

Presenting a Model for Understanding the Dark Aspects of Organizational Myth Phenomenon at Yazd University of Medical Sciences

Ali. Sheyda¹, Saeid. Saeida Ardekani^{2*}, Mehdi. Sabokro³

¹ PhD Student, Faculty of Economics, Management & Accounting, Yazd University, Yazd, Iran

² Professor, Faculty of Economics, Management & Accounting, Yazd University, Yazd, Iran

³ Associate Professor, Faculty of Economics, Management & Accounting, Yazd University, Yazd, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: dr.saeida@yazd.ac.ir

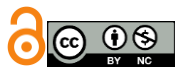
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ABSTRACT

Objective: The goal of this research is to present a model for understanding the dark aspects of the organizational myth phenomenon.

Methodology: In terms of purpose, the research is applied and developmental, descriptive-exploratory in terms of implementation method, and qualitative regarding data type. The sample consisted of 20 scientific experts and knowledgeable individuals in the field of management at Yazd University of Medical Sciences, selected through purposive sampling. Data collection was conducted through interviews. Interviews continued until theoretical saturation was achieved, which occurred after 15 interviews. Data were analyzed using the Grounded Theory approach in three stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

Findings: A total of 114 concepts from the open codes of the interviews were categorized into 21 sub-categories and 7 main categories, which were organized into a paradigm model consisting of six main classes: causal conditions (organizational causes and individual causes), context (internal organizational environment and external environment), intervening conditions (characteristics of employees and managers), central phenomenon (dark aspects of organizational myths), strategies (individual development strategies and organizational-level strategies), and consequences (individual, organizational, and social outcomes). The resulting model deeply and richly describes the understanding of the dark aspects of organizational myths at Yazd University of Medical Sciences.

Conclusion: Recognizing the influential factors, strategies, and outcomes of understanding the dark aspects of the organizational myth phenomenon at Yazd University of Medical Sciences using the proposed model can assist policymakers, planners, and healthcare sector executives in managing this phenomenon.

Keywords: *Dark aspects of organization, Organizational myths, University of Medical Sciences*

1 Introduction

Organizations, recognized as dynamic social systems filled with interactions, operate through interpersonal communications, with coordination also based on these communications. Alongside communications, power manifests itself in these human-made phenomena (Olafsen et al., 2017). Mayer (2009) defines power in an organization as the ability to influence organizational outcomes, and according to Hyland and Yousif (2012), real power emerges when employees willingly assist their manager or organization in achieving desired goals (Dashti et al., 2022). Generally, power, in any form or type, within any structure or organization, is a potential force that an individual uses to affect others and their decision-making capabilities; in such a way that others are compelled to perform a specific activity (Noermijati et al., 2021). One of the classifications made regarding the power of employees and managers in an organization is hard and soft power (Neale, 2019). Hard power is the result of employees' positions within the organizational structure, whereas they are often empowered with a type of power that, irrespective of their occupational position, is due to a set of personal characteristics and behavioral traits, some innate and some acquired, allowing them to exert influence within the organization and over its employees in an invisible manner. This type of power does not align or match with structural coordinates, organizational chart positions, and managerial tools available to them (Asghari et al., 2016). Soft power refers to employees in the organization finding a special position relative to their organizational position. Generally, it can be considered that every person in the organization benefits from both hard and soft power (Singh & Vashisht, 2021). Typically, the hard and soft powers of employees in an organization are known as positional and personal power, respectively. Given that personal power is a tool that arises without the desire and opinion of managers and the organization in some personnel, employees possessing this type of power have more ground and facilities to exert influence on other employees and the organization as a whole, and in practice, these individuals are positioned above their job and organizational status. This situation can display a dual behavior from them in the organization (Mostafa et al., 2021). If they use their power to advance the organization's goals, they play a constructive role; if they prioritize their personal and group interests over the organization's goals, they cause challenges and tensions in the organization. Therefore, considering that both types of power are available to employees in any organization, it is

necessary to note that personal powers, due to their greater attractiveness and influence within others, create higher functions and positions for employees and managers (Rayisi & nastiezaie, 2019). The ineffectiveness of positional power over personal power causes the desires of individuals with soft power to be implemented among other employees. These individuals may not be managers, but other employees respect their wishes and do what they want (Tuzun et al., 2017). In fact, the power of such individuals is informal, and this kind of power has much greater influence in the informal structure and relationships. The lack of strict control by senior managers in the informal part of the organization and the presence of individuals equipped with soft power in this section creates the possibility of their misuse for personal gain. On the other hand, the emergence of an individual in the organization with supernatural power, regardless of the type of power, eliminates the possibility of critique against them; while the employee themselves may react appropriately in accepting and correcting it if critiqued (Fatemeh et al., 2019). An employee with a supernatural position in the organization has the ability and opportunity to use their position appropriately or inappropriately. If the individual uses their position to achieve the organization's goals, this is considered effective and positive; if pursued for goals other than the organization's, it is deemed negative and harmful (Morshedi Tonekaboni, 2021). Based on this, the important issue that this research is designed upon is to explain and clarify how individuals in the organization can, through a supernatural and beyond imagination position, have the possibility of advancing goals other than the organization's goals in such a way that managers and the governing body in the organization cannot criticize or punish such individuals. An important point to consider is that individuals with a special and supernatural position in the organization are not necessarily intent on misusing their position and power, and it is possible that these individuals align with the organization's goals. Identifying and managing this issue is a very important point in the field of organization and management of human resources and employee behavior (Fatahi & Mehdizadeh, 2020). The use or misuse of a supernatural position by employees holding this position is a subject that can be examined and evaluated under various factors. Interactions within the organization affect the formation of organizational life flow, and this can overshadow any phenomenon within the organizational context; to the extent that there is now a necessity for redefining both formal and informal structures in the organization (O'Connor et al., 2017). The possibility of

forming a potential beyond expectation for some employees and placing them in a supernatural position on one hand, and on the other hand, considering that human behavior, both at the individual and collective level, is a mean of their psychological, biological, economic, and social variables, makes conducting this research necessary and essential due to its absence in the organizational literature history; because it is necessary to realistically assess the positive or negative functioning of placing some employees in a supernatural position, identifying who, under what conditions, influenced by what factors, and using what resources, can reach this mythical position and under what factors and situations other employees in the organization bring about this position for supernatural individuals (Fateme et al., 2019). Alongside the type of power, its effects, and the effectiveness resulting from it at the individual, group, or organizational level, personal characteristics such as arrogance, pride, ambition, self-serving bias, narcissism, and hubris syndrome can be considered effective for individuals who consider themselves distinguished and superior to others. Alongside the mentioned issues, the objectives and applications intended from implementing this project are discovering the reasons for the formation of this phenomenon for theorizing in the topics of individual and collective organizational behavior and accurately explaining it within the organizational context, and practically also introducing the quality and quantity of this phenomenon in the organization, the effective backgrounds on its formation, and introducing the visible and hidden consequences of this phenomenon and the correct use of this phenomenon and employees holding this extraordinary position in the organization (Al-Madadha et al., 2021). Therefore, and in light of the above, the researcher seeks to answer the question of what the model for understanding the dark aspects of the organizational myth phenomenon at Yazd University of Medical Sciences is like?

2 Methods and Materials

The present research design is qualitative, aiming at applied and developmental purposes, and is of an inductive nature. The participants were managers and experts at Yazd University of Medical Sciences, selected with the goal of

presenting a model for understanding the dark aspects of organizational myths, using purposive sampling. The interview process continued until theoretical saturation was reached after 15 interviews. Among these research participants, 8 were members of the university's faculty, and 7 were executive managers, with 9 males and 6 females. Data collection was conducted through interviews, and data analysis employed the Grounded Theory framework. The data analysis process occurred in three stages; initially, in open coding, codes and initial signs were identified. In the second stage (axial coding), existing concepts were eliminated and merged to form first-level categories, and all formed concepts from the categorization of signs were compared to identify similarities and differences among categories. Through this process, categories were formed. By repeating this process and merging categories again in the third stage of coding (selective coding), a categorization of categories was formed, and ultimately, the final model emerged from these categories.

In this research, inter-coder agreement (reliability between two coders/evaluators) was used to calculate the reliability of the texts. For this purpose, a university lecturer knowledgeable about the research topic was asked to participate in this research as a research collaborator (coder); then, along with the research collaborator, three texts were coded separately, and the percentage of inter-coder agreement, used as the reliability index for the research, was calculated. The total number of codes recorded by the researcher and collaborators was 109, with 60 total agreements and 21 disagreements between these codes. The reliability between coders for the conducted interviews, calculated using the formula, equals 86%. Given that the reliability rate is over 60%, the inter-coder reliability percentage of the research is confirmed.

3 Findings and Results

In the open coding stage, the interview texts were considered, and after line-by-line study, relevant points to the topic were extracted. The result of this process was notes considered as initial data from which concepts were extracted. During the interviews, initial concepts were extracted, shown in Table 1 based on open coding.

Table 1

Analysis of Key Interview Points

Questions	Extracted Concepts
What do you think are the causal factors affecting the understanding of the dark aspects of organizational myths at Yazd University of Medical Sciences?	Jealousy in the workplace, self-esteem, destructive leadership, unethical work environment, leader narcissism, feeling of rejection at work, political behaviors of managers, organizational structure, role conflict and overload, emotional exhaustion, bully leadership, job burnout, organizational jealousy, job burnout, organizational trauma, organizational indifference, organizational reward system, ambiguity and role conflict, feelings of injustice and discrimination, job stress, workplace violence, job frustration, job stress
What do you think are the contextual factors affecting the understanding of the dark aspects of organizational myths at Yazd University of Medical Sciences?	Environmental dynamism, competition, group cohesion, extra-organizational factors, cultural and organizational values, group cohesion in the organization, unfavorable labor market conditions, complexity of laws and regulations, political dependency, weak work culture, fairness in payments, religious and political insight of employees, pathology of anti-value programs and activities, performing responsibilities with the aim of achieving divine satisfaction
What do you think are the intervening factors affecting the understanding of the dark aspects of organizational myths at Yazd University of Medical Sciences?	Organizational support, job satisfaction, organizational loyalty, organizational virtue, perception of procedural and distributive justice, emotional intelligence, political intelligence, authentic leadership style, trustworthy leadership, ethical leadership, job enthusiasm of employees, resilience of employees, cultural intelligence and socially acceptable behaviors, meritocracy in organizational human resources, commitment to transparency in organizational accountability process, integrating social demands, diligence in citizen awareness, use of elites
What do you think are the strategies affecting the understanding of the dark aspects of organizational myths at Yazd University of Medical Sciences?	Strengthening organizational identity, training and appreciation and supervisor support, creating a culture of teamwork, fostering a culture of criticism, empowering employees, enhancing psychological capital, fostering professional ethics
What do you think are the results and consequences of understanding the dark aspects of organizational myths at Yazd University of Medical Sciences?	Decrease in interpersonal trust, organizational failure, job anxiety, organizational silence of employees, organizational cynicism, increase in job abandonment and employees' intention to leave the organization, decrease in organizational health, decrease in employees' mental health
What dimensions and components do the dark aspects of organizational myths include?	Tyranny and bullying at work, undermining colleagues, negative counseling, accepting bribes, stealing from the organization, working slowly, wasting resources, leaving work early, deceptive communications, secrecy, addressing financial challenges, delayed allocation of budgeted funds, no discrimination in dealing with corruption, lack of cost-saving and operational efficiency

The second stage of data coding, known as axial coding, involves categories interconnecting as a network. The aim of this coding stage is to restore order and coherence to the coded data, categorizing, combining, and organizing a large amount of data, and reassembling them in new ways. In this stage of the qualitative data analysis process with a Grounded Theory approach, axial coding was performed through continuous and multiple comparisons of the concepts generated in the previous stage. In the classification

and coding process, there may be lexical similarity between concepts, which is natural in qualitative research, and the concept can be categorized based on the closest semantic and conceptual relationship it has with each of the categories. Twenty sub-categories were extracted from 112 identified concepts in the open coding stage. These categories are more abstract than the concepts of the previous stage. Then, based on the sub-categories, 10 main categories were created, shown in [Table 2](#).

Table 2

Axial Coding

Main Category	Sub-Category	Concepts
Organizational Causes	Organizational Culture	Non-acceptance and intolerance of critiques and criticisms, such as suppressing others, limiting flexibility and organizational growth, creating a toxic work environment, and reducing employee motivation and energy
	Organizational Structure	Lack of communication and transparency in the transfer of information and knowledge, reducing coordination and interaction among organization members, leading to misunderstandings and mistakes in the implementation of projects and various activities
	Organizational Reward System	Different job titles, good salary rewards, significant changes in job titles, quick decisions in career development, firm belief in the values and goals of the organization
Individual Causes	Personality Traits of Employees	Sense of responsibility and social commitment in the workplace, informational knowledge in the work area, appropriate educational methods for applying ideas
	Psychological and Mental States	Non-authoritarian leadership style of superiors, power of political parties, organizational gameplay, feelings of failure, low self-esteem
Internal Organizational Environment	Organizational Values	Jealousy in the workplace and the value of organizational silence, lack of trust between individuals, organizational cynicism, unconventional personal behaviors, increased public trust, feedback culture and teamwork

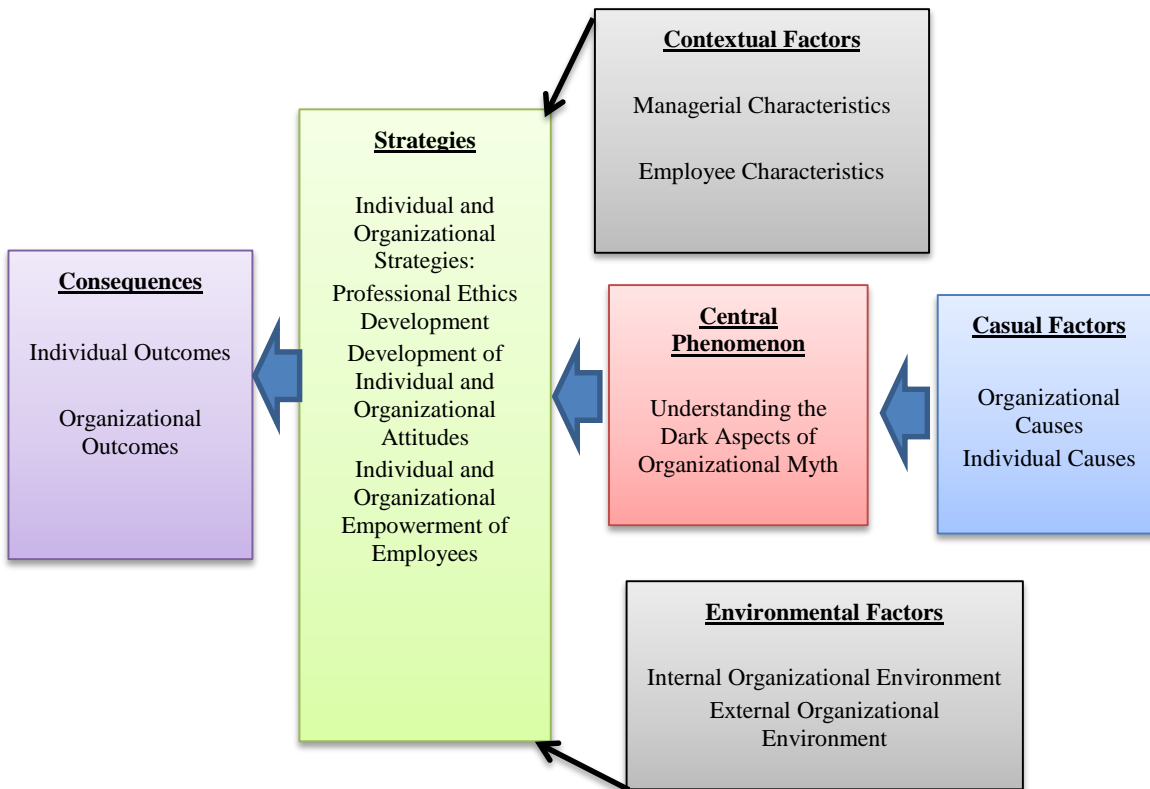
External Organizational Environment	Legal Requirements		The importance of health and safety issues for citizens, support for the implementation of participatory projects, infrastructure development and support for cultural and educational activities, creating value for society, adherence to the principle of mutual respect, voluntary work and effort, creating hope and assurance in employees
	Environmental Changes		Support from senior organization managers, interaction and communication between organizational units, commitment to full compliance with environmental laws and requirements, raising awareness and environmental culture among citizens, preventing greenhouse gas pollution, managing water, energy, and waste consumption, reducing environmental pollutants, improving and enhancing the organization's relationship with shareholders, the importance of health and safety issues for citizens, support for the implementation of participatory projects
Individual and Organizational Strategies	Professional Development	Ethics	Honesty, justice and fairness, loyalty, striving for superiority and competitiveness, respect for others, empathy with others, observance and respect for social values and norms
	Development of Individual and Organizational Attitudes	of and	Fighting monopolism, adopting a transparent and honest approach towards stakeholders, enhancing trust and confidence in stakeholders, excellence in the stakeholder-related area, ensuring justice and fairness towards employees, avoiding nepotism in employee selection, addressing public complaints
	Individual and Organizational Empowerment of Employees	and of	Autonomy, influence, meaningfulness, trust, individual and group participation, performing responsibilities with the aim of achieving divine satisfaction
Individual Outcomes	Inappropriate Behavioral Outcomes		Lack of responsibility, indecisiveness, unfair behavior, lack of trustworthiness, inclination to increase job turnover
Organizational Outcomes	Inappropriate Performance Outcomes		Unclear organizational goals for everyone in the organization, non-compliance with a specific strategy in the organization, lack of future orientation towards organizational development, nepotism in the organization, non-compliance with the law in the organization, existence of individual interests in line with work in the organization, encouragement towards non-compliance with law and regulations in the organization
Understanding the Dark Aspects of the Organization	Deviant and Destructive Behaviors	and Employee	Stealing organizational assets, damaging organizational property, personal use of organizational assets, deliberate and premature departure from the organization, performing personal tasks during office hours, spending excessive money for personal work purposes
	Sabotage and Anti-Citizenship Behaviors	Employee	Ignoring non-work responsibilities (such as commitments to their families), undermining subordinates in public, ignoring opinions contrary to management views, baseless praise and flattery, creating a disruptive and troublesome environment
Managerial Characteristics	Leadership Development		Self-awareness, balanced processing, ethics orientation, relational transparency, continuous improvement of customer-oriented processes, legal and judicial support for employees, high insight and transparency of technology
	Competency Development		Intellectual and mental competencies, personality competencies, executive competencies, acceleration in executing affairs, preserving secrets and information of partners and respecting their privacy, effective management of relationships with stakeholders, removing barriers to increased partner participation
Employee Characteristics	Intellectual and Operational Attitudes	and	Adherence to the principle of mutual respect, voluntary work and effort, creating hope and assurance in employees, promoting internal commitment, improving the public image of the organization, democracy with respect for human rights

Ultimately, indicators of understanding the dark aspects of the organization were selected as the central category, and other concepts and categories were organized within a

Grounded Theory paradigm model (causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervening factors, strategies, and outcomes), shown in [Figure 1](#).

Figure 1

Final Paradigm Model



The description of the model for understanding the dark aspects of organizational myths, narratively based on Grounded Theory, is as follows: One of the important and necessary actions for effective planning and management of understanding the dark aspects of the organization is identifying employees' deviant and destructive behaviors, and anti-citizenship organizational behaviors of employees, which are considered the foundation of understanding the dark aspects of the organization. Therefore, managing the understanding of the dark aspects of the organization requires identifying individual outcomes including irresponsibility, indecisiveness, unfair behavior, lack of trustworthiness, and inclination to increase job turnover, which if the necessary conditions are facilitated, define and determine the understanding of the dark aspects of the organization. In the direction of managing the understanding of the dark aspects of the organization, it is also necessary to provide the necessary contexts and conditions based on external and internal organizational conditions. Moreover, to manage the understanding of the dark aspects of organizational myths, it is essential to use appropriate actions and strategies, including individual and organizational strategies such as: strategies for developing professional ethics (honesty, justice and fairness, loyalty,

striving for superiority and competitiveness, respect for others, empathy with others, observance and respect for social values and norms), strategies for developing individual and organizational attitudes (fighting monopolism, adopting a transparent and honest approach towards stakeholders, enhancing trust and confidence in stakeholders, excellence in the stakeholder-related area, ensuring justice and fairness towards employees, avoiding nepotism in employee selection, addressing public complaints), strategies for individual and organizational empowerment of employees (autonomy, influence, meaningfulness, trust, individual and group participation, performing responsibilities with the aim of achieving divine satisfaction). It is noteworthy that facilitators regarding the above strategies include managerial characteristics variables such as: leadership development (self-awareness, balanced processing, ethics-oriented, relational transparency, continuous improvement of customer-oriented processes, legal and judicial support for employees, high insight and transparency of technology), competency development (intellectual and mental competencies, personality competencies, executive competencies, acceleration in executing affairs, maintaining secrets and information of partners and respecting their privacy, effective management

of relationships with stakeholders, removing barriers to increased partner participation), as well as employee characteristics including: intellectual and operational attitudes (adherence to the principle of mutual respect, voluntary work and effort, creating hope and assurance in employees, promoting internal commitment, improving the public image of the organization, democracy with respect for human rights).

4 Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this study was to present a model for understanding the dark aspects of organizational myths at Yazd University of Medical Sciences. The main issue of the research and the concern of the researcher was that the emergence of some manifestations of understanding the dark aspects of the organization, according to the managers and planners of this university and the occurrence of negative consequences thereof, such as dissatisfaction of stakeholders and service users of the organization and neglect of this issue in the executive arena, has led to the failure to utilize related opportunities and consequently, to the dissatisfaction of stakeholders in this field.

In response to the first research question, the causal factors affecting the understanding of the dark aspects of the organization at Yazd University of Medical Sciences were identified; in such a way that, according to the results of the interview analysis, "organizational and individual causes" are considered as factors that play an active role in the model of understanding the dark aspects of the organization and without these factors being prepared, the model of understanding the dark aspects of organizational myths is not realized. One of the interviewees commented on this matter: One of the dark aspects in organizational myth-making is ignoring the role and importance of individual and professional development and growth of organizational members. In some cases, mythic personalities may tend to focus only on achieving organizational goals and organizational success, without allocating sufficient attention to the personal and professional development and growth of organizational members.

As mentioned, based on the research findings, the causal conditions for understanding the dark aspects of organizational myths are: Organizational causes include: Organizational culture (non-acceptance and intolerance of critiques and criticisms, such as suppressing others, limiting flexibility and organizational growth, creating a toxic work environment, and reducing employee motivation and

energy), Organizational structure (lack of communication and transparency in the transfer of information and knowledge, reducing coordination and interaction among organization members, leading to misunderstandings and mistakes in the implementation of projects and various activities), Organizational reward system (different job titles, good salary rewards, significant changes in job titles, quick decisions in career development, firm belief in the values and goals of the organization), and also Individual causes include: Personality traits of employees (sense of responsibility and social commitment in the workplace, informational knowledge in the work area, appropriate educational methods for applying ideas), which are consistent with the findings of previous studies (Foroutan et al., 2023; Grewal & Tansuhaj, 2001; Oliveira et al., 2021) that showed in mastering the art of crisis, every organizational crisis becomes an existential crisis and the organizational myth is cited to chart a practical course that ensures continuous organizational coherence around the values expressed in the myth. As a new practical path is limited by the logic of the myth, it does not disrupt the distinct personality and historical legacy of the organization. Since the organizational myth, due to its symbolic nature, provides multiple reference frameworks, it enables the reprioritization and reinterpretation of its constitutive values, thereby providing space for successful adaptation to new conditions. Our findings contribute to the historical turn and the revival of old institutionalism in organizational studies. And are in line with the previous findings (Aria Parsa & Dalvi Esfahan, 2023; Ghanbari & Erfani Zadeh, 2017; Laureiro-Martínez & Brusoni, 2018; Ma et al., 2021) which showed that individual factors (cognitive and personality traits of individuals), group factors (interactions of individuals), and organizational factors (including structure, processes, and tasks) and environmental factors (including cultural factors, resources, legal and power and politics) affect the emergence of the dark aspects of the organization. According to Jung, without the experience of opposites, there is no wholeness, and the essence of the conscious mind is discrimination, and if it is to be aware of things, it must distinguish opposites: "Likewise, opposites seek each other in nature, and in the unconscious, the situation is the same, especially in the case of the exemplary unity, namely the Self. But as soon as the unconscious begins to manifest itself, the opposites become divided, as happened in the creation of the world; for every act of beginning is an act of consciousness, a creative act, and all our symbols relating to

the creation of the universe exist because of this psychological experience.

Based on analyses related to the second question, the contextual factors affecting the understanding of the dark aspects of organizational myths at Yazd University of Medical Sciences are identified as: The internal organizational environment includes: Organizational values (jealousy in the workplace and the value of organizational silence, lack of trust between individuals, organizational cynicism, unconventional personal behaviors, increased public trust, feedback culture, and teamwork), The external organizational environment includes: Legal requirements (the importance of health and safety issues for citizens, support for the implementation of participatory projects, infrastructure development and support for cultural and educational activities, creating value for society, adherence to the principle of mutual respect, voluntary work and effort, creating hope and assurance in employees), Environmental changes (support from senior organization managers, interaction and communication between organizational units, commitment to full compliance with environmental laws and requirements, raising awareness and environmental culture among citizens, preventing greenhouse gas pollution, managing water, energy, and waste consumption, reducing environmental pollutants, improving and enhancing the organization's relationship with shareholders, the importance of health and safety issues for citizens, support for the implementation of participatory projects) were categorized.

Contextual factors are specific conditions that affect actions and interactions. In fact, the context includes a set of specific factors that, unlike causal factors, indirectly affect the central category, which is the creation of dark aspects of organizational myths in the organization. These results showed that the influence of myth existed throughout the life of traditional humans, and this influence can be found in both the common and thoughtful individuals of the modern era; because today's human is the same technocrat rebel and the same Prometheus who rebels for greater understanding and uses his emotions towards the manifestation of more awareness. Stories and legends of organizational mission and goals act as powerful tools in creating organizational commitment and motivation. These stories play a significant role in forming and strengthening organizational identity and shaping organizational culture and are of great importance. Stories and legends that promote the values and principles to

which the organization is committed. Stories and legends related to organizational values and principles play a significant role in organizational myth-making. These stories serve as a means to promote and advertise the fundamental values and principles of the organization and help members to adhere to these values in their behavior and decisions. As one of the most fundamental tools of organizational myth-making, stories and legends of organizational values and principles help define strategies and enhance organizational culture. These stories act as guides for appropriate behavior within the organization and encourage members to conform to the principles and values of the organization.

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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