# Validation of the Model on the Impact of Leader's Cultural Intelligence on Organizational Performance Empowerment Considering the Mediating Role of Organizational Structure

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**Abstract**

The aim of the present study is to validate the model of the impact of a leader's cultural intelligence on organizational performance empowerment, considering the mediating role of organizational structure. In the first phase, the research is exploratory in terms of its objective and fundamental in terms of its outcome, utilizing qualitative data. In the second phase, the research is explanatory in terms of its objective and developmental in terms of its outcome, employing quantitative data. In the qualitative phase, the target population consisted of university faculty members and management experts in Khuzestan province. Purposeful sampling was used in the qualitative phase, and through theoretical purposeful sampling, the sample members were identified. The sample size in the qualitative phase was determined based on the level of saturation, with interviews conducted with 20 faculty members and experts in the relevant field. The target population for the quantitative part of the research consisted of professionals and academics specializing in management and cultural studies. The sample size was determined to be 384, with 300 completed questionnaires ultimately received. For data collection in the present study, semi-structured interviews with experts were used to design the questionnaire. Based on the results of the interviews with experts and the indicators and components derived from them, a questionnaire was developed. Data analysis from the interviews was conducted using the grounded theory approach based on Strauss and Corbin's (1998) systematic approach, which includes open, axial, and selective coding stages. The results revealed that the model of the impact of leader's cultural intelligence on organizational performance empowerment, considering the mediating role of organizational structure, has adequate validity.

*Keywords:* Cultural Intelligence, Organizational Performance Empowerment, Organizational Structure.

# 1. Introduction

Cultural intelligence is an essential skill for leadership in the contemporary era. Managers must possess sufficient flexibility to consciously adapt to new cultural situations they encounter. In this regard, cultural intelligence helps empower both managers and employees (Malai et al., 2016). Cultural intelligence enables organizational leaders to easily overcome cultural barriers and better resolve intercultural issues. The success of an organization in national and international arenas requires the ability and skill to interact with individuals from diverse cultures. Therefore, a type of leadership is required that can address the challenges and tensions created in the global community with awareness and by finding appropriate solutions [1, 2].

In today's world, where the most prominent feature may be the diversity and plurality of individuals with different ideas, having leaders who are capable of establishing communication and understanding others deeply is of great importance [3]. Among the competencies of global leadership, possessing a significant degree of cultural intelligence is crucial, which fortunately can be acquired and enhanced as a skill [4]. Cultural intelligence, as a new domain of intelligence, has a strong relationship with diverse work environments. It allows individuals to recognize how others think and how they respond to behavioral patterns. As a result, intercultural communication barriers are reduced, and individuals develop skills in managing cultural diversity [5]. Undoubtedly, it is essential for organizational leaders to possess multiple types of intelligence. In addition to the conventional intellectual and emotional intelligence, which have always been emphasized by management and leadership scholars, leaders in the 21st century require another type of intelligence to navigate the complexities of modern business environments, which is referred to as cultural intelligence [6].

Cultural intelligence is necessary for competition in the highly complex world of the 21st century. Individuals with low cultural intelligence are unable to establish effective communication with their colleagues, either from the same culture or from other cultures, and as a result, are unsuccessful in their communication and managerial tasks [7]. Another definition of cultural intelligence is the ability of individuals to achieve personal growth through continuous learning and a better understanding of cultural heritage, customs, values, and effective interaction with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Some researchers also define cultural intelligence as an individual's ability to effectively adapt to new cultural frameworks, relating this concept to other types of intelligence, including emotional and social intelligence [8].

Numerous studies have been conducted on cultural intelligence; however, the specific relationship between this variable and organizational performance empowerment enablers has not been clearly established [9]. Organizational performance is one of the most important indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of management and reflects the extent of the organization's success in utilizing resources to achieve predetermined goals [10]. As organizations grow larger, the need for evaluation and control increases. A major issue in many organizations, especially those with numerous branches or even multiple departments, is that no clear indicators and enablers have been provided for their improvement. If good indicators had been introduced, they could have guided their workforce more effectively, particularly directing departments towards the organization's strategic objectives [11]. Some studies, however, suggest that organizational leadership style can have a significant impact on organizational performance [1].

On the other hand, some existing evidence suggests that the relationship between leadership style and organizational performance is not direct, and other factors act as mediators. Organizational structure refers to the way in which organizational activities are divided, organized, and coordinated. Organizations create structures to coordinate the activities of their workforce and control the tasks of members [12]. Organizational structure is a very important concept in the field of management. Organizations consist of different subsystems, and for these subsystems to be effective, communication, coordination, and control are essential. A highly complex organization requires more communication, effective coordination, and efficient control methods. In other words, as complexity increases, managers' responsibility to ensure that disparate and segregated activities within the organization are carried out consistently and collaboratively to achieve organizational goals also increases [13]. Recent rapid changes and technological advancements, especially in the information technology sector, along with the increasingly competitive environment today, force organizations to undergo internal transformations and adapt to these changes [14].

Empowering organizational performance among university staff has always been a concern for all universities. This is because university staff continuously interact with many students, and the main issue is the empowerment of their organizational performance. Due to

frequent interactions between staff and students during working hours, organizational vitality tends to diminish, which negatively impacts their organizational performance. In this context, organizational structure certainly plays a positive role in influencing performance [6]. If the roles and responsibilities of staff are clearly divided and each employee performs their own duties fully, with managers not placing all responsibilities on the staff, the organizational performance of university staff will certainly improve. One of the most important factors that will affect organizational structure is the cultural intelligence of managers. When managers can effectively recognize the cultural differences of staff and students, they can confidently perform their tasks in the appropriate contexts. However, case studies indicate that this is often not the case, leading to tensions within the organization, which negatively impacts staff performance [13].

Exploring cultural intelligence and leadership skills in this domain is of great importance for improving staff performance. Communication and interactions between individuals with different cultural backgrounds, given the cultural diversity within the country and the necessity for organizations to operate internationally to achieve success and improve performance in an era characterized by communication and globalization, is one of the most important issues in human resource management today [15]. The needs of the present age, along with numerous advancements and transformations in organizational environments, emphasize the necessity of applying an appropriate leadership style [10]. Furthermore, creating cultural insight among managers and staff of an educational organization when dealing with diverse cultures requires a desirable type of intelligence, and cultural intelligence possesses the characteristics needed for interacting with various conditions [13].

Leadership is a process that seeks to facilitate the achievement of organizational goals by motivating and effectively communicating, encouraging employees to carry out their tasks willingly [16]. Therefore, leadership is a part of management, and this responsibility, like planning, organizing, and controlling, is a task for managers. In today's world, with challenges such as competition and stress factors worldwide, leadership has become harder than ever. Such challenges require restoring confidence, hope, and optimism in individuals, and leaders must help people find and nurture themselves. Therefore, there is a need for leaders who are familiar with different goals, values, and cultures [6]. When facing new cultural situations, it is

difficult to find familiar signs and symbols that can be used for communication [4]. In such situations, the leader of the organization must, based on available information, create a shared cognitive framework, even if this framework does not fully capture local behaviors and norms. The development of such a framework can only be accomplished by those who possess high cultural intelligence [17].

Since the management of contemporary organizations—given the dynamic nature of the business environment—is a fast-paced and rapidly developing process, organizational leaders must have the ability to recognize and respect the values and cultures of different employees [10]. In other words, possessing a desirable level of cultural intelligence is essential for leadership in the modern business and organizational management era. Enhancing this skill in leaders will lead to greater effectiveness for the organization [18]. Despite the importance of leaders' cultural intelligence in improving organizational performance and growth, there has been limited research within the country to explain its relationship with organizational performance [19]. Specifically, the role of mediating factors in the relationship between leaders' cultural intelligence and organizational performance has not been clearly explained [20]. Given these research gaps, the present study aims to present a model of the impact of leaders' cultural intelligence on organizational performance empowerment, considering the mediating role of organizational structure.

## 2. Methodology

The method employed in this study is based on fundamental research. The goal of the two-phase fundamental studies is that the results of the first phase (qualitative) assist the results and analyses of the second phase (quantitative). This approach is particularly useful when the researcher needs to develop or test a tool, as each of these methods alone may not adequately examine the variables under study. In this method, the first phase utilizes qualitative methods to identify key variables, develop a classification system, expand a novel theory, or study the details of a phenomenon. The variables and their relationships are identified to answer the research questions. In the quantitative phase of the study, the initial model developed from the qualitative phase is validated. In this phase, survey-based approaches and questionnaires are typically employed.

This study is fundamental in nature, as it seeks to develop a model of the impact of cultural intelligence in leadership

on the empowerment of organizational performance, considering the mediating role of organizational structure. Additionally, since both library studies and field methods such as interviews and questionnaires are used in this research, it can be classified as a cross-sectional survey research based on the data collection method.

Ultimately, this study will adopt both qualitative and quantitative approaches. In the first phase, library research and specialized interviews will be used to identify the indicators of the model of the impact of cultural intelligence in leadership on the empowerment of organizational performance, considering the mediating role of organizational structure. After the qualitative analysis, a questionnaire will be distributed, and data will be collected from the relevant experts, marking the transition of the research to the quantitative phase. Thus, this study is a mixed-methods research.

In the qualitative phase, the statistical population includes faculty members and management experts in the Khuzestan province. Purposeful sampling is applied in the qualitative phase, meaning that units are selected based on specific characteristics related to the phenomenon under study rather than random selection. Decisions are also made about who should be observed or interviewed and the duration of the study. At least one initial decision about the length of the study must be made, although changes may occur later. Based on the review of the literature and available information on the topic, a reasonable estimate should be made at the outset of the study.

Ultimately, using theoretical purposeful sampling, the members of the statistical sample in this phase were identified. The focus was on individuals who had more knowledge of the research topic. Additionally, the interviewees were asked to introduce other experts who are knowledgeable in the field, representing snowball sampling in qualitative research. The criteria for selecting interviewees included the following:

1. Authors of books and articles in the area of cultural intelligence and organizational structure.
2. Experience in presenting at conferences and academic congresses in the relevant field.
3. Familiarity and experience in the related field.

The sample size in the qualitative phase was determined based on saturation level, meaning that the researcher continued conducting interviews until additional interviews no longer led to new data and did not provide further insights into the research topic. If additional interviews led to repetitive data, the researcher stopped the interviews.

Therefore, the sampling method was both purposeful and snowball, with interviewees being asked to introduce other individuals who could provide valuable qualitative data. In total, 20 faculty members and experts in the related field were interviewed.

For the quantitative phase, the statistical population includes professional and academic experts in management and cultural studies with the following characteristics:

- University faculty members and higher education institutions
- Ph.D. students
- Managers of institutions
- CEOs and board members of organizations
- Managers and analysts of investment organizations, brokerage firms, and investment funds

Given the large size of the statistical population, the sample size was determined using Cochran's sample size formula, and the sample members were selected using simple random sampling. The sample size was determined based on Cochran's formula. It is worth mentioning that some researchers recommend a minimum sample size of 200 for structural equation modeling. Questionnaires were sent to 384 individuals, and ultimately, 300 completed questionnaires were received.

The primary data collection tools for this research include library studies, semi-structured interviews, ISM (Interpretive Structural Modeling) questionnaire, and a researcher-designed questionnaire.

**Library Studies**: In the first phase, library studies will be employed to review the theoretical concepts related to the research topic, examine the literature, and review previous research. Written sources such as specialized books in the field of the impact of cultural intelligence in leadership on the empowerment of organizational performance, considering the mediating role of organizational structure, and related articles will be used.

**Interviews in Qualitative Analysis**: In the second phase, interviews with relevant experts will be conducted to gain insights and understanding of the model of the impact of cultural intelligence in leadership on the empowerment of organizational performance, considering the mediating role of organizational structure. The interviews will also help with coordination and identifying the study variables. The interviews will be coded using MAXQDA software.

**ISM (Interpretive Structural Modeling) Questionnaire**: After identifying the initial indicators for the model of the impact of cultural intelligence in leadership

on the empowerment of organizational performance, considering the mediating role of organizational structure, the ISM questionnaire will be used to identify the causal relationships among the main categories of the study. The initial model of the research will be developed. This method will be conducted using MICMAC software.

**Researcher-Designed Questionnaire**: After presenting the research model, the researcher will develop a Likert-type questionnaire to validate the proposed model using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique. This method will be conducted using SMART PLS software.

## 3. Findings and Results

In the qualitative phase, the required data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The questions used in the interviews were developed in line with the perspectives of experts in the fields of cultural intelligence, performance, and organizational structure, and their validity was confirmed through expert feedback from specialists knowledgeable about the research topic. Based on this, the researcher first drafted the main interview questions and then presented them to five professors from educational universities in Khuzestan province who had multiple published articles in the field of cultural intelligence and had supervised theses in this domain. Their feedback was incorporated into the questions, and the revised questions were reviewed in a final session for confirmation. The main interview questions are as follows:

- According to Ang et al. (2007), cultural intelligence has four dimensions: Metacognition: Knowledge understanding; Cognition: Knowledge of structures; Motivation: Direction of energy and capability to perform tasks; Behavior: Actions performed in different cultural situations. In your opinion, what dimensions and aspects constitute cultural intelligence?
- What conditions do you think can play a role in the formation and strengthening of cultural intelligence?
- Given the current state of cultural intelligence in organizations, what strategies and approaches would you suggest to enhance it?
- What societal factors influence the selection of strategies or approaches?
- What factors intervene in the selection of strategies or approaches?
- What outcomes do the selected strategies or approaches produce in the current situation?

The analysis of the interview data was carried out using the grounded theory method based on the systematic approach of Strauss and Corbin (1998), following three phases of open, axial, and selective coding. In this approach, the main categories identified were classified under causal conditions, core categories, contextual factors, intervening factors, strategies, and outcomes. Open coding is an analytical process through which concepts, characteristics, and dimensions of the data are identified. This stage occurs at the lowest level of abstraction. Axial coding is the process of linking categories to subcategories and connecting them at the level of characteristics and dimensions. However, these categories are not final at this stage, as for theory generation, an integration and refinement process must take place, which is referred to as selective coding.

The contextual factors affecting the cultural intelligence of leaders are as follows:

**Table 1.** Contextual Factors Affecting Leaders' Cultural Intelligence

| Extracted Code Class | Selected Code | Axial Code |
|---|---|---|
| Contextual Factors | Personality Factors | Creativity |
| | | Innovation |
| | | Risk-taking |
| | | Achievement Motivation |
| | | Adaptability |
| | | Commitment |
| | | Emotional Intelligence |
| | | Optimism |
| | | Positivity |
| | | Psychological Resilience |
| | | Diversity-seeking |
| | | Ambiguity Tolerance |

| Organizational Factors | Leader's Authority |
| --- | --- |
| | Organizational Structure |
| | Leader-Employee Relationships |
| | Employee Behavior |
| | Employee Expectations |
| | Leadership Styles |
| | Organizational Maturity |
| | Power Distribution |
| | Support and Backing |
| | Cognitive Ability |

The intervening factors affecting the cultural intelligence of leaders are as follows:

**Table 2.** Intervening Factors Affecting Leaders' Cultural Intelligence

| Extracted Code Class | Selected Code | Axial Code |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Intervening Factors | Cultural Intelligence Strategy | Pre-encounter Strategy Development |
| | | Examining Assumptions During Encounter |
| | | Adjusting Mental Maps if Actual Experiences Differ from Previous Expectations |
| | Cultural Intelligence Knowledge | Understanding Economic and Legal Systems |
| | | Social Interaction Norms |
| | | Religious Beliefs |
| | | Aesthetic Values |
| | | Foreign Language Knowledge |

Having extracted the contextual and intervening factors influencing cultural intelligence, the impact of leaders' cultural intelligence on organizational performance empowerment, considering the mediating role of organizational structure, is modeled. This is the focus of the quantitative phase of the study.

To assess the goodness of fit of the measurement model, four criteria were used: reliability, construct validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. To measure the reliability of the model, composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha were examined, and the results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Reliability Results of the Research Constructs

| Constructs | Cronbach's Alpha | Composite Reliability |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Cultural Intelligence | 0.741 | 0.695 |
| Organizational Performance | 0.767 | 0.688 |
| Organizational Structure | 0.772 | 0.671 |

A Cronbach's alpha value above 0.7 is considered acceptable reliability. In addition to the traditional Cronbach's alpha, the more modern composite reliability criterion was used to determine the reliability of each construct. The advantage of this criterion over Cronbach's alpha is that it calculates the reliability of the constructs not in isolation but in relation to the correlation between constructs. To better assess reliability, both measures are

employed. A composite reliability value above 0.6 for each construct indicates an acceptable stability for the measurement model.

The construct validity related to the research variables is presented in Table 4:

**Table 4.** Results of Factor Loadings for Questions

| Latent Variable | Manifest Variables | Factor Loading | Significance Level | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cultural Intelligence | Q1 | 0.561 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q2 | 0.598 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q3 | 0.536 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q4 | 0.509 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q5 | 0.520 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q6 | 0.501 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q7 | 0.530 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q8 | 0.575 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| Organizational Structure | Q9 | 0.504 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q10 | 0.594 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q11 | 0.558 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q12 | 0.919 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q13 | 0.536 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q14 | 0.531 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| Organizational Performance | Q15 | 0.520 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q16 | 0.580 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q17 | 0.542 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q18 | 0.551 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q19 | 0.581 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q20 | 0.553 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q21 | 0.538 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q22 | 0.970 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q23 | 0.546 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q24 | 0.571 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q25 | 0.522 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q26 | 0.542 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q27 | 0.505 | Significant | P < 0.05 |
| | Q28 | 0.512 | Significant | P < 0.05 |

Table 5 presents the results of the goodness-of-fit indices for the relevant constructs. The effect size ($f^2$) is another criterion used to link the measurement and structural components in structural equation modeling. Thus, the $f^2$ values for endogenous variables were calculated using Cohen's formula and reported in Table 5. The $Q^2$ index indicates the predictive power of the model, and if the value for an endogenous construct is 0.02, 0.15, or 0.35, it corresponds to weak, moderate, or strong predictive power, respectively, for the related exogenous constructs.

**Table 5.** Results of Goodness-of-Fit Indices

| Index Name | Values | Model Estimates | Acceptable Threshold |
|---|---|---|---|
| GOF | Cultural Intelligence | 0.567 | > 0.36 |
| | Organizational Performance | 0.522 | |
| | Organizational Structure | 0.541 | |
| $R^2$ (Coefficient of Determination) | Organizational Performance | 0.628 | > 0.50 |
| | Organizational Structure | 0.694 | |
| $Q^2$ Index | Organizational Performance | 0.394 | Positive |
| | Organizational Structure | 0.347 | |

As the fit indices presented in the figure above indicate, all confirmed relationships are well-aligned with the factor structure and the theoretical framework of the study. This demonstrates the consistency between the questions and the theoretical constructs. In other words, the observed data are consistent with the conceptual model of the research.

To investigate the mediating role of organizational structure in the impact of cultural intelligence on organizational performance, the Sobel test was applied. Since the Z-Value statistic was greater than 1.96 (Z = 8.057), the mediating effect is confirmed. This indicates that organizational structure plays a mediating role in the relationship between cultural intelligence and organizational performance.
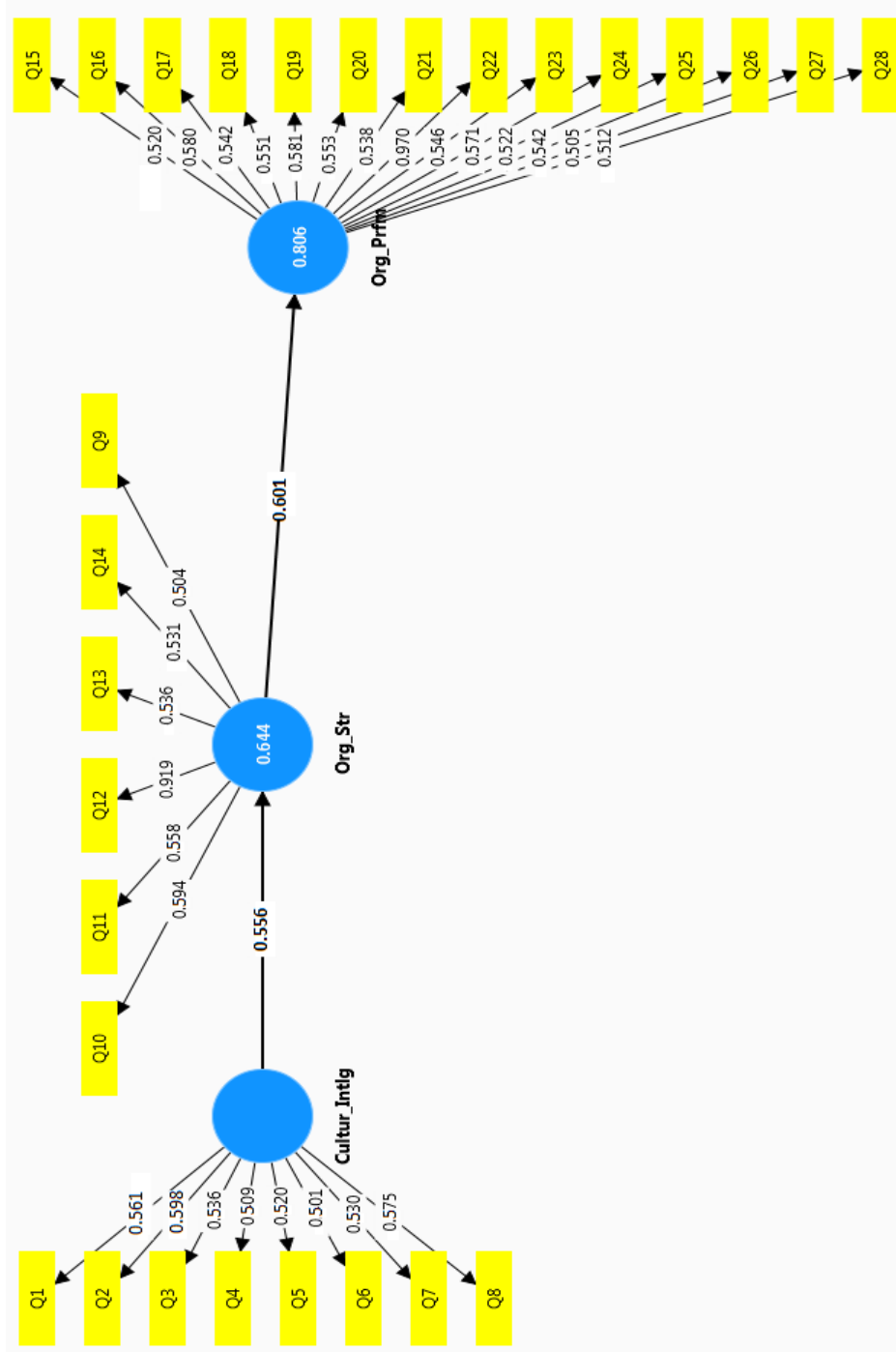


**Figure 1.** Model with Standardized Coefficients

## 4.    Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the first finding, it was determined that the contextual factors affecting the cultural intelligence of leaders include: personal factors (creativity, innovation, risk-taking, achievement motivation, adaptability, commitment, emotional intelligence, optimism, positive thinking, psychological capacity, diversity orientation, and tolerance for ambiguity), and organizational factors (leader's authority, organizational structure, leader-employee relationships, employee behavior, employee expectations, leadership styles, organizational maturity, power distribution, support, and cognitive ability).

Akbariyeh et al. (2024) concluded that personal factors influence the cultural intelligence of managers, which aligns with the present study [3]. Piri and Malaalahi (2022) studied the relationship between cultural intelligence and organizational commitment in decision-making methods of managers in the prisons of Sistan and Baluchestan Province and concluded that personal factors influence the cultural intelligence of managers [18], in line with the present research. The study by Feiz and Golshahi (2016) aimed to examine the impact of cultural and emotional intelligence on the performance of district employees working in Tehran, considering the role of intercultural adaptation, and concluded that organizational factors affect the cultural intelligence of managers [21], consistent with the present study. Kilduff and Cormican (2022) aimed to identify critical success factors for cultural intelligence in intercultural communications in global projects and examined the relationships between leadership characteristics and their level of cultural intelligence, concluding that personal factors influence the cultural intelligence of managers [22], which is aligned with the present study.

The explanation that can be provided for this section is as follows: Cultural intelligence is a new domain of intelligence that has a significant relationship with diverse work environments. Nowadays, organizations seek individuals who can perform optimally as a group while also being able to communicate with people from different cultures. To meet this goal, organizations need individuals with high cultural intelligence. In general, the ability of an individual to adapt to values, traditions, and customs different from those they are accustomed to and work in a culturally diverse environment is indicative of cultural intelligence.

Cultural intelligence enables individuals to understand how others think and how they respond to behavioral patterns, thus reducing intercultural communication barriers and empowering individuals to manage cultural diversity. In diverse work environments, it is necessary to manage anxieties arising from cultural shock and the disruptions and consequences of cultural conflicts effectively. For this purpose, adaptation and effective adjustment of cultures are required. "Cultural intelligence" is the rapid adaptation to new situations and the ability to perform more easily based on environmental conditions. Cultural intelligence is an essential business tool for both internal and external goals. Internally, cultural intelligence helps employees at all levels understand each other better and, in turn, achieve better results together. Business leaders should use cultural intelligence to assist in the growth and development of their employees by identifying the unique traits that strengthen each employee. Externally, cultural intelligence is indispensable.

Based on the second finding, it was identified that the intervening factors affecting leaders' cultural intelligence include: cultural intelligence strategies (developing strategies before intercultural interactions, reviewing assumptions during interactions, and adjusting mental maps when actual experiences differ from prior expectations) and cultural intelligence knowledge (understanding economic and legal systems, social interaction norms, religious beliefs, aesthetic values, and foreign languages).

Mojaver (2022) conducted a study on the mediating role of leader-member exchange and transformational leadership in the relationship between cultural intelligence and prosocial behavior, concluding that intercultural interaction influences leaders' cultural intelligence [23], which aligns with the current research. Sadrayi and Najari (2022) examined the effective role of communication competence in cultural intelligence among managers at Agricultural Bank of Tehran Province and concluded that awareness of social interaction norms influences leaders' cultural intelligence [19], which is consistent with the present study. Fardzadeh et al. (2022) aimed to investigate the relationship between cultural intelligence and organizational commitment among male managers of first-cycle middle schools in the city of Manoujan, finding that understanding religious beliefs affects leaders' cultural intelligence [20], which is consistent with the present research. Maleki Avarsin and Heydarnejad (2022) determined the role of emotional and cultural intelligence of primary school

managers on their performance in the educational system of District 3 in Tabriz and concluded that awareness of legal systems influences leaders' cultural intelligence [24], which aligns with the present study. Abdoli et al. (2021) explored the relationship between cultural intelligence and the perceived value of sustainable tourism among foreign tourists visiting Yazd city and found that awareness of social interaction norms influences leaders' cultural intelligence [9], consistent with the present research.

The purpose of this study was to design a model of cultural intelligence and its relationship with organizational performance and structure. The analysis of interview data led to the identification of several main categories, including six classes of causal conditions, the central phenomenon, contextual conditions, intervening factors, strategies, and consequences. The explanation for this section is that two main categories, including demographic characteristics and individual traits, are considered causal conditions influencing cultural intelligence. This result means that focusing on improving these factors leads to the formation and development of cultural intelligence in organizations. To achieve cultural intelligence in organizations, it is necessary to select managers who, in terms of personality, foster a sense of trust and motivation in employees to gain their trust.

Additionally, personal traits and organizational factors play a decisive role in the formation and reinforcement of cultural intelligence. The more direct interactions and exchanges among these elements, the more positive the organizational atmosphere becomes, and employees are conveyed a more meaningful sense of their activities with better quality. Therefore, attention to these factors leads to the formation of cultural intelligence.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- Since cultural intelligence, like other aspects of personality, is developable, recommendations can be provided to senior managers of organizations in this regard. However, two points should be noted: first, the development of cultural intelligence can only be carried out by qualified professionals, such as professional psychologists, and second, improving cultural intelligence should be part of a comprehensive strategic human resource development program, alongside other aspects of this program. Among the methods for developing and strengthening cultural intelligence are steps proposed by Earley and Mosakowski (2004). According to these researchers, after measuring this type of intelligence in individuals and determining their strengths and weaknesses, the necessary educational programs should be chosen. For example, if an individual's behavioral cultural intelligence is low, they should attend courses related to behavior; if their cognitive or knowledge-based aspect is weak, their inductive and deductive reasoning abilities should be developed. Based on the results of this study, since the average scores of bank branch managers' cultural intelligence in behavioral and especially knowledge dimensions were lower compared to other dimensions, participation in the mentioned classes or using educational models designed for cultural intelligence dimensions, along with simulation and role-playing exercises, is recommended to increase the cultural intelligence of managers in this regard. Especially for level five branches of the bank, which, according to the results of the Friedman ranking test and Duncan test, showed lower cultural intelligence and consequently lower job performance compared to other levels. On the other hand, since no significant relationship was found between the level of cultural intelligence of managers and their demographic characteristics (work experience and educational qualifications), it can be concluded that these factors do not serve as indicators of managers' cultural intelligence. In other words, greater work experience or higher professional qualifications are not related to the cultural intelligence of individuals and do not indicate higher cultural intelligence.

- Since a significant portion of cultural intelligence skills and abilities is acquired, organizations can give special attention to strengthening this type of intelligence in their training and development programs for managers, using both formal and informal educational methods to improve the cognitive and behavioral skills of their managers.

- Also, based on the confirmation of the research hypotheses regarding the impact of cultural intelligence on organizational performance and structure, it can be concluded that cultural intelligence is an important factor affecting organizational performance and structure. Therefore, it is recommended that more efforts be made to increase the cultural intelligence dimensions among employees in organizations.

This can be achieved by enhancing coexistence and fostering teamwork.

- Given the impact of cultural intelligence on organizational performance, it is recommended that, as much as possible, employees be trained about different cultures, including economic and legal systems, their norms and grammar, values, and cultural beliefs, such as marriage traditions, industries, and handicrafts, so that by increasing their awareness, employees can learn how to behave with clients from different cultures. This will improve their relationships with the organization and enhance performance. Thus, starting with employees, it is possible to ask them to share all the cultural characteristics of their ethnicity with other employees or use the organization's website to provide information on this subject to enhance the overall awareness of employees.

- Managers and officials of institutions should motivate employees to establish connections with individuals from different ethnic backgrounds, enabling them to advance the institution's goals and plans effectively. Motivation should initially be created by addressing employees' material and non-material needs, taking into account their individual traits, so that they can enjoy interacting with different cultures, and their motivation will evolve beyond just satisfying their needs. Therefore, motivation should be nurtured in employees so that, over time, they enjoy communicating with diverse cultures.

- Cultural intelligence is related to emotional intelligence but goes one step further. Individuals with high emotional intelligence understand others' emotions, needs, and desires, and are aware of how their own emotions and feelings affect others. However, to understand cultural factors and adapt their behavior accordingly, they must acquire additional skills. Therefore, it is recommended that decision-makers and planners pay close attention to this matter.

## Authors' Contributions

Authors equally contributed to this article.

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## Declaration of Interest

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## Ethical Considerations

All procedures performed in this study were under the ethical standards.

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