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# Design and Validation of a Diversity Management Model in Human Resources
## (Public Organizations in Razavi Khorasan Province)

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A B S T R A C T

**Objective:** The purpose of this research is to design and validate a human resource diversity management model in public organizations in Razavi Khorasan Province.

**Methodology:** The present study was conducted with a mixed-methods (qualitative-quantitative) approach. The qualitative population consisted of managers of public organizations in Razavi Khorasan, among whom 12 were selected using theoretical sampling and snowball sampling techniques, and interviews were conducted. In the quantitative part, the population included all managers of public agencies in Razavi Khorasan Province in 2021, numbering 8,936, from which a sample size of 368 was determined using stratified random sampling and Cochran's formula. Data collection tools were semi-structured interviews for the qualitative part and questionnaires for the quantitative part. For data analysis in the qualitative part, MAXQDA software was used, where categories, components were coded through open, axial, and selective coding leading to the theorizing stage.

**Findings:** Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to analyze the data obtained in the quantitative part. In the qualitative section, axial coding or 6Cs were explained, detailing the causal conditions, core category, strategy, consequences, context, and intervening conditions. In the quantitative section, the research results showed that the proposed model has an appropriate fit.

**Conclusion:** Until attention is paid to the diversity of employees, their differences, capacities, and knowledge variations, one cannot expect the necessary productivity and efficiency from employees.

**Keywords:** *Diversity management, human resources, public managers, mixed-methods approach*

## 1 Introduction

Today, human resources are considered the capital of an organization, and it has been determined that humans are the main factor in the survival of organizations in competition. With the complexity of the environment and the emergence of various cultures and jobs within organizations, the role of human resources has gradually changed. The human force of any organization is considered one of its significant assets; this is important because other resources such as capital and physical assets do not create the necessary efficiency and productivity without human resources (Taghva et al., 2023; Tayari et al., 2022; Thite, 2022). Undoubtedly, in today's fast-paced, transformational, and competitive world, what ensures the realization of competitive advantage for organizations is high-quality, creative, and dynamic human resources. Therefore, in the current era, human resources are considered the main foundation of the process of increasing effectiveness and efficiency and are the most valuable capital and the golden key to competition (Nasirinia et al., 2019; Nazarian-Jashnabadi et al., 2023). Currently, the success of organizations directly depends on the effective use of human resources based on applied behavioral sciences (Amin & Salehnezhad, 2020; Fatemeh Sadat Vahabzadeh et al., 2021). Hence, a new perspective that has emerged in management literature regarding humans is a strategic outlook. This means that humans are both the agents of work and its creators, thus playing a central role in organizational transformation, with significant organizational changes stemming from the unlimited intellectual capabilities of this factor (Abun et al., 2022; Albrecht et al., 2015). Moreover, modern social and economic trends indicate that the demographic composition of the workforce is rapidly changing, and managing people with diverse characteristics is becoming a new challenge for employers. Many organizations, especially national ones, understand that diversity is not an unavoidable side effect of social developments; instead, it is a factor and reality that can bring new perspectives and enhance the development of new products and services (Asghar iSarem et al., 2016; Bahari & Taheri rouzbahani, 2023). On the other hand, a diverse workforce brings new mindsets to the organization, which enhances creativity and productivity (Otoo, 2019; Plakhotnik, 2014).

Despite all the uncertainties about future events, one can be certain about the diversity of the workforce in the future, such that it is predicted to be broadly composed of minority groups; such as women, immigrants, and racial and ethnic minorities (Kersten, 2000). Therefore, as the employee population increases, so does the diversity of characteristics in organizations, because each employee has characteristics including race, language, age, gender, social class, and education. Hence, knowing the capabilities of our employees and turning these capabilities into action will help the organization better achieve its goals. Diversity management is also a management process, especially human resource management, based on a set of values that identifies differences among individuals as a strength for management (Jami Pour et al., 2018).

Diversity in the workplace is an important issue for today's management, and organizations need this diversity to create creativity and growth (Green & Garmestani, 2012). Also, human resource diversity increases skills, abilities, information, experience, and knowledge. This is because the interaction between different individuals leads to positive outcomes. In addition, diversity management motivates interaction and knowledge sharing among employees. Due to the expansion of interpersonal and intergroup exchanges, it leads to organizational development (Meena & Vanka, 2017). Today, organizations and offices or any entity involved with human resources are looking for solutions to further improve their work outcomes. Given the advancements and new complexities that modern humans face every day, new topics for improving results and maximizing efficiency and productivity come to mind every day. According to recent studies, the issue of human resource diversity has been a challenging and thoughtful topic in the field of human resource management.

Today, organizations (public organizations) are considered complex and large social organizations in any country due to the necessity of social changes and are inextricably linked to social, cultural, and economic growth and development, gradually moving from a simple initial state to a complex one (Medvedev, 2016). The mission of these organizations is to make productive use of talented individuals, turning them into healthy, thriving, balanced, and developed humans. They also meet the human resource needs of society in different cultural, social, and economic sectors. The specialized and diverse human force of these organizations, as one of the fundamental factors in planning growth and development alongside capital and technology, manifests itself. Therefore, organizations must undertake significant investment and short-term and long-term planning on specialized and diverse forces at high levels of the organization and maintain and preserve the current


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efficient workforce (Taleghani et al., 2016). It should be noted that human resource diversity management is a planned system that deals with the heterogeneous recruitment and development of employees. The importance of diversity management, especially in the field of human resources, is very necessary (Abaker et al., 2019) and is important from both theoretical and practical aspects. Because a diverse organizational workforce will lead to high upstream creativity and in it, employee performance, productivity, and profitability of the organization will increase. Also, by implementing diversity management in the organization, employees' inclination to perform organizational citizenship behaviors increases, leaving positive effects on employee performance. In addition, they will have a correct understanding of work equations and are an important factor in the commercial success of organizations. This, the present research addresses the design of a human resource diversity management model and its validation in public organizations in Razavi Khorasan Province.

## 2 Methods and Materials

The present research, in terms of its purpose, is an applied study and, regarding data collection, falls under the category of field research, which has been conducted through survey methods. The research methodology, from the perspective of required data collection, is classified within the group of exploratory mixed-methods research. In this study, initially, a conceptual model of diversity management in human resources is designed in the qualitative part, and the model derived from the qualitative part is tested in the quantitative section.

### *2.1 Qualitative Section*

Population and sample of the qualitative section: Three main approaches or designs can be distinguished in the grounded theory strategy: systematic approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), the discovery approach (Glaser, 1992), and the constructivist approach (Charmaz, 1990). This research will utilize the systematic approach of Strauss and Corbin. The main stages of the grounded theory method in the systematic approach are open coding: generating concepts and their characteristics; axial coding: establishing relationships between concepts; and selective coding: integrating and refining concepts. These stages are iterative, for example, during open coding, some relationships between concepts are identified by the researcher, and these relationships are established; also, during the process of establishing relationships between concepts, new concepts are discovered. The core of grounded theory is constant comparison, and even Glaser and Strauss (1967: 230) consider constant comparison synonymous with grounded theory. After this stage, the researcher tests the developed model using quantitative research methods, namely path analysis, to test and validate the conceptual model of the research. In the model testing phase, the validity of the identified criteria is evaluated, and the relationships among them are examined through a correlational research design using path analysis.

The research participants are managers of public organizations in Razavi Khorasan Province. Since the research topic is the management of human resource diversity in public organizations, managers of public organizations have been selected as participants for the qualitative section. The sampling method in this research is purposive. The purpose of purposive sampling is to quickly obtain specific information and gain an understanding of the target population. In this research, snowball sampling has been used. In the current study, the number of samples selected in the qualitative phase is 12, who have been chosen as a sample for conducting interviews.

For analyzing the data in this research phase, data analysis from interviews has been conducted using coding methods with MAXQDA software, where categories and components have reached the theorizing stage through open, axial, and selective coding.

### *2.2 Quantitative Section*

Population and sample of the quantitative phase: The statistical population includes all managers of public agencies in Razavi Khorasan Province in the year 2021, numbering 8,936. A stratified random sampling method proportional to the sample size has been used for sample selection. The required sample size was determined using Cochran's formula.

To determine the sample size, the simplest method is using Cochran's formula. For sample size determination, initially, a pilot sampling of 30 individuals from the population was conducted, and based on the standard deviation of this pilot sample (which was 0.50), considering the population size and applying it in Cochran's formula for random sampling, the minimum sample size was determined to be 368.



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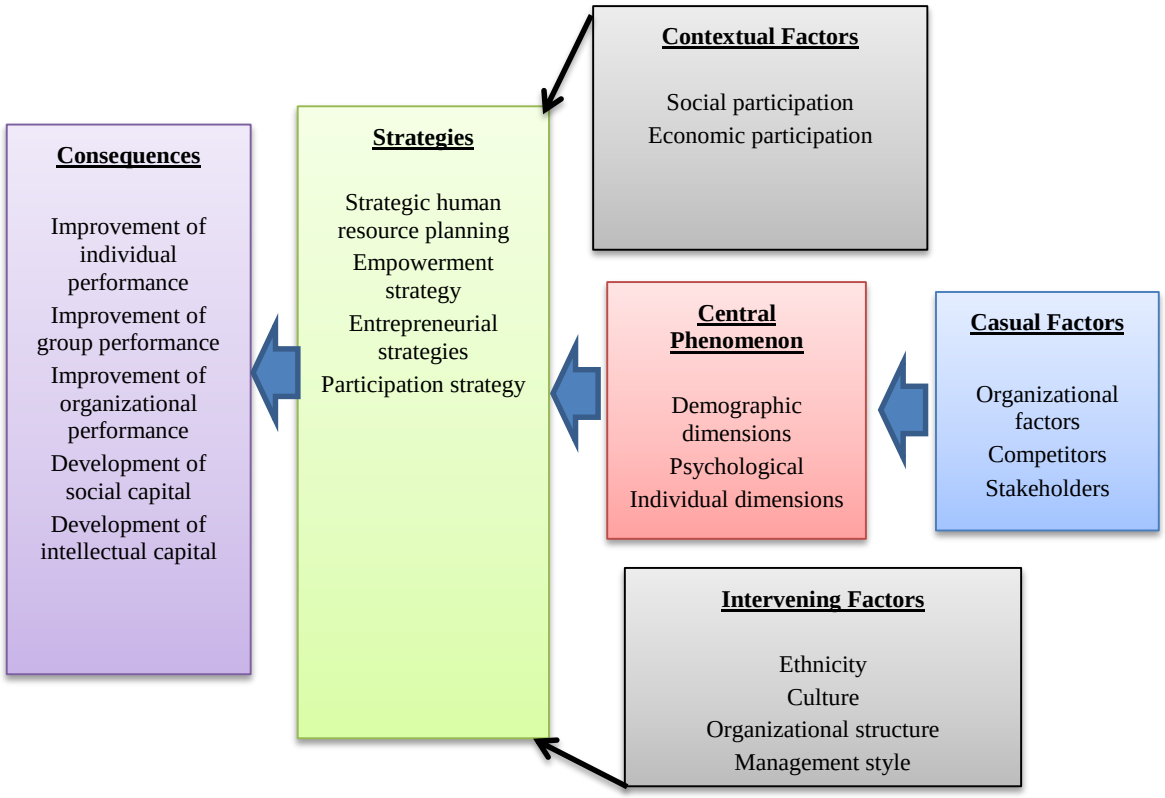
or analyzing the data obtained in the quantitative part, questionnaires and descriptive and inferential statistical methods have been used. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to respond to research questions for research validity. Also, confirmatory factor analysis was used to ensure the categorization of questions into components. Furthermore, structural equation modeling was used to determine the effect and fit of the model in the quantitative part. The testing of research hypotheses was conducted using SPSS and also PLS.

## 3 Findings and Results

Since the research method in this study has been grounded theory, axial coding or 6C in this section is described, detailing causal conditions, the core category, strategy, outcomes, contexts, and intervening conditions. It is worth mentioning that in the axial coding, the components of the research are also derived, answering the question of what the components of the research topic are.

**Figure 1**

*Paradigm Model of The Study*




In the fitted factor analysis model, the factor loading of all questions in predicting the related items was significantly different from zero at the 95% confidence level. Therefore, in this stage, the aforementioned questions are not eliminated and are not excluded from the process.

**Table 1**

*The Results of T-Test, Kolmogrov Smirnov, and Kruskal-Wallis Tests*

| Component | T Test | | | Kolmogrov-Smirnov | | Kruskal-Wallis | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | t | df | p | z | p | Chi-squared | p |
| Social factors | 23.100 | 29 | 0.000 | 4.192 | 0.000 | 9.568 | 0.639 |
| Demographic change | 16.728 | 29 | 0.000 | 3.236 | 0.000 | 5.524 | 0.133 |
| Political factors | 33.836 | 29 | 0.000 | 3.286 | 0.000 | 9.851 | 0.166 |
| Legal factors | 32.874 | 29 | 0.000 | 2.789 | 0.000 | 10.202 | 0.105 |
| Technological factors | 24.803 | 29 | 0.000 | 3.952 | 0.000 | 6.287 | 0.235 |



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| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Technology | 23.450 | 29 | 0.000 | 3.457 | 0.000 | 4.835 | 0.085 |
| Economic factors | 13.718 | 29 | 0.000 | 6.154 | 0.000 | 6.730 | 0.201 |
| Organizational factors | 33.056 | 29 | 0.000 | 7.154 | 0.000 | 8.257 | 0.090 |
| Competitors | 10.520 | 29 | 0.000 | 8.259 | 0.000 | 5.521 | 0.347 |
| Stakeholders | 13.150 | 29 | 0.000 | 5.198 | 0.000 | 9.508 | 0.501 |
| Demographic dimensions | 15.874 | 29 | 0.000 | 2.089 | 0.000 | 10.202 | 0.067 |
| Psychological | 20.4503 | 29 | 0.000 | .457 | 0.000 | 4.735 | 0.098 |
| Individual dimensions | 12.093 | 29 | 0.000 | 3.082 | 0.000 | 1.948 | 0.154 |
| Strategic human resource planning | 25.019 | 29 | 0.000 | 4.315 | 0.000 | 2.708 | 0.604 |
| Empowerment strategy | 13.476 | 29 | 0.000 | 8.457 | 0.000 | 2.967 | 0.571 |
| Entrepreneurial strategies | 23.687 | 29 | 0.000 | 7.921 | 0.000 | 4.506 | 0.737 |
| Participation strategy | 32.476 | 29 | 0.000 | 10.254 | 0.000 | 5.462 | 0.212 |
| Improvement of individual performance | 24.250 | 29 | 0.000 | 4.452 | 0.001 | 3.208 | 0.927 |
| Improvement of group performance | 16.230 | 29 | 0.000 | 12.781 | 0.000 | 10.232 | 0.530 |
| Improvement of organizational performance | 22.878 | 29 | 0.000 | 5.718 | 0.001 | 11.618 | 0.856 |
| Development of social capital | 16.504 | 29 | 0.000 | 8.124 | 0.002 | 3.925 | 0.474 |
| Development of intellectual capital | 14.083 | 29 | 0.000 | 9.147 | 0.000 | 7.294 | 0.270 |
| Social participation | 25.500 | 29 | 0.000 | 8.147 | 0.000 | 5.282 | 0.152 |
| Economic participation | 16.708 | 29 | 0.000 | 3.036 | 0.000 | 3.504 | 0.963 |
| Ethnicity | 32.856 | 29 | 0.000 | 5.206 | 0.000 | 6.298 | 0.391 |
| Culture | 18.230 | 29 | 0.000 | 12.781 | 0.000 | 10.232 | 0.530 |
| Organizational structure | 42.878 | 29 | 0.000 | 5.018 | 0.001 | 12.618 | 0.876 |
| Management style | 26.504 | 29 | 0.000 | 8.104 | 0.002 | 3.925 | 0.434 |

Table 1 shows the results of the T-test, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, and Kruskal-Wallis test for each of the components derived from open, selective, and axial coding.

The results reported in the table above indicate that the intensity of agreement among groups was uniform, indicating consensus. Subsequently, the validation of research categories in the statistical sample has been addressed.

**Figure 2**

*Model with Standard Coefficients*

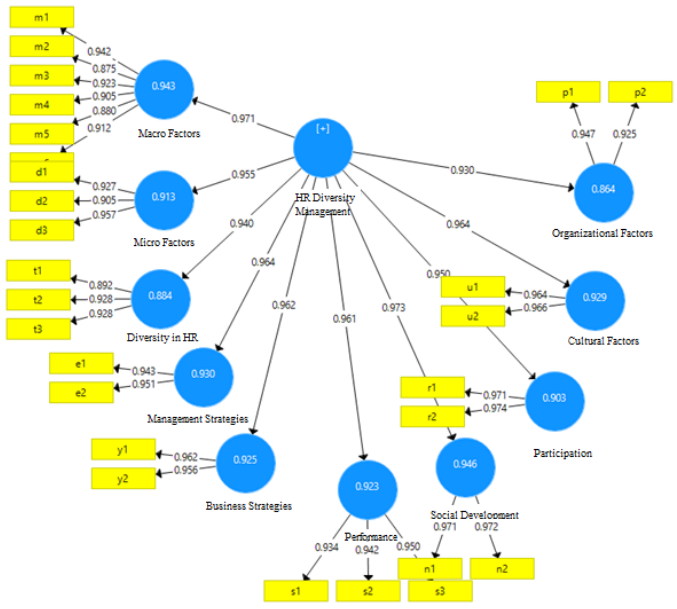




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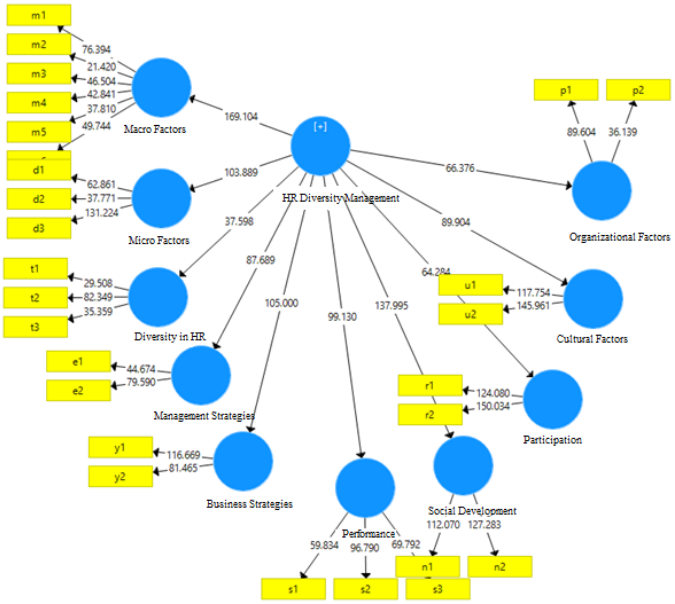
**Figure 3**

*Model with T-Values*




In inferential statistics, to examine the research hypotheses, variables, or in other words, generalize the results obtained from the sample to the statistical population of the research has been used. The subject of descriptive statistics organizes and classifies data, graphical representation, and calculates values such as the average, etc., indicating the characteristics of each member of the discussed population. In descriptive statistics, information obtained from a group describes that group.

Figure 2 shows the factor loadings of the confirmatory factor analysis model, which is a technique based on the homogeneity test.

Figure 3 shows the T-statistic of the confirmatory factor analysis model of causes.

The research model, based on the measurement indices of variables, should provide similar estimates in other samples from the same population; therefore, in the revised reflective measurement model, various tests are conducted for model reliability, which most experts agree should be performed.

Internal consistency of questions of a variable outside the model is shown. Cronbach's alpha, according to Fornell and Larcker (1986), should be above 0.7; meaning the correlation of questions of each variable outside the model should be above 0.7.

**Table 2**

*Reliability Results Obtained for the Research Model*

| Row | Research Components | Cronbach's Alpha | Composite Reliability |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Macro | 0.956 | 0.962 |
| 2 | Micro | 0.922 | 0.951 |
| 3 | Human Resource Diversity | 0.904 | 0.940 |
| 4 | Human Resource Management Strategy | 0.886 | 0.946 |
| 5 | Diverse Business Strategy | 0.913 | 0.958 |
| 6 | Performance Improvement | 0.937 | 0.959 |
| 7 | Social Development | 0.940 | 0.971 |
| 8 | Participation | 0.942 | 0.972 |
| 9 | Cultural Factors | 0.926 | 0.964 |
| 10 | Organizational Factors | 0.860 | 0.934 |
| 11 | Human Resource Management | 0.990 | 0.991 |

The results of Table 2 show that Cronbach's alpha for all research variables is above 0.7.

Internal consistency of questions of a variable inside the model is shown. The composite reliability coefficient should



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be greater than 0.7, which is the most important test shown in the table above, indicating that all composite reliability coefficients are above 0.7.

**Table 3**

*Results of Average Variance Extracted Test*

| Row | Research Components | Average Variance Extracted Test |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Macro | 0.822 |
| 2 | Micro | 0.865 |
| 3 | Human Resource Diversity | 0.839 |
| 4 | Human Resource Management Strategy | 0.897 |
| 5 | Diverse Business Strategy | 0.920 |
| 6 | Performance Improvement | 0.887 |
| 7 | Social Development | 0.944 |
| 8 | Participation | 0.945 |
| 9 | Cultural Factors | 0.931 |
| 10 | Organizational Factors | 0.876 |
| 11 | Human Resource Management | 0.915 |

All AVE coefficients for variables are above the number 0.5.

Divergent validity also measures a measurement model's ability to distinguish the observable variables of that model's latent variable from other observables in the questionnaire and is essentially the complement of convergent validity, measured through the Fornell-Larcker test.

**Table 4**

*Fornell-Larcker Test Results (Divergent Validity)*

| Variable | Macro | Micro | Human Resource Diversity | Human Resource Management Strategy | Diverse Business Strategy | Performance Improvement | Social Development | Participation | Cultural Factors | Organizational Factors |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Macro | 0.90 | 0.86 | 0.84 | 0.82 | 0.88 | 0.84 | 0.83 | 0.82 | 0.86 | 0.86 |
| Micro | | 0.93 | 0.88 | 0.81 | 0.87 | 0.85 | 0.80 | 0.84 | 0.87 | 0.82 |
| Human Resource Diversity | | | 0.91 | 0.83 | 0.87 | 0.82 | 0.85 | 0.84 | 0.83 | 0.84 |
| Human Resource Management Strategy | | | | 0.94 | 0.88 | 0.84 | 0.83 | 0.86 | 0.88 | 0.87 |
| Diverse Business Strategy | | | | | 0.95 | 0.86 | 0.85 | 0.88 | 0.89 | 0.85 |
| Performance Improvement | | | | | | 0.94 | 0.87 | 0.85 | 0.81 | 0.88 |
| Social Development | | | | | | | 0.97 | 0.86 | 0.79 | 0.89 |
| Participation | | | | | | | | 0.97 | 0.85 | 0.89 |
| Cultural Factors | | | | | | | | | 0.96 | 0.88 |
| Organizational Factors | | | | | | | | | | 0.93 |

The Table 4 shows the results of divergent validity examination by the Fornell and Larcker (1981) method. As observed, the square root of AVE of latent variables in the current research, located in the main diagonal cells of the matrix, is greater than the correlation value between them, which is arranged in the lower left cells of the main diagonal. Therefore, it can be stated that in the current instrument, constructs (latent variables) interact more with their own questions than with other constructs. In other words, the questionnaire's divergent validity is at an appropriate level.



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## 4 Discussion and Conclusion

Given that the research method in this study, in the qualitative part, was grounded theory, axial coding or 6C in this section has been described, detailing causal conditions, the core category, strategy, outcomes, contexts, and intervening conditions. This research aligns with the previous (Abaker et al., 2019; D'Netto et al., 2014; Green & Garmestani, 2012; Jami Pour et al., 2018; Medvedev, 2016; Meena & Vanka, 2017; Mohammad Shaker et al., 2016; Senichev, 2013; Shabani Bahar et al., 2014; Taleghani et al., 2016). This study has somewhat determined that managing a human group faces numerous challenges and obstacles. Therefore, managers and planners of an organization must, above all, understand the human workforce, their ethical and behavioral characteristics, and the community and family in which they live, and plan macro and micro according to their needs. A manager must recognize each of these factors before formulating and implementing their plans and, as far as possible, think of finding a solution for them. Generally, it must be said that management is not only not a simple task but is also very difficult and complex. Every manager, in addition to management science, should have a relative mastery of a number of other branches of human sciences so that a manager should be somewhat familiar with psychology, sociology, politics, economics, statistics, civil engineering, financial and monetary matters, and if possible, have consultants for themselves in each of these sciences to assist in planning and implementing affairs.

How valid is the conceptual model of human resource diversity management? To analyze the research data, a two-stage method for modeling using the partial least squares method was used. The first stage includes determining the measurement model through reliability and validity, and the second stage includes determining the structural model through analyzing fit indices, determination coefficients, and path analysis. In the first stage, validity and reliability estimation are used to examine the measurement model, which reviews the confirmatory methods of data alignment with a specific factorial structure. In fact, confirmatory factor analysis examines the suitability of items selected to introduce variables. In the second stage, path analysis of model fit indices and the determination coefficient is used to examine the structural model. As a fundamental pillar of organizational development, humans play a significant and crucial role within their group and organizational activities. Today, the growth and development of organizations depend on the correct utilization of human resources. Management science theorists, recognizing humans as a complex element in the organization, consider the human factor as the most important element for maintaining the existence and survival of the organization and have increasingly focused on human resources as a powerful tool in organizational changes and transformations. It seems that the greatest asset of successful organizations is human capital. Without considering the needs of the human workforce, the energy and resources of the organization cannot be directed in a way that achieves the desired goals. Given today's turbulent world, which they have renamed through change, organizations face numerous challenges, one of the most important of which is human resource challenges. Generally, these challenges stem from changes in four basic areas: technology, structure, strategies, and organizational culture. Each of these changes creates new challenges in the field of human resource management. Active organizational participation in technological competition and the emergence of new jobs and the necessity for employees to become multi-skilled make their empowerment inevitable. Through empowerment programs, work capacity increases with delegation, increased responsibility, autonomy in decision-making, and a sense of self-efficacy, thereby increasing organizational productivity and effectiveness. This task requires infrastructure, including capital, motivated human resources, and a consistent attitude. The challenges of human resource management increase loyalty and employees' attachment to the organization, which is manifested in active participation in offering initiative and creativity, ultimately leading to the enhancement of organizational productivity. It is worth mentioning that until attention is paid to the diversity of employees, their differences, capacities, and knowledge variations, one cannot expect the necessary productivity and efficiency from employees.

Suggestions:

The organization should respect the rights of employees, value their opinions, and avoid any form of gender discrimination or any other discrimination.

The organization should form an organizational ethical charter, such as an oath of professional and organizational ethics for employees, guiding them in their service path.

It is suggested that managers clearly define acceptable behaviors based on organizational standards and make them available to employees.



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## Authors' Contributions

All authors have contributed significantly to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

## Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

## Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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## Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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## Ethical Considerations

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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