these activities (Mahdavi and Najafi Kani, 2005). Currently local administrators are held accountable for so called

* Responsible Author: lida.sharafi@yahoo.com

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“Hadi Project”. This project that started a few years ago is a type of rural planning that aims to improve the overall view of villages across Iran. Villages that have undergone Hadi Planning are physically attractive and environmentally safe. This participatory project is coordinated by local administration and it is the responsibility of local administrative to see that the project is well underway and that rural villagers are involve in every step of the project. Local administrations are also involved in local services. Rural sanitations, sewage systems, water, electricity, gas, and many more services but to name a few are on the shoulders of these people-centered institutions. Although local administrations have been active during the past 8 years in Kermanshah province, little attention has been made to the diverse activities played by these indigenous groups. Therefore, the rural administration important place in management and rural development is necessary to assessing of its performance. If it does correctly, costs reduced and identify strengths and weaknesses, and also enhance efficacy and effectiveness in it institutions (Rezvani et al. 2013).Moreover, limited literature exists that reveals rural administration performance in Kermanshah township. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative study was to analyze rural administrations performance and present solutions to improve their performance as perceived by rural administrators in Baladarband Rural District, Kermanshah Township.

Methodology
The nature of this study required a different approach to research methodology. Thus in order to gain a deep insight and collect rich primary data source, a qualitative approach (A case study) deemed appropriate for this study. The unit of analyses included 12 local administrators in Baladarband region in Kermanshah Township. Data was collected by using semi-structured and several focus group interviews. Then data were analyzed by using content analysis. A three step process was used to analyze data. The first stage, concepts emerged from text, then they categorized as primary theme. In final stage, categories formed axial categories. In the first stage 83 concepts about rural administration emerged from the data. These concepts were then summarized and reduced in number to 6 categories.
Results
The findings indicated that the performance of rural administrators has been in six cores such as: physical and skeletal development in village; preparation and implementation of environmental initiatives; social and administrative interactions; preparation and implementation of cultural, religious and sport initiatives; public service; and agricultural development.

Also solutions offered by rural administrators were classified in six categories. This approach is presented to improve the performance of rural administrators include: justification of council cooperation with people and with rural administrators; guaranteed job security and motivate rural administrators; review the selection process of rural administrator; provide the financial resources needed by rural administrator; consolidate legal status of rural administrator; and strengthening linkages with relevant organizations with rural administrators.

Conclusion
The result of this study has implications for agricultural and rural development policy-makers in Kermasnshah province. First, rural development practitioners need to be cognizant of several and diverse activities local administrators are involved. This would help rural development practitioners to develop a mindset that in order for local administrative to be effective, more physical and monetary assistance is required. Second, if policy-makers at national level are interested to develop these local institutions across the country, they need to be provided with more jurisdictions and autonomy. In other words, local administrators can only be effective if they feel more secured in their job and provided with more support in terms of effective local good governance. Finally, it is recommended that future study use a mix method approach so that all dimensions of local administrators are taken in to account.

Keywords: Rural administration, Content analysis, Qualitative analysis, Local leadership, Rural management.
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