



Identification and Explanation of the Dimensions, Components, and Indicators of Human Resource Governance Based on National Culture in the Public Sector of Kerman City

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to identify the dimensions, components, and indicators of human resource governance based on national culture in the public sector of Kerman city. The research method, in terms of its goal, is fundamental-applied, and in terms of execution, it is qualitative, descriptive, and thematic analysis. The statistical population of this study, based on the saturation principle, included 30 university professors, experts, and human resource managers from the executive agencies in the public sector of Kerman city. They were selected using purposeful and snowball sampling methods, based on the inclusion criteria for the study. The data collection tool was semi-structured interviews. The data were analyzed using MAXQDA2020 software and the six-phase thematic analysis approach by Braun and Clarke (2006). To evaluate the validity and rigor of the data, four criteria—acceptability, reliability, transferability, and confirmability—proposed by Lincoln and Guba were applied. Based on the semi-structured interviews, seven dimensions (talent management, human resource development, employee well-being and welfare, integrated human resource policies, human resource roles and responsibilities, human resource risk management, and national culture [Iranian-Islamic]) were identified, along with 22 components (organizing themes) and 78 indicators (basic themes). The results of this research can serve as a practical guide for human resource managers in this area. Furthermore, the contribution of this study to knowledge and its practical application can be found in its focus on the conditions for implementing human resource governance at the national level with an institutional perspective.

Keywords: Human Resource Governance, National Culture, Public Sector of Kerman City.

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1. Introduction

The well-being of a country depends on the performance of its public organizations. To achieve the provision of appropriate public services, effective human resource management must be realized. Human resources are a fundamental input that greatly contributes to the better performance of organizations. Human resource practices are essential for improving the quality of services provided by the government. Without human resources, organizations are inert, and it is believed that they are considered a source of competitive advantage [1-3]. In the public sector, the timely and quality delivery of services by organizations benefits all members of society. However, despite the mechanization of many tasks due to technological advancements, providing such services is largely dependent on the knowledge, skills, and motivation of employees, which are the result of human resource management policies and actions in areas such as recruitment, motivation, empowerment, and retention of human resources [4-6]. On the other hand, organizational change has become a key activity for maintaining organizational efficiency and increasing the ability of organizations to respond and adapt to the changing environment and competitive market that imposes transformations. By employing various human resource management approaches to provide organizations with human resources that have the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behavioral orientations necessary to execute change strategies, human resource management can play a central role in driving organizational change [7]. Over the past decade, the human resources department has evolved from a purely administrative unit to a strategic asset of the organization. Today, managers understand that to implement the organization's strategy, they must have a strong and efficient team. Leading companies and organizations worldwide strongly emphasize the importance of skilled human resources and their retention. In fact, the ability of management to attract talent and suitable human resources is one of the key elements of organizational success [8]. Moreover, Martin and McGoldrick (2009) found that there has been very little written on human resources and governance in the last decade. Through their examination of key academic databases, only a small number of human resources articles mention corporate governance in their keywords, although prominent human resource theorists have called for conceptualizing human resource management from a governance perspective [9].

Human resource governance is a very important issue because it reflects the influence of human resources power through which individual decisions lead to effective actions and ensures that compliance with labor laws and human resource standards is enhanced through the transfer from business partners to human resource governors [10]. As part of governance (corporate), the definition of human resource governance is the framework of behavior of the actors involved in human resource management and its control within an organization and its departments, which includes formal norms resulting from the collective influences of stakeholders (Kahler & Grundy, translated by, 2019, p. 53). Every human resource manager supports governance, but what is human resource governance? The answer may vary depending on the organization, the industry in which it is located, or even the human resource manager's function. Governance will also vary depending on the specific activity for which the organization wants to maintain a systematic approach to monitoring actions [11].

On the other hand, human resource governance aimed at sustainable human resource management can bring many benefits, such as promoting social dialogue and cooperation in the workplace [12], developing skills and employability [13], creating a safe working environment [14], ensuring equality in treatment and non-discrimination [15], improving general working conditions [16], employee vitality [17], maintaining social legitimacy and personal autonomy [18], and achieving work-life balance [19] for public sector organizations and administrative systems in countries.

Furthermore, understanding cultural differences and how to properly deal with them is of great importance. However, it is essential to note that culture is not a one-dimensional concept, and in its simplest form, national and organizational cultures can be distinguished. National culture has a stronger foundation than organizational culture and is deeply rooted in human behavior, passed down through generations, and in a way, is intrinsic to each individual [20].

In general, many studies have been conducted in the field of strategic management, human resource management, and culture, but these studies have mainly focused on one aspect of the above-mentioned issues. Few studies have been conducted regarding the relationship between national culture and human resource management. It is worth mentioning that most comparative studies in the field of human resource management have been conducted in Western Europe and North America, although with more companies entering the dynamic world of international

business, the importance and number of such studies have increased. Over the last two decades, research has been conducted to examine the impact of national culture on human resource management policies and practices [21].

In recent years, various studies have explored the evolving nature of human resource governance in different contexts, emphasizing its significance in addressing the challenges of the digital age, crisis management, and sustainability. Khuzaini et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative study in Indonesia on "Human Resource Governance in the Digital Age," highlighting the crucial role of integrating HRM with technological advancements to enhance effectiveness and efficiency. The study emphasized that digital HRM requires stakeholder collaboration and technological support, both internally and from external platform service providers, to drive organizational success [22]. Similarly, Srour (2022) explored "The Role of Human Resource Governance in Crisis Management" in Lebanon, finding that effective HR governance directly influences crisis management outcomes, particularly through continuous process improvements, better work organization, and administrative capabilities. This research also underlined the importance of employee participation in strategy development and the need for robust HR structures to navigate financial crises [23]. Kim et al. (2022) examined the optimal combination of HRM practices and national culture for government effectiveness in OECD countries, showing that performance-based evaluation, rewards, and informal hiring practices align well with individualistic cultures and low uncertainty avoidance, thereby enhancing government performance [24]. Dedich and Milovanovic (2021) focused on the impact of national cultural differences on HRM and leadership styles in international settings, emphasizing the need for leadership adaptation to local market demands [20]. Zuma (2018) explored HR governance for sustainable human resource development in the private sector of Bangladesh, identifying six key components—talent management, integrated HR policies, risk management, compensation, employee welfare, and development—that contribute to organizational performance [25]. Zarei et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative, interpretive study on the HR governance model in public organizations, specifically the Social Security Organization in Iran. Their findings revealed the importance of transformational leadership, policy-making roles, and effective communication in building a comprehensive HR governance model, emphasizing the pivotal role of HR professionals in the success of such models [26]. Finally,

Farjvand et al. (2015) designed a model for HR governance in uncertain environmental conditions, advocating for a partnership between frontline managers, senior management, HR professionals, and employees. This approach, based on a grounded theory methodology, stresses the necessity of collaborative governance to adapt and survive in dynamic and unpredictable environments. Together, these studies contribute to a broader understanding of HR governance across various sectors and contexts, highlighting its critical role in organizational success, particularly in times of change, crisis, and uncertainty [27].

Governance is one of the topics that has attracted the attention of many intellectuals in our country in recent years. This became especially important after the theory of good governance was introduced, which gained significant attention from researchers in this field. In this regard, numerous effective actions have been taken, such as the establishment of a governance school, holding seminars and conferences, and presenting outputs in this area. Additionally, in our country, the cultural characteristics are a combination of national and ancient traditions, while simultaneously Islamic and religious. Since the use of public management approaches in organizations, particularly in human resources, is largely of Western origin and based on the characteristics of those societies, a new perspective on human resource management is necessary. Therefore, in policymaking, religion and belief systems play precise and significantly influential roles as two important and higher-level cultural dimensions. According to studies on human resource governance, foreign researchers have introduced various models and theories in this regard, and the results derived from implementing these models (depending on the social and cultural conditions governing the study's statistical population) are only applicable to those specific conditions and situations. Therefore, before applying past research results in developing and presenting models, their dimensions and components must be localized and adapted to the public organizations of Iran. Nevertheless, in many subtopics of governance, including human resource governance, no comprehensive research has yet been conducted, which, considering the novelty of the governance discourse in our country, is somewhat natural. From a managerial perspective, the topics of this research are among the most strategic issues in the field of human resources. Furthermore, the novelty of the literature on this topic at the global level and the lack of abundant knowledge resources in our country make this research indispensable. On the other hand, a clear and organized model of human resource

governance based on the dominant culture in Iranian society has not yet been structured and formulated. Therefore, it can be said that the comprehensive attention to the human resource dimensions in the Seventh Development Plan, considering potential environmental conditions in public organizations, is one of the most prominent strengths of this research and adds significant value compared to past studies. Thus, this research can fill the theoretical gap in this field.

Hence, the present study aims to explore human resource governance based on national culture in the public sector of Kerman city. Based on this, the researcher addresses the main question: What are the dimensions, components, and indicators of human resource governance based on national culture in the public sector of Kerman city?

2. Methodology

Since the title of this research concerns identifying and explaining the dimensions, components, and indicators of human resource governance based on national culture in the public sector of Kerman city, the present study is qualitative in nature. In terms of the study's scope, it includes both library and field research. Based on the research objectives, the study is both fundamental and applied, and the data collection period is cross-sectional. Additionally, the method used for analyzing the interview data is thematic analysis.

The sample in this study was selected using purposeful sampling, including 30 individuals, consisting of university professors and experts in human resource management, academic experts with theological education (for extracting Islamic indicators related to national culture), and human resource managers from the executive bodies in the public sector of Kerman city who were available and willing to cooperate. To ensure that the experts had adequate experience and knowledge, efforts were made to include human resource managers from executive organizations who held at least a master's degree, had a minimum of ten years of relevant work experience in the public sector, and were senior experts aged 35 or older. In the academic expert group, the criteria for selection included teaching and research experience in human resource management. It should be noted that if experts could not be identified in the panel or if the researcher was unable to find experts, snowball sampling could be used in this type of study. The sample size was determined based on theoretical saturation.

To assess the validity and accuracy of the data, four criteria were used: credibility, confirmability,

transferability, and dependability, as proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). For credibility, the interview texts were reviewed by the participants. Furthermore, sufficient time was allocated for data collection and analysis, and efforts were made to select participants with diverse experiences. Confirmability was ensured through systematic data collection, repeated comparisons, and accurate documentation, with the process being verified by the research's advisors and supervisors. The third criterion, transferability, refers to how well the study's findings can be transferred or applied to other groups or settings. To achieve this, diverse perspectives and experiences from various participants were considered. For dependability, the data collected from participants, as well as from the research advisors and supervisors, were re-examined.

For data analysis, thematic analysis was used, based on the approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). After analyzing the interviews, seven dimensions, 22 components, and 78 indicators were identified in line with the research objective. Data analysis was performed using MAXQDA2020 software.

3. Findings

The semi-structured interview process was conducted with 30 experts. After collecting the data and summarizing the interviews, an effort was made to identify the dimensions, components, and indicators of human resource governance based on national culture in the public sector of Kerman city using the thematic analysis method and the open coding process, assisted by MAXQDA2020 software. In this regard, the thematic analysis method by Braun and Clarke (2006) was employed. This method was executed in six stages, as follows:

Step One (Familiarization with the Data): In this step, the researcher first summarized the verbal expressions derived from the interviews with experts. After several rounds of reading and immersion in the data, a preliminary understanding of them was obtained. The outcome of this initial familiarization was the extraction of primary themes from the interview texts.

Step Two (Initial Coding): In the second stage, the aim was to extract concepts through the process of categorizing verbal expressions, followed by coding the concepts. During this process, a number of initial codes were identified from the verbal expressions of the interviewees.

Step Three (Searching for Themes): In the third stage, known as selective coding, the goal was to review the initial

codes assigned to each concept, eliminating concepts that were similar, incomplete, or irrelevant to the subject. As a result, a number of selective concepts (core themes) were extracted.

Step Four (Reviewing Themes): In the fourth stage, a re-examination of the selective codes was conducted in order to categorize them (based on content and appearance) into sub-themes.

Step Five (Defining and Naming Themes): In the fifth stage, the researcher performed a back-and-forth process among the sub-themes to categorize them into higher-level categories (main themes). In this process, sub-themes were grouped into more general themes. Subsequently, a review of the nature and content of each main theme led to their naming.

Step Six (Reporting): The final stage of thematic analysis involves the presentation of the final report, in which the findings of the analysis are shared.

In this study, the recorded interviews, along with the researcher’s notes, were transcribed in Microsoft Word, and active reading and re-reading of the texts were conducted to search for meanings. Using the capabilities of MAXQDA

software, the initial coding process was carried out for the 30 interviews. All primary themes extracted from the texts of the 30 interviews were identified. This step was performed for all interviews. After selecting the expressions from the primary themes, concepts were extracted through the categorization process of the verbal expressions, resulting in a total of 520 verbal expressions being identified and linked with the initial codes (primary themes).

In the third stage, also known as selective coding, an effort was made to examine the initial codes assigned to each concept and eliminate those that were similar, incomplete, or unrelated to the subject. A total of 78 selective codes or core themes were identified in this process.

In the fourth stage, the researcher conducted a re-examination of the selective codes, aiming to categorize the selected concepts (based on content and appearance) into broader categories (sub-themes). Based on the findings from this step, a total of 22 sub-categories, or organizing themes, were created. Additionally, to assess the validity of the sub-categories extracted in this stage, a back-and-forth review from steps one to four was conducted, ensuring the content validity of the identified categories, as detailed in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Formation of Organizing Themes (Subcategory)

Row	Basic Themes	Identified Codes at Level One	Frequency
1	Identifying Talent Needs	Formation of talent pools and optimization of talent development, ability to identify the potential and talents of job applicants, focus on the development and management of talent pools, process of identifying high-potential individuals among job applicants, talent assessment, segmentation of special talent, talent profile creation, identification and evaluation of talent gaps/opportunities, analysis of skilled workforce gaps, identification of key positions	10
2	Talent Needs Planning	Focus on planning and managing workforce needs, alignment of human resource programs and talent supply processes, systematic and transparent job analysis, ability to predict job applicant performance (progression estimation), succession planning	5
3	Talent Attraction	Recruitment and selection of talented individuals, internal and external talent sources, alignment of talent attraction strategy with organizational strategy	3
4	Talent Development and Enhancement	Equipping and empowering talents, managing talent career paths	2
6	Talent Deployment	Organizational acceptance of talents, matching talent with job roles, engaging talents	3
5	Talent Retention	Organizational support for talents, planning to prevent talent poaching, continuous performance evaluation of talents, talent retention system	4
7	Human Resource Training and Development	Training employees in accordance with the organizational environmental conditions, coaching and mentoring programs, creating conditions for knowledge sharing and experience exchange among employees (sharing information, knowledge, and experience – documenting experiences), collaboration with reputable academic and research centers to stay updated on the latest scientific achievements in problem-centered fields	4
8	Human Resource Expertise Competencies	Analyzing and developing competencies, self-actualization of human resources, human resource foresight	3
9	Employee Welfare	Rewards and compensation, designing welfare programs, establishing welfare and medical units, improving the quality of insurance and retirement services, transportation facilities, childcare services, loans	5
10	Employee Well-being	Organizational support, human dignity, workplace health, social health and social services	4
11	Employee Participation	Employee involvement	1
12	Employee Voice	Employee voice	1
13	Employee Relations Management	Interaction with employees, interaction with key stakeholders	2

14	Senior Management Role	Role as a role model, supportive role, policy-setting role, facilitative role	4
15	Front-line Management Role	Role as a consultant in human resource committees, supportive role, training and coaching role, role in evaluating employee knowledge and skills	4
16	Human Resource Specialist Role	Role as a strategic partner in the organization, service-oriented role, coordinating role in human resource committees	3
17	Employee Role	Role as a business partner, self-care role, self-control role, role in enhancing job skills and unique abilities	4
18	Operational Risk Management in Human Resources	Risks related to recruitment and staffing, risks related to training and development, risks related to performance evaluation and management, compensation risks	4
19	Human Capital Risk Management	Job health and safety risks, risks related to the decline in competencies and capabilities of human resources, risks associated with outdated knowledge and skills of employees	3
20	Risks from Human Resources' Views and Attitudes	Behavioral risks, managerial conflict risks, risks from conflicts between personnel and work teams, psychological risks	4
21	Characteristics of Iranian Human Resources	Religious orientation, emphasis on religious and ethical values	2
22	Values and Culture in Iranian Public Sector Organizations	Participatory culture, justice-seeking and egalitarianism, performance orientation	3

In the fifth stage, the researcher again performed back-and-forth actions among the sub-categories (organizing themes), aiming to categorize them into higher-level categories (main themes). With the theoretical insights

gained from the topic, the organizing themes were grouped into seven broader categories or overarching themes. After reviewing the nature and content of each sub-category, the main themes were then named accordingly.

Table 2. Identification of Overarching Themes (Main Categories)

Main Category	Subcategory
Talent Management	Identifying Talent Needs
	Talent Needs Planning
	Talent Attraction
	Talent Development and Enhancement
	Talent Deployment
	Talent Retention
Quality Development of Human Resources	Human Resource Training and Development
	Human Resource Expertise Competencies
Employee Welfare and Well-being	Employee Welfare
	Employee Well-being
Integrated Human Resource Policies	Employee Participation
	Employee Voice
	Employee Relations Management
Roles and Responsibilities in Human Resources	Senior Management Role
	Front-line Management Role
	Human Resource Specialist Role
	Employee Role
Human Resource Risk Management	Operational Risk Management in Human Resources
	Human Capital Risk Management
	Risks from Human Resources' Views and Attitudes
National Culture (Iranian-Islamic)	Characteristics of Iranian Human Resources
	Values and Culture in Iranian Public Sector Organizations

MAXQDA software includes a tool called MAXMaps, which provides a new approach for visualizing data and relationships within the data. The primary function of this

tool is to provide a graphical representation of the various elements within a MAXQDA project.



Figure 1. The Network of Themes, Dimensions, and Components of Human Resource Governance Based on National Culture in the Public Sector of Kerman City

4. Discussion and Conclusion

As demonstrated in the literature review, theoretical framework, and the findings and analysis of the results, in the current era, human resource governance has emerged as a significant phenomenon, serving as the foundation for the sustainable development of human resources. The implementation of good governance in human resources

within an organization leads to the organization's sustainable growth and development. Today, it is essential for any organization to have a clear structure to gain a competitive advantage in the field of human resources. Moreover, human resource governance requires the comprehensive cooperation of all organizational components. Undoubtedly, without the collective support of all these components, it is

impossible to conceive an integrated system for effective human resource governance in an organization.

Given the importance of the research topic and a review of the theory and previous studies, the need for conducting this research in the public sector was evident. One of the distinctive aspects of this research is the extension of the theoretical foundations related to corporate governance and, consequently, human resource governance from the private sector to the public sector, as most studies on human resource governance have been conducted in the private sector. It is hoped that this research will make a significant contribution to introducing the concept of human resource governance in the public sector in Iran and lay the groundwork for implementing human resource governance. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify and explain the dimensions, components, and indicators of human resource governance based on national culture in the public sector of Kerman city. The findings and the studies considered in the process of conducting this research present a new step in the field of human resource governance. This is because, although the dimensions, components, and indicators of human resource governance have not been clearly defined in the theoretical sources and previous research, and there was no precise knowledge available on the topic of human resource governance, this study provides new insights by identifying and explaining these aspects based on national culture in the public sector through thematic analysis. The rationale and method of its implementation have also been discussed.

The results of the research indicate that human resource governance based on national culture consists of seven dimensions: talent management, qualitative development of human resources, well-being and welfare of human resources, integrated human resource policies, roles and responsibilities of human resources, management of human resource risks, and national culture (Iranian-Islamic). It also includes 22 components and 78 indicators.

The findings of this study have the potential to be used as a model of human resource governance based on national culture in the field of modern public management, helping public sector managers to leverage the dimensions, components, and indicators of this model to manage sustainable human resources and enhance organizational productivity, which is the ultimate goal of modern public administration. However, the difference between the results obtained in this study and the research of Zuma (2018) lies in the fact that the human resource governance model for sustainable human resource development was presented

only for the private sector [25]. Farajvand and colleagues (2015) and Zarei et al. (2023) proposed a human resource governance model that focuses solely on the roles of senior managers, frontline managers, human resource specialists, and employees in the human resource governance process, while neglecting other dimensions and components [26, 27]. In contrast, this study presents a different approach to human resource governance that is tailored to the national culture and applicable to a range of public organizations with various styles. Furthermore, unlike existing models that feature general and ambiguous dimensions and components, human resource governance based on national culture in the public sector includes clear and specific dimensions, components, and indicators, and its dimensions and components are fundamentally different from those in existing models.

Despite the insights provided, this research has some limitations:

- Limited resources due to the novelty of the research topic.
- The research was conducted in the community of human resource managers, experts, and faculty members in Kerman city. Therefore, caution should be exercised when generalizing the results. It is recommended that this research be expanded to include the entire public sector of the country to enhance its generalizability.

Finally, based on the research results, it is suggested that future researchers:

- Conduct similar studies across all organizations in the Iranian public sector.
- Undertake comparative studies on human resource governance in Iran's administrative system with advanced countries, in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and increase the generalizability of the findings.
- Additionally, while applying other methodologies to extract the dimensions, components, and indicators of human resource governance, examine the requirements, infrastructure, and barriers to implementing human resource governance in Iran's public sector.

Authors' Contributions

Authors equally contributed to this article.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

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

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