

## Research Article

# Towards appropriate human resource management in the administrative system of Agriculture Jihad of Iran: Yazd Province

Negin Fallah Haghighi <sup>a\*</sup> , Hossein Azadi <sup>b</sup> 

<sup>a</sup> Department of Technology Development Studies (DTDS), Iranian Research Organization for Science and Technology (IROST), Tehran, I. R. Iran

<sup>b</sup> Department of Geography, Ghent University, 9000 Ghent, Belgium

## ARTICLE INFO

## Keywords:

Agricultural management  
Grounded theory  
Human resource development  
Performance evaluation  
Policy implementation

## Abbreviation:

Human resource management  
(HRM)

Received: 25 February 2025

Revised: 28 May 2025

Accepted: 03 June 2025

**ABSTRACT-** Agricultural management is considered as a vital component of government frameworks in many countries, and transformation within this management is essential for improving the administrative system to implement policies and provide services. This qualitative study aimed to analyze human resource management (HRM) issues within the administrative system of agricultural organizations, using grounded theory as its methodological framework. The study's population consisted of policymakers, planners, and managers working in the Agriculture Jihad Organization of Yazd Province, Iran. The population was selected via purposeful sampling. Data were collected through in-depth and semi-structured interviews, which continued until theoretical saturation and data redundancy were achieved. Through the coding process, identified issues in HRM within the agricultural administrative system fell into three main categories: a lack of design and establishment of an optimal performance monitoring and evaluation system, inadequate organizational performance in the domain of human resource development (HRD), and deficiencies in organizational management performance. Furthermore, by integrating the results from open and selective coding, a paradigmatic model of HRM issues in the agricultural administrative system was presented, incorporating causal, contextual, intervening conditions, strategies for action/reaction, and outcomes. Ultimately, based on this paradigmatic model, the interrelations among issues were elucidated within a conceptual framework, and studies were recommended to establish an optimal system for the performance monitoring and evaluation of employees. This was to create a connection between this system and the reward and remuneration system.

## INTRODUCTION

Human resource management (HRM) is a crucial factor in development management. Leaders and policymakers in developing countries aim for progress in human resource development (HRD) to achieve sustainable improvements (El Badawy & Hady, 2014). One of the most important measures in this area is to focus on the optimal management of state offices (Leviäkangas, 2021). The complexity of many of the challenges encountering organizations has led to many efforts to reform and improve the administrative structure in order to be more efficient and accountable, and reducing corruption (Moss et al., 2012). Thus, governments at various levels, in their efforts to provide quality services through diverse methods, have recognized the need to reform management structures and transform administrative systems (Fan et al., 2021; Leviäkangas, 2021; Park and Krause, 2021). In Iran, the necessity for change in the public sector has long been acknowledged and placed on the agenda of national planners. This recognition culminated in the development of multiple administrative transformation

plans (Ahmadi et al., 2014). The concept and implementation of reforms in Iran's administrative system date back to the early 1950s, during the initial stages of system formation. These efforts gained institutional structure in 1966 with the establishment of the Administrative and Employment Affairs Organization, which was officially tasked with driving transformation, reform, and development within the administrative system. However, despite the formation of this organization and several reform initiatives over the years, the current Iranian administrative system still lacks adequate efficiency. It suffers from persistent weaknesses—including lack of meritocracy, low salaries and weak incentive structures, nepotism, opaque procedures, and insufficient oversight—that have hindered its ability to act as a catalyst for national progress. Instead, it has come to be viewed as an obstacle to development (Feiz, 2015). Given this context, government bodies—such as the Agriculture Jihad organization—must prioritize human resource development, dedicating significant time and capital to managing and nurturing their personnel. There is a growing recognition that investment in human resources is critical for enhancing administrative

\*Corresponding Author: Department of Technology Development Studies (DTDS), Iranian Research Organization for Science and Technology (IROST), Tehran, I. R. Iran

E-mail address: [nfallah@irost.ir](mailto:nfallah@irost.ir)

DOI:10.22099/iar.2025.52563.1675



effectiveness and strengthening institutional capacity. Research on both developed and newly developing countries (e.g., Cooke et al., 2020; Jewell et al., 2022; Roodbari et al., 2025) demonstrates how these nations have achieved substantial progress by clearly articulating goals and strategies related to human resource development and management. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze optimal human resource management practices within the administrative system of the Agriculture Jihad Organization of Yazd Province. Yazd was selected as a representative case study because, based on key national indicators, it is recognized for having a moderate and balanced level of administrative development in the agricultural sector. This positioning makes it a suitable model for understanding broader human resource management (HRM) challenges within Iran's public sector (Deputy for Development and Planning, 2023). As an initial step in this research, relevant prior studies were reviewed and compared, and their findings are summarized below.

Hrynevych (2005) proposed a conceptual model for identifying factors contributing to corruption, categorizing them into three groups: internal, external, and problematic factors. Internal factors are linked to decision-making and management structures, such as the absence of clear norms and regulations, lack of transparency in procedures, monopoly power, weak professional standards, low salaries and ineffective incentive systems, limited managerial capacity, poor absorption capacity, deficient accounting systems, lack of supervision, absence of independent quality assurance systems, and inadequate dissemination of information. External factors, which indirectly impact administrative operations, include the absence of political will, flawed economic, political, and social structures, erosion of ethical values, the ability to bypass financial laws, lack of external auditing, denial of the right to information, and intense competition in the labor market. Problematic factors, which act as a double-edged sword and complicate the administrative process, include decentralization, office management, and privatization. Smith-Hillman (2007), in a regression analysis involving 23 African countries, found a strong and significant relationship between employee commitment and accountability and the overall health of the administrative system. Similarly, Rasouli and Shahaei (2009) demonstrated that employees' economic conditions, socio-cultural attributes, organizational characteristics, personality traits, and the scope of laws and regulations had the most substantial impact on the emergence and proliferation of corruption. Conversely, cultural, administrative, social, political, and economic strategies were found to be most effective in controlling and reducing corruption within administrative systems. The OECD (2009) outlined several strategies to enhance administrative health in public offices, including adherence to legal principles, decentralization, fair treatment of employees, continuous performance monitoring, meritocracy, the institutionalization of a culture of critique and of reward and punishment, improved living conditions, transparency, accountability, the elimination of corruption, sound decision-making, and continued education. Abdullahi and Onasanya (2010) identified key challenges facing administrative advancement, such as the mismatch between salaries and workload, lack of meritocracy, insufficient motivation and incentives, inadequate specialized training

for staff and managers, and a disconnect between specialization and organizational roles. Azimi et al. (2011) further highlighted the influence of issues such as payment systems, control and supervision, communication channels, legislation related to crime and corruption, informal networks, transparency, information and accountability mechanisms, administrative regulations, psychological factors, managerial weaknesses in leadership and supervision, and the mobilization of resources and facilities in contributing to corruption in public organizations. Salehi Amiri and Shadaloei (2013) argued that the health of administrative systems and the development of ethical values are influenced both by ontological and anthropological principles underpinning individual beliefs and by three categories of values: intra-organizational values (e.g., ethical culture and transparency norms), extra-organizational values (e.g., social ethics and political accountability), and individual values (e.g., personal integrity and professional commitment). Farhadi Nejad et al. (2015) identified key competencies required for effective public sector management, classifying them into personal characteristics (e.g., intelligence, commitment, intellectual and analytical skills, and spiritual work ethics), human resource factors (e.g., attention to welfare, psychological needs, empowerment, and personnel management), professional competencies (e.g., technical and managerial expertise), and leadership skills (e.g., monitoring, evaluation, guidance, decision-making, and motivation). Mohammadi (2017) emphasized that authoritarianism, hierarchical structures, mutual distrust, nepotism, weak meritocracy, and irrational public attitudes are among the most significant cultural barriers to reforming Iran's administrative system. Similarly, Henok et al. (2018) pointed to the lack of institutionalization of the principle of competence, the politicization of administration, nepotism, and the absence of shared understanding and consensus on policies, visions, and values as major obstacles to effective public administration. Ghanem and Castelli (2019) found that ethical intelligence and employee responsibility have a significant positive impact on administrative system health. Cooke et al. (2020) identified employee voice, diversity and inclusion, well-being and resilience, crisis preparedness, and green human resource management as critical components of effective HRM, which they argue are central to addressing future organizational challenges. Jewell et al. (2022) stressed the need for HRM research to move beyond past issues and engage meaningfully with the present and future realities of the field. In alignment with this perspective, Roodbari et al. (2025) called for a comprehensive review of systematic implementation mechanisms, influential contextual factors, and outcome-driven strategies to bridge existing gaps in HRM practice and research.

Based on the findings of the aforementioned studies, it is evident that several recurring factors significantly influence the health of administrative systems—particularly within public sector organizations. Among these, the payment system and the provision of appropriate wages and rewards stand out as critical components. A major source of inefficiency in many organizations stems from low employee motivation and job dissatisfaction, which are often caused by inadequate material incentives, unfair or inconsistent compensation, and the absence of clear,

equitable, and structured salary and benefits policies. Such deficiencies render management systems ineffective in adapting to the dynamic environment of contemporary organizations and limit their role in enhancing individual performance. Accountability and transparency also emerge as essential elements in ensuring the health of administrative systems, particularly in the context of Iran's public sector. These elements serve as key indicators of good governance and institutional integrity. Monitoring and control mechanisms are equally important, functioning as safeguards against corruption arising from unchecked power. Ongoing accountability and systematic monitoring are integral to democratic governance, playing a vital role in preventing abuse, ensuring legal compliance, protecting human rights, and enhancing administrative effectiveness. Meritocracy is another frequently highlighted factor in the literature. Organizational growth and excellence are closely linked to the competencies, capabilities, and merits of human resources. The effectiveness of any institution depends on how well it manages and utilizes these resources. Successful organizations tend to rely on experienced and capable managers who can guide them toward achieving strategic goals. Given Iran's distinctive context—where most organizations, including those in the agricultural sector, are state-run or state-supervised—this study undertakes an exploratory inquiry using a qualitative research paradigm to examine the challenges of human resource management (HRM). While previous research, both quantitative and qualitative, has offered valuable insights, there remains a need for investigations that can identify the contextual, causal, and intervening conditions influencing HRM challenges in public organizations. Prior studies have addressed a wide array of themes related to administrative health, such as wage systems, transparency, meritocracy, accountability, nepotism, motivation, ethical values, and leadership competencies. However, these studies often examine these factors in isolation or within the confines of pre-established theoretical frameworks. In contrast, the present study adopts a grounded theory methodology, enabling an organic synthesis of prior findings. Rather than imposing a predetermined lens, this approach allows the complexities of HRM within the Agriculture Jihad Organization of Yazd Province to emerge directly from empirical data. Through systematic coding and constant comparative analysis, diverse factors, strategies, and challenges identified in the literature—including monitoring, reward systems, meritocracy, accountability, and managerial capacity—are integrated and reconceptualized into core categories aligned with the components of a paradigmatic model (i.e., causal conditions, contextual factors, intervening conditions, action strategies, and outcomes). This methodology transcends the examination of isolated variables by capturing the interconnections and systemic dynamics underlying HRM challenges in this government-run agricultural administrative setting. The novelty of this

research lies in its comprehensive identification and classification of HRM-related issues in public organizations, as well as its exploration of the underlying conditions contributing to weak HRM performance within the Agriculture Jihad Organization of Yazd Province. In addition, this study addresses the broader consequences of these deficiencies and organizes the identified problems and conditions within the structure of a grounded theory framework, offering a contextually nuanced and theoretically informed explanation of HRM dynamics in the Iranian public sector.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative research paradigm and is classified as applied research, as its findings are intended to assist policymakers and administrative planners in achieving management and human resource development (HRD) objectives and guiding future initiatives. From the perspective of variable control and research setting, it is a field study, while the data collection method is descriptive and non-experimental. The qualitative approach employed is grounded theory, selected for its methodological rigor, systematic structure, and capacity for in-depth analysis. The decision to use grounded theory was based on several factors, as emphasized by experts such as Strauss and Corbin (2008) and Richards and Morse (2013): The limited results obtained from previous quantitative research on administrative management in the Yazd Agriculture Jihad Organization; the lack of transparency and insufficient data regarding the key factors and variables affecting HRM in this context; the complexity and pathological nature of HRM challenges in Iran's governmental agricultural sector; and the need to understand and compare the real-life experiences of individuals within the system with existing theoretical frameworks. Data collection was conducted through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The study area was Yazd Province (Fig. 1), selected as a representative case for Iran based on empirical evidence provided by the Deputy for Development and Planning (2023). Yazd ranks within the national interquartile range (25th–75th percentile) for key administrative indicators in the agricultural sector, including an institutional efficiency index score of 68.2 out of 100 and a human resource development compliance score of 71.5 out of 100. These figures confirm Yazd's balanced administrative development, making it a robust proxy for examining HRM challenges in Iran's public agricultural management system. The study's statistical population consisted of managers at different administrative levels, as well as experts and specialists within the Agriculture Jihad Organization of Yazd Province. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, using the snowball method, and interviews continued until theoretical saturation was reached, i.e., when no new information emerged from subsequent interviews (Given, 2008). In total, 45 interviews were conducted with individuals from the target population.

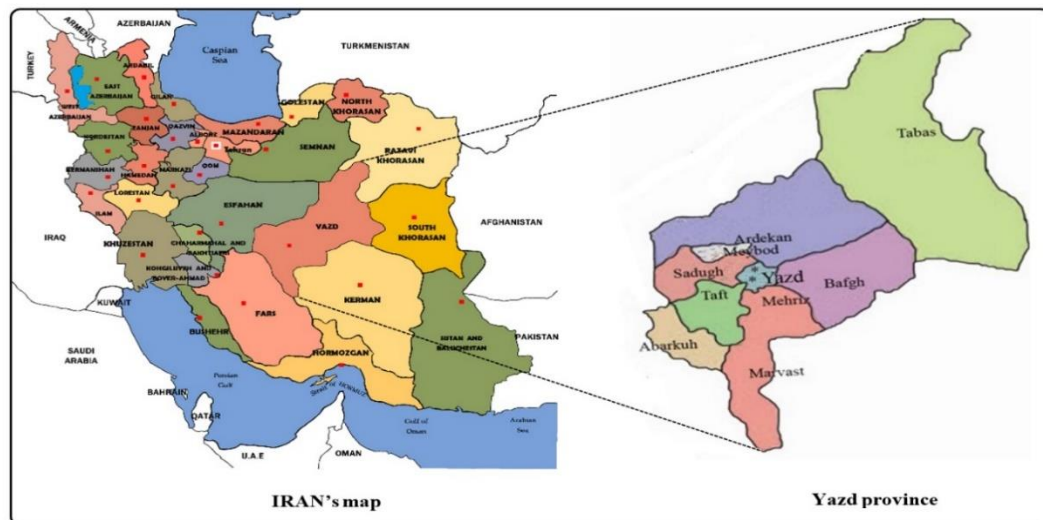


Fig. 1. The site study area (Fallah Haghighi and Bijani, 2020).

Grounded theory is guided by a central research question that is intentionally broad and open-ended at the outset, gradually becoming more focused as the research progresses and field-specific issues emerge (Strauss and Corbin, 2008). In this study, the core research questions were: What are the threats to human resource management (HRM) within the administrative system of the Agriculture Jihad Organization? What contextual and structural conditions contribute to poor HRM performance? And what are the consequences of these weaknesses and challenges within the broader administrative system of public organizations? For data analysis, Strauss and Corbin's (2008) constant comparative method was employed, which involves simultaneous data collection and analysis. After each interview, transcripts were produced and reviewed multiple times, followed by a structured coding process to identify key concepts and their attributes. This process unfolded in three stages: open coding, where concepts are identified and classified from initial notes; axial coding, in which categories are connected and organized into thematic subcategories; and selective coding, which involves integrating and refining the theoretical framework. During the axial coding phase, general categories derived from open coding were structured within a paradigmatic model to capture the conditions, contexts, processes, and consequences associated with HRM challenges in the Agriculture Jihad Organization. In this model, the components were categorized into three key types: contextual conditions, causal conditions, and intervening conditions. Contextual conditions refer to specific situational factors that converge at a given time and place, shaping how individuals respond through their actions and interactions. Causal conditions encompass events or factors that directly influence the emergence or escalation of a phenomenon. Intervening conditions are those that mediate, intensify, or alter the impact of causal factors (Imani and Mohammadian, 2008). To ensure the validity and reliability of the data,

multiple methods were used during data collection, including in-depth interviews, audio recordings, and visual documentation through photographs and videos. In grounded theory, the validity of the emerging theory is confirmed only when theoretical saturation is achieved—that is, when no new insights emerge from continued data collection, indicating that the data has been thoroughly examined and comprehensively interpreted (Goulding, 2002). In this study, saturation was reached as previously described, validating the findings and the resulting theoretical model.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The open coding phase resulted in the identification of 63 distinct “concepts” related to the research topic (Table 1). These concepts, derived from the interview transcripts, were systematically examined and compared to identify similarities and differences. Through this comparative process, semantically related or thematically similar concepts were grouped into higher-level abstract categories referred to as “categories”. In effect, this stage involved summarizing and synthesizing the raw data from the interviews by organizing individual concepts into broader thematic groupings. Each category was associated with specific subcategories, and the relationships between main and subcategories were clearly defined. With the identification of these main categories, subcategories, and their associated concepts, the study proceeded to the next analytical phase. At this point, the categories were arranged in a logical structure, and the nature of their interrelationships was established. This step corresponds to axial coding, where connections are made between categories and their subcategories, forming an integrated conceptual framework. The results of this stage include axial categories, subcategories, associated concepts, and the types of relationships among them (Fig. 2).

**Table 1.** The main concepts of open coding

|     |                                                                                             |     |                                                                                                                                     |     |                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| C1  | Lack of meritocracy                                                                         | C22 | Lack of public participation in decisions and consequently lack of commitment and responsibility in the implementation of decisions | C43 | Employee self-centeredness                                                                                                                            |
| C2  | Unmotivated employees                                                                       | C23 | High willingness to transfer to other organizations among employees                                                                 | C44 | Lack of desire for team activities in the organization                                                                                                |
| C3  | Lack of incentive in organization                                                           | C24 | Tendency to spend time in vain during office hours                                                                                  | C45 | Incompatibility of managers' expertise with the organization's missions                                                                               |
| C4  | Lack of defined and efficient system for rewarding employees                                | C25 | Weakness of organization in empowerment of labor force                                                                              | C46 | Lack of an optimal employee assessment system                                                                                                         |
| C5  | Lack of defined and efficient system for punishing employees                                | C26 | Not appreciating young and educated people                                                                                          | C47 | Lack of connection between people's expertise and defined tasks                                                                                       |
| C6  | Lack of welfare justice between the employees                                               | C27 | Lack of system for measuring the efficiency of human resources                                                                      | C48 | Lack of connection between people's skill and defined tasks                                                                                           |
| C7  | Lack of transparency in defining duties                                                     | C28 | Lack of integrated database to transfer information between managers and employees                                                  | C49 | Lack of adherence to rules and regulations                                                                                                            |
| C8  | Lack of transparency in dismissal and appointment of employees                              | C29 | Lack of work commitment                                                                                                             | C50 | Management making exceptions among employees (supporting and allocating rewards to specific individuals under the same conditions as other employees) |
| C9  | Dissatisfaction of employees with their job                                                 | C30 | Lack of man power performance feedback system                                                                                       | C51 | Inadequacy of in-service training and type of job                                                                                                     |
| C10 | Employees dissatisfaction of their receipts                                                 | C31 | Lack of reward allocation system to employees based on efficiency                                                                   | C52 | Weakness of monitoring accounting and financial sector of organization                                                                                |
| C11 | Multiple occupation among personnel due to economic problems                                | C32 | Lack of high efficiency of manpower in some departments                                                                             | C53 | Lack of consistency between wages, type of job and people's responsibility                                                                            |
| C12 | Strict rules and regulations                                                                | C33 | Create daily life                                                                                                                   | C54 | Lack of reward allocation system to employees based on creativity                                                                                     |
| C13 | No timely informing regarding instructions                                                  | C34 | Lack of precise definition of work for an employee                                                                                  | C55 | Restricting the social activities of employees to work place                                                                                          |
| C14 | Lack of proper flow of information in the organization                                      | C35 | Disproportion between wages and living needs                                                                                        | C56 | Marginalizing well-meaning and elite employees                                                                                                        |
| C15 | Keeping employees unaware of their rights                                                   | C36 | Monopoly power in organizations                                                                                                     | C57 | Lack of proper and logical treatment of violations                                                                                                    |
| C16 | Lack of informing employees about the results of their performance                          | C37 | Poor managerial decision making                                                                                                     | C58 | Lack of standard definition of useful working hours                                                                                                   |
| C17 | Lack of accountability of managers                                                          | C38 | Lack of indicators and framework for obtaining managerial positions                                                                 | C59 | Lack of budget, facilities and resources in organizations                                                                                             |
| C18 | Lack of sense of responsibility in employees                                                | C39 | Managerial weakness of managers                                                                                                     | C60 | Lack of workshops and specialized trainings related to the duty of experts                                                                            |
| C19 | Lack of honesty                                                                             | C40 | Managers actions based on personal interest                                                                                         | C61 | Transfer efficient forces between departments                                                                                                         |
| C20 | Frustration feeling                                                                         | C41 | Appointment of managers based on relationships (not criteria)                                                                       | C62 | No consistency between wage and expectations                                                                                                          |
| C21 | Lack of accountability of employees to system regarding the damages imposed on organization | C42 | Dismissal of elite employees from organization                                                                                      | C63 | Lack of mechanism for using qualified manpower in managerial positions                                                                                |

The axial coding process led to the identification of three main categories: “lack of design and implementation of an optimal performance monitoring and assessment system”, “adverse performance of organizations in the field of human resource development (HRD),” and “weakness in the managerial performance of the organization”. The challenges related to the lack of an optimal employee performance monitoring and evaluation system were further categorized into two subcategories: “inadequate administrative rules and weakness in monitoring and assessment” and “unfavorable employee performance and lack of commitment and work conscience”. Monitoring and evaluating

employee performance is a core function of human resource management, aimed at assessing work-related behaviors and outcomes, providing feedback, and identifying employee potential for future growth. This process plays a crucial role in improving organizational effectiveness (Hook and Jenkins, 2019). Its objectives include supporting the personal and professional development of employees, enhancing motivation, enabling effective HR planning, and fostering communication between staff and management (Ivancevich, 2007). When effectively designed and implemented, such systems incentivize employees to contribute creatively and consistently to organizational goals. Moreover, they

enable employees to understand the quality of their current performance and outline the necessary steps for improvement. Among the personal characteristics that influence employee performance, commitment, responsibility, and work conscience stand out as key traits. These qualities function as internal control mechanisms that drive individuals to perform their duties accurately and completely, in both qualitative and quantitative terms, even in the absence of external oversight (Rubel et al., 2018). A wide range of factors—such as motivation, capability, job understanding, workplace environment, and personality traits—affect job performance. However, research indicates that responsibility and work

conscience are among the most significant personality predictors of performance (O'Connor & Paunonen, 2007). The second main category, “adverse performance of organizations in the field of HRD”, comprises three subcategories: “weaknesses in the system of motivating employees and retaining efficient staff”, “lack of information and transparency in organizational operations”, and “insufficient employee empowerment”. These deficiencies reflect systemic HRD challenges that hinder capacity building, employee satisfaction, and institutional effectiveness. The relationships between the main and subcategories are illustrated in Fig. 3, Fig. 4, and Fig. 5.

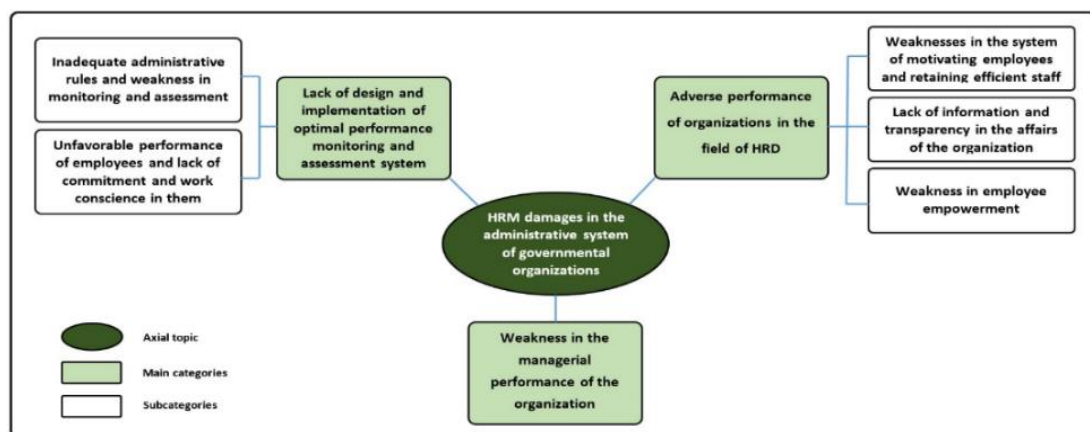


Fig. 2. Axial topic, main categories, and subcategories.

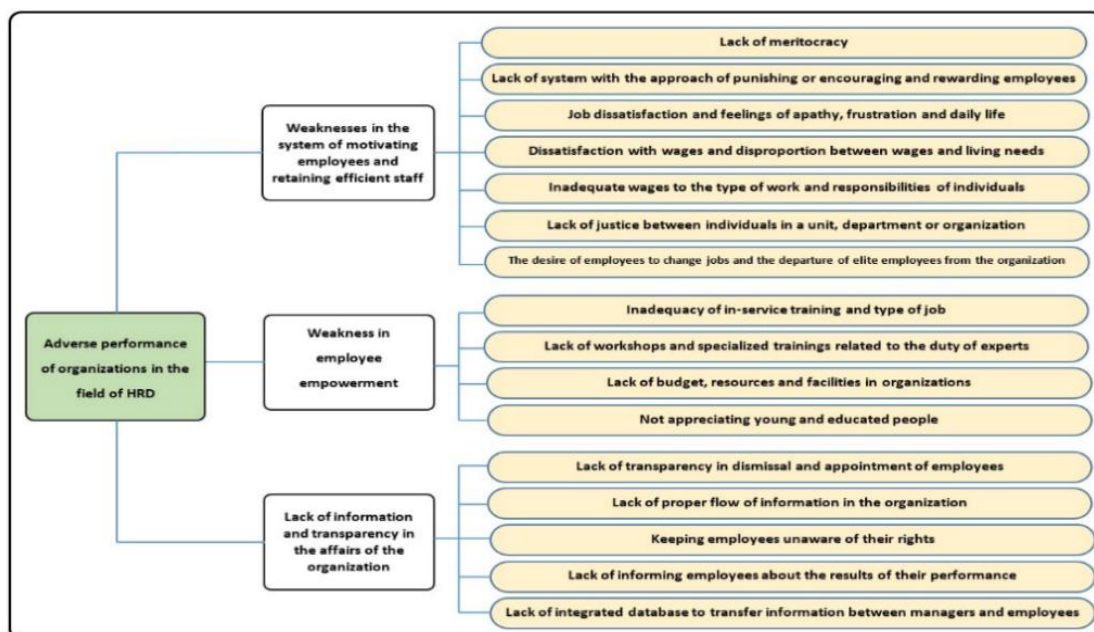
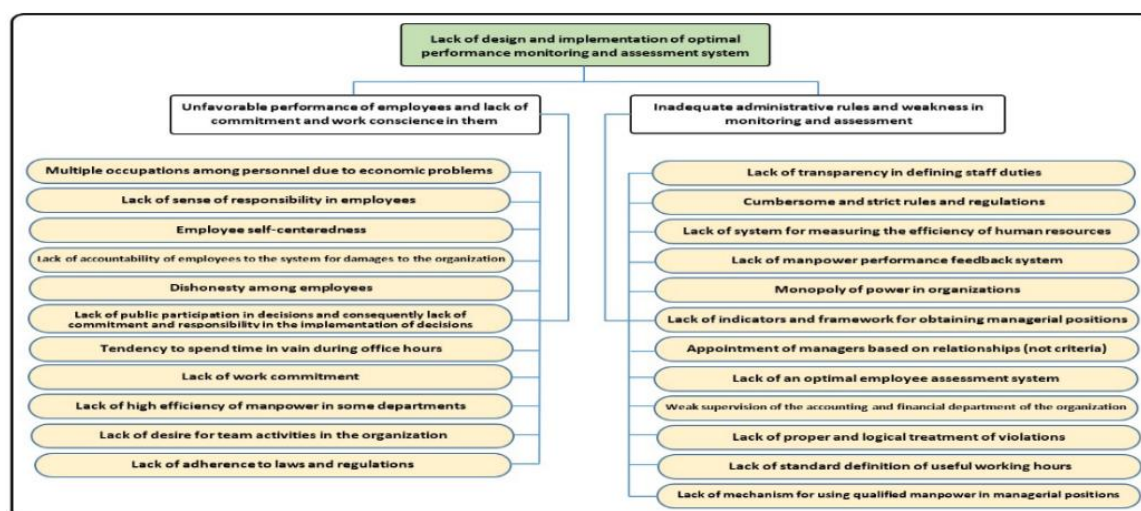


Fig. 3. Relationship between the main category of adverse performance of organizations in the field of HRD with its sub-categories and concepts extracted from the coding process.



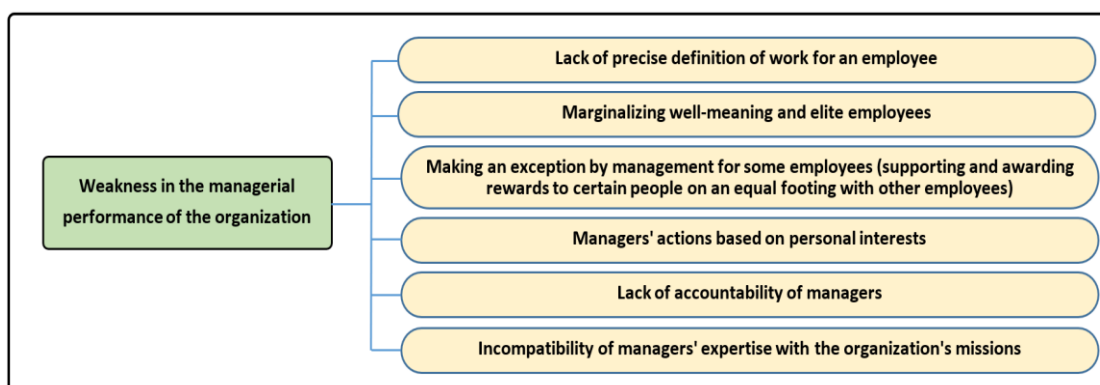
**Fig. 4.** Relationship between the main category of lack of design and implementation of optimal performance monitoring and assessment system with its sub-categories and concepts extracted from the coding process.

Motivation represents the energy, commitment, and creativity that employees bring to the execution of their tasks. Given its pivotal role in influencing job performance, organizational management must actively cultivate and sustain employee motivation through various strategies. These may include the provision of both material and non-material incentives, fostering staff participation in decision-making processes, and enhancing employee autonomy and authority. Alongside human and financial capital, information constitutes one of the most critical resources in contemporary organizational management—particularly in the current era of information and communication technologies. Transparency and access to accurate information not only facilitate effective decision-making but also strengthen the organization's capacity to combat corruption, especially within public sector institutions. Employee empowerment, another essential pillar of human resource development, involves building internal capacities that enable staff to contribute productively and assume meaningful roles within the organization. Empowerment encompasses not only the delegation of authority but also the enhancement of employee performance through opportunities for learning, skill development, and motivational support. It serves as a critical factor in increasing organizational productivity and fostering a sense of ownership among employees. One of the most significant threats identified in the human resource management (HRM) system of public organizations is the lack of a well-designed and effectively implemented performance monitoring and assessment system. This issue is categorized into two interrelated subcategories: “unfavorable employee performance and lack of commitment and work conscience” and “unsuitable administrative rules and weakness in monitoring and assessment” (Fig. 4). In the context of agricultural organizations, these threats are further intensified by the inherent characteristics of agricultural work, which includes seasonal labor demands, geographically dispersed field operations, and the necessity for domain-specific technical expertise. These features complicate centralized monitoring efforts and magnify the consequences of weak supervision or employee disengagement, particularly in critical areas such as agricultural extension services and resource management.

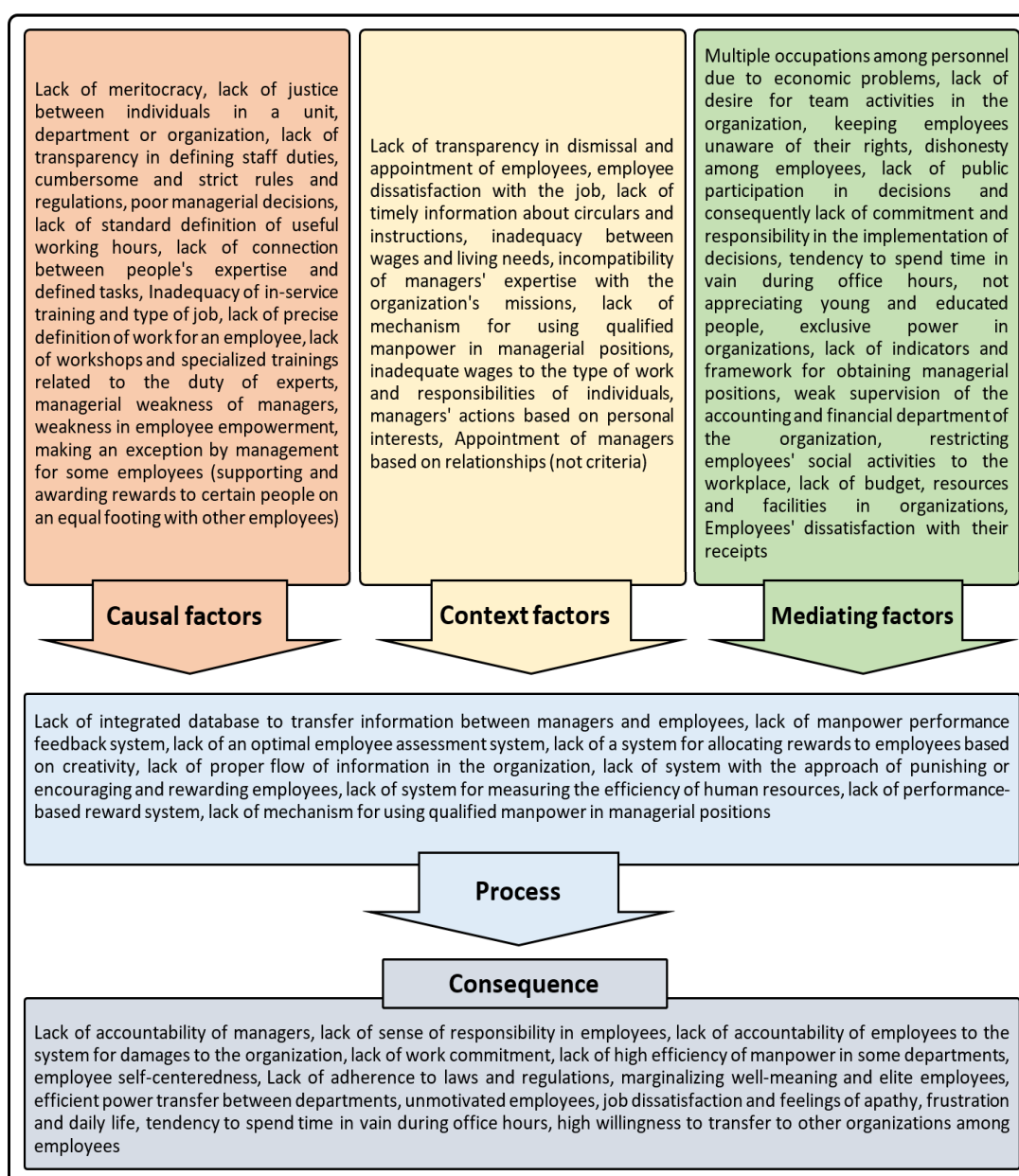
Moreover, the technical nature of many agricultural roles necessitates performance evaluation systems that are context-specific and responsive to field realities. Such systems must differ substantially from the generalized performance metrics commonly employed in administrative or office-based settings, emphasizing adaptability, technical proficiency, and situational responsiveness.

Weakness in managerial performance was identified as another major threat to human resource management (HRM) within the administrative system of the organization (Fig. 5). Organizational management encompasses the processes of planning, organizing, directing, and supervising the activities of members while efficiently utilizing all available resources to achieve institutional goals. However, deficiencies in managerial competence—particularly managers' lack of familiarity with planning techniques, organizational structuring, HRM practices, motivational strategies, performance evaluation, and control mechanisms—pose significant challenges. Furthermore, inappropriate selection of managers at various levels, frequent managerial turnover, and the absence of structured training programs contribute to ineffective leadership styles and diminished managerial performance. Collectively, these factors undermine productivity and hinder the achievement of strategic HRM objectives.

The chart illustrating the relationship between the axial theme, i.e., “Human Resource Management Threats in the Administrative System of the Agriculture Jihad Organization”, and the corresponding main categories, subcategories, and associated concepts is presented in Fig. 6. Through the integration of findings from the open and selective coding stages, various categories were identified and classified based on their functional roles within the analytical framework. These roles include causal conditions, processes, intervening conditions, interactions/strategies, and consequences. The resulting classification was then structured into a paradigm model, which delineates the dynamic interplay among these elements by organizing them under three core components: conditions, action/reaction strategies, and consequences (Fig. 7).



**Fig. 5.** Relationship between the main category of weakness in the managerial performance of the organization with its sub-categories and concepts extracted from the coding process.



**Fig. 6.** HRM damages in the administrative system of Agriculture Jihad Organization: Axial topic, main categories, and subcategories.

In the domain of process, attention must be given to the improvement of procedural systems related to employee performance evaluation, as well as mechanisms for

administering rewards and penalties. In this context, the study by Mohammadi et al. (2018) emphasizes that enhancing service quality, optimizing work processes, and

fostering continuous improvement are critical management imperatives for the Agriculture Jihad Organization. The effective implementation of modern management tools and techniques can enable the organization to deliver better services to society and, ultimately, fulfill its social responsibilities while enhancing institutional accountability. An evaluation of the paradigm model presented in Fig. 7 reveals that the primary causal factors contributing to HRM threats stem from weak managerial performance within the organization and its executive bodies, i.e., factors that give rise to many systemic issues in the administrative framework. Additionally, contextual, intervening, and process-related variables also play significant roles in either exacerbating or alleviating these causal conditions.

In addition to the previously identified factors, two independent variables, i.e., ethical and regulatory factors, can significantly influence human resource management (HRM) within the administrative systems of public organizations. Ethical considerations include issues such as dishonesty, lack of work commitment, and absence of accountability or responsibility, all of which reflect deteriorations in the moral framework of the organizational environment. Regulatory factors pertain to the degree of adherence to rules and institutional norms, and include challenges such as appointment of managers based on personal relationships, misalignment between managerial expertise and organizational mandates, and self-serving decision-making by managers. These issues are frequently

symptomatic of inadequate oversight and the limited presence of effective supervisory bodies within the organization. Consistent and structured monitoring of managerial and administrative performance, carried out by governmental institutions, civil society actors, and non-governmental organizations, can enhance organizational efficiency and serve as a preventive mechanism against systemic decline and dysfunction. The modeling of HRM threats in the Yazd Agriculture Jihad Organization, as illustrated in Fig. 8, demonstrates how these variables interact within the broader HRM framework. Notably, these factors may exert mutually reinforcing positive or negative effects, influencing both organizational outcomes and institutional dynamics. The relative impact and interdependence of these variables on the overall efficiency of HRM systems presents an important avenue for future research and empirical exploration.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the present study indicated that the most important threats to HRM in the Agriculture Jihad Organization are placed in three main categories: “lack of design and implementation of optimal performance monitoring and assessment system”, “adverse performance of organization in the field of HRD”, and “weaknesses in the managerial performance of the organization”.

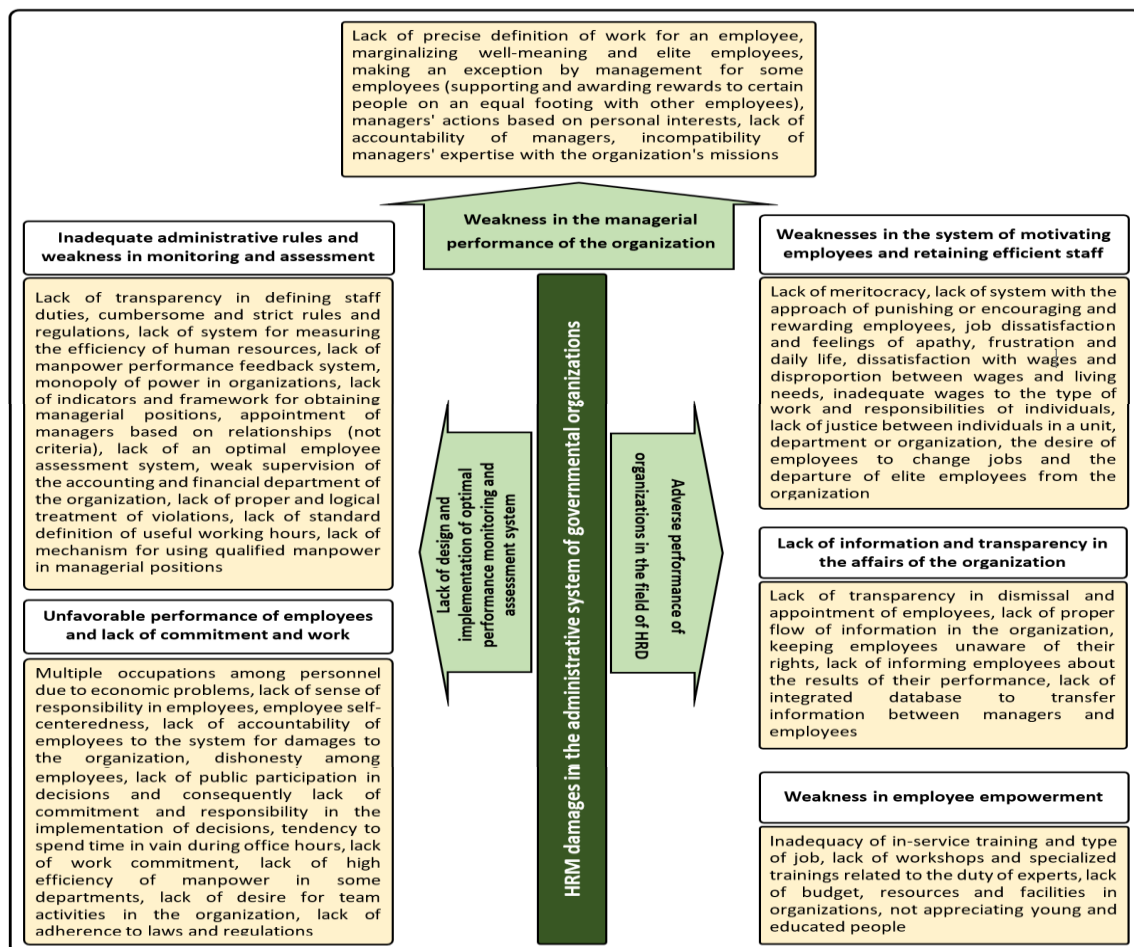
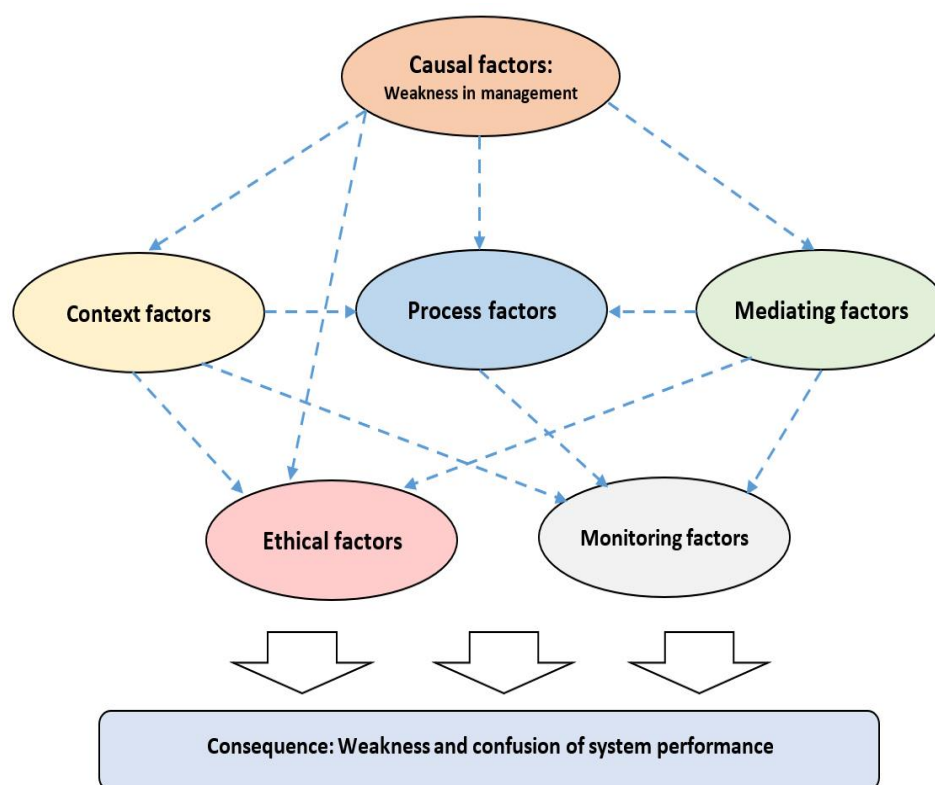


Fig. 7. Paradigm model of HRM pathology in the Agricultural Jihad Organization.



**Fig. 8.** Conceptual model of pathological analysis of HRM in the administrative system of governmental organizations.

Consistent with the findings of Hrynevych (2005), Azimi et al. (2011), and Henok et al. (2018), the present study underscores the importance of continuous control, monitoring, and evaluation of employee performance as a fundamental strategy for enhancing the efficiency of the administrative system and mitigating corruption. Organizational efforts to implement structured performance assessment mechanisms, alongside systems of incentives and disciplinary measures based on the quality and quantity of work, were identified as key factors contributing to enhanced employee efficiency, increased commitment, a strengthened sense of responsibility, and improved work conscience. However, one of the critical challenges in this domain lies in the existence of cumbersome and overly rigid legal frameworks, which were identified as a major subcategory influencing the implementation of optimal performance monitoring systems. Supporting the findings of Imani et al. (2019), the present study reaffirms that while law-based governance is crucial in curbing corruption and fostering institutional integrity, obsolete, redundant, and complex regulations hinder the effective functioning of HR processes. To ensure relevance and impact, these regulatory frameworks must be revised and modernized, particularly with respect to recruitment and appointment procedures, to enable the attraction and selection of the most competent individuals. In alignment with prior research by Rasouli and Shahaei (2009), Abdullahi and Onasanya (2010), Azimi et al. (2011), Salehi Amiri and Shadaloei (2013), and Otegbulu (2016), the findings emphasize human resource development (HRD) through employee training and the strategic application of material incentives—including salaries and rewards—as critical dimensions of

HR effectiveness. In the contemporary information age, where knowledge and education are foundational to socio-economic advancement, developing knowledge-based organizations necessitates sustained investment in learning and capacity-building initiatives. Moreover, employee motivation and the retention of skilled personnel must be prioritized by organizational leadership and policy planners. A key constraint in this regard is the growing disparity between employee income and living expenses, which has emerged as a dominant factor eroding commitment and lowering productivity. This financial imbalance often compels employees to seek secondary employment, contributing to both physical and mental fatigue and further diminishing workplace efficiency. To address these challenges, it is imperative to ensure economic security by aligning salaries and benefits with the nature of work, the level of specialization, years of experience, and individual performance. Moreover, material and spiritual incentives should be structured to reward superior performance and cultivate a culture of excellence. Performance-based reward systems not only stimulate healthy competition and motivation among employees but also create the conditions necessary for sustained organizational productivity and effectiveness.

Weak managerial performance within the organization represents a key sub-category under the broader theme of adverse outcomes in organizational resource development. Poor decision-making, actions driven by personal interests, and a lack of managerial accountability often result in the frustration and marginalization of competent and well-intentioned employees, ultimately undermining organizational morale and efficiency. As highlighted in the study by

Tolouian (2020), the competency model for public sector managers encompasses four principal dimensions: managerial skills (e.g., technical, human, and perceptual abilities, analytical and diagnostic capabilities, and interpersonal communication), individual abilities (including education, experience, cognitive, and physical capacities), organizational factors (such as cultural and legal infrastructure, and recruitment policies), and individual characteristics (personality traits, learning aptitude, perception and attitude, motivation, values, and ethical orientation). These dimensions were ranked from most to least important in shaping managerial competence. Similar findings have been reported in earlier studies by Hrynevych (2005), Azimi et al. (2011), Otegbulu (2016), and Mohammadi et al. (2018), reinforcing the central role of competent management in organizational development. To enhance managerial performance, several strategic and organizational practices can be employed. These include valuing employees' opinions, encouraging the integration of diverse ideas, fostering a supportive and low-stress work environment, and promoting organizational backing for staff development. Other important measures are creating job appeal, enabling career advancement opportunities, and offering intangible rewards such as fair allocation of resources in addition to financial incentives. Capable managers who employ such strategies are more likely to boost employee motivation and performance. Furthermore, motivation should be accompanied by the enhancement of employee knowledge and skills, and the development of effective communication and information-sharing channels within the organization, all of which contribute to employee empowerment and productivity. Therefore, as a foundational step, organizations must prioritize the selection and appointment of competent, accountable, and high-performing managers. Following this, it is essential to implement comprehensive in-service training programs to further develop their managerial skills, with a focus on leadership style, motivational strategies, and aligning individual and team performance with the broader goals of the organization.

Enhancing the aforementioned aspects of management within state organizations, particularly by strengthening ethical principles and emphasizing effective supervision, plays a crucial role in improving human resource management (HRM) and mitigating related threats within the administrative systems of government bodies. Such improvements help prevent disillusionment and dysfunction within public organizations by ensuring that well-meaning and high-performing employees are not marginalized. Instead, by leveraging their full potential, their continued presence within the organization is secured, reducing the risk of talent attrition to other organizations or the private sector. As with any study, the present research is subject to limitations. Some of these arise from the qualitative methodology employed, particularly the challenge of generalizing the findings beyond the studied context. These limitations, however, present opportunities for future research, especially using quantitative or mixed-method approaches, to further validate and expand upon the model developed in this study. Future scholars are

encouraged to elaborate on this model and assess its applicability across broader or different organizational settings. Moreover, the conceptual categories identified herein provide a rich foundation for various lines of inquiry from multiple scientific perspectives. Careful investigation of each category can yield targeted strategies and operational plans aimed at reducing administrative threats, particularly within the agricultural sector. An inherent limitation of qualitative content analysis, which was employed in this research, is the potential overlap of certain concepts and the subjectivity involved in their classification. While this overlap may be interpreted differently by individual readers, the research team exercised rigorous analytical care and collaborative consensus to minimize such discrepancies and ensure the clarity and reliability of the categorization process.

## FUNDING

There was no funder for the research.

## CRedit AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Conceptualization: Negin Fallah Haghighi and Hossein Azadi; Methodology: Negin Fallah Haghighi and Hossein Azadi; Formal analysis: Negin Fallah Haghighi; Investigation: Negin Fallah Haghighi; Resources: Negin Fallah Haghighi and Hossein Azadi; Data curation: Negin Fallah Haghighi; Writing-original draft preparation: Negin Fallah Haghighi; Writing-review and editing: Negin Fallah Haghighi and Hossein Azadi; Visualization: Negin Fallah Haghighi and Hossein Azadi; Supervision: Negin Fallah Haghighi; Project administration: Negin Fallah Haghighi; Funding acquisition: Negin Fallah Haghighi.

## DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

## ETHICAL STATEMENT

This study adheres to established ethical standards. The author acknowledges the importance of obtaining prior informed consent from all participants, thereby respecting their autonomy and valuing their contributions. The research was conducted in accordance with applicable national legislation and institutional guidelines, underscoring the commitment to responsible and transparent research practices.

## DATA AVAILABILITY

The data utilized in this study are outlined within the article.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special gratitude is hereby expressed to all the respondents who presented the needed data with great patience, as well as to the surveyors and interviewers who did their best in terms of data collection.

## REFERENCES

- Abdullahi, O. E., & Onasanya, S. A. (2010). Challenges facing the administration of educational assessment measures at the secondary school level in Nigeria. *Journal of Applied Sciences*, 10, 2198-2204. <https://doi.org/10.3923/jas.2010.2198.2204>
- Ahmadi, F., Shafizadeh, H., & Mousavi, S. S. (2014). Investigation changes plans realize measure in the administration system with emphasize on index strategic management. *Journal of Strategic Management Researches*, 20(54), 117-134. (In Persian).
- Azimi, H., Atafar, A., & Shaemi Barzaki, A. (2011). Investigating the managerial and organizational factors affecting administrative-financial corruption in government organizations in the centers of Isfahan and Zanjan provinces, Iran. *Strategic Management Thought*, 4(2), 147-129. (In Persian). Retrieved from: <http://ensani.ir/fa/article/journal-number/33361/>
- Cooke, F. L., Schuler, R., & Varma, A. (2020). Human resource management research and practice in Asia: Past, present and future. *Human Resource Management Review*, 31(4), 100778. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2020.100778>
- Deputy for Development and Planning (2023). Study of intra-provincial imbalances in Yazd. Published by the Iranian Budget and Planning Organization. Retrieved from: <https://conference.imps.ac.ir/uploads/pre-yazd-14020911.pdf>
- El Badawy, T. A. & Hady, N. (2014). An overview of human resource development in pre & post revolution Egypt and its efforts towards reaching sustainable development. *Journal of Human Resources Management & Labour Studies*, 2(3&4), 39-77. <https://doi.org/10.15640/jhrmls.v2n3-4a3>
- Fallah Haghighi, N., and Bijani, M. (2020). A gap analysis between current and desired situation of economic factors affecting human resources development in Iran. *Geo Journal*, 85(4), 175-1190. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-019-10017-1>
- Fan, D., Zhu, C. J. Huang, X., & Kumar, V. (2021). Mapping the terrain of international human resource management research over the past fifty years: A bibliographic analysis. *Journal of World Business*, 56(2), 101185. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2020.101185>
- Farhadi Nejad, M., Lagzian, M., Mansoorian, Y., & Kaffash Poor, A. (2015). Managerial competencies for effective management in Iranian governmental organizations; grounded data theory. *Quarterly Journal of Public Organizations Management*, 3(1), 55-70. (In Persian). Retrieved from: [http://ipom.journals.pnu.ac.ir/article\\_1682.html?lang=en](http://ipom.journals.pnu.ac.ir/article_1682.html?lang=en)
- Feiz, M. (2015). Investigation of public administration issues in Iran (comparative study). Management Portal, No Page. (In Persian). Retrieved from: <http://system.parsiblog.com/>
- Hook, C., and Jenkins, A. (2019). *Introducing Human Resource Management* (8rd ed.). Pearson.
- Ghanem, K. A., & Castelli, P. A. (2019). Accountability and moral competence promote ethical leadership. *The Journal of Values-Based Leadership (JVBL)*, 1(12), 1-126. <http://dx.doi.org/10.22543/0733.121.1247>
- Given, L. M. (2008). *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research method*. London: Sage Publications.
- Goulding, C. (2002). *Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide for Management, Business and Market Researchers*. London: Sage.
- Henok, S. (2018). Practices and challenges of institutionalizing the Ethiopian civil service in the context of Ethiopian developmental state the case of federal institutions. (Doctoral dissertation, Department of Public Administration, Addis Ababa University). Retrieved from: <http://etd.aau.edu.et/>
- Hrynevych, L. (2005). Private tutoring in Ukraine. Presentation prepared for the IIEP/OSI, Sub regional seminar on transparency, ethics and anti-corruption measures in education. (pp: 32-39), 27-29 October, Kiev (Ukraine). Retrieved from: [https://etico.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/2005\\_ukraine\\_transparency\\_ethics\\_and\\_anti-corruption\\_measures\\_in\\_education\\_eng.pdf](https://etico.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/2005_ukraine_transparency_ethics_and_anti-corruption_measures_in_education_eng.pdf)
- Imani, M. T., & Mohammadian, M., (2008) Methodology of grounded theory. *Methodology of Social Sciences and Humanities Journal*, 14(56), 31-54. (In Persian). Retrieved from: <http://ensani.ir/file/download/article/20110201143037>
- Imani, H., Gholipour, A., Azar, A., & Pourezat, A. A. (2019). Identifying components of staffing system to develop administrative integrity. *Journal of Public Administration (JPA)*, 11(2), 251-284. (In Persian). <https://doi.org/10.22059/JIPA.2019.277466.2504>
- Ivancevich, J. M. (2007). *Human resource management*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Jewell, D. O., Jewell, S. F., & Kaufman, B. E. (2022). Designing and implementing high-performance work systems: Insights from consulting practice for academic researchers. *Human Resource Management Review*, 32(1), 100749. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2020.100749>
- Leviäkangas. (2021). Addressing sustainability or following political climate Rhetoric? Anatomy of government Agency's performance management. *Case Studies on Transport Policy*, 9(1), 191-199. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cstp.2020.12.002>
- Mohammadi, H. (2017). Challenges of establishing organizational excellence model (EFQM) as a performance improvement framework in the Iranian administrative system. *Standard and Quality Management Journal*, 7(2), 48-64. (In Persian). Retrieved from: [http://www.jstandardization.ir/article\\_51318.html](http://www.jstandardization.ir/article_51318.html)
- Mohammadi, H., Alvani, S. M., Memarzade Tehran, G. R., & Hamidi, N. (2018). Identify cultural barriers Iran administrative system faces. *Organizational Culture Management*, 16(1), 67-87. (In Persian). <https://doi.org/10.22059/JOMC.2018.201229.1006757>
- Moss, D., McGrath, C., Tonge, J., & Harris, P. (2012). Exploring the management of the corporate public affairs function in a dynamic global environment. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 12(1), 47-60. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.1406>
- O'Connor, M. C., & Paunonen, S. V. (2007). Big five personality predictors of postsecondary academic

- performance. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 43(5), 971-990.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2007.03.017>
- OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). (2009). *Overcoming Barriers to Administrative Simplification Strategies: Guidance for Policy Makers*. OECD Regulatory Policy Division, Paris, France. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.oecd.org/regreform/42112628.pdf>
- Otegbulu, M. (2016). Perceived challenges to effective administration of secondary school in Imo State. *Developing Country Studies*, 6(10), 67-71. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/DCS/article/view/33360/34300>
- Park & Krause, (2021). Exploring the landscape of sustainability performance management systems in U.S. local governments. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 279, 111764.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2020.111764>
- Rasouli, R., Shahaei, B. (2009). Administrative corruption in educational system: Factors of emersion, prevalence, and control. *Journal of Public Administration (JPA)*, 1(3), 19-34. (In Persian). Retrieved from:  
[https://jipa.ut.ac.ir/article\\_20311.html?lang=en](https://jipa.ut.ac.ir/article_20311.html?lang=en)
- Richards, L., & Morse, J. M. (2013). *Readme first for a user's guide to qualitative methods*. Los Angeles: Sa
- Roodbari, H., Mirfakhar, A. S., Trullen, J., Valverde, M., & Ogbonnaya, B. C. (2025) What works for whom in which circumstances in successful HRM implementation? A realist synthesis. *Journal of Business Research*, 188, 115115.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2024.115115>
- Rubel, M. R. B., Rimi, N. N., Yusliza, M. Y., & Kee, D. M. H. (2018). High commitment human resource management practices and employee service behaviour: Trust in management as mediator. *IIMB Management Review*, 30(4), 316-329.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iimb.2018.05.006>
- Salehi Amiri, R., & Shadaloei, N. (2013). The effective factors on the ealth of bureaucracy in achievement of reform plan of administrative system. *Journal of Cultural Management*, 7(1), 1-11. (In Persian). Retrieved from:  
[http://jcm.srbiau.ac.ir/article\\_3437.html?lang=en](http://jcm.srbiau.ac.ir/article_3437.html?lang=en)
- Smith-Hillman, A.V. (2007). Competition policy, inflation and corruption: Evidence from African economies. *Applied Economics Letters*, 14(9), 653-656.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13504850500461415>
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.  
<https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452230153>
- Tolouian, G. A. (2020). Development of a process model of competencies of human resource managers in the public sector with emphasis on the general policies of the administrative system. *Quarterly Journal of New Research Approaches in Management and Accounting*, 3(19), 43-58. (In Persian). Retrieved from:  
<http://ensani.ir/fa/article/412627/>