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Presenting a Model for Human Capital Excellence with a Cultural Approach in the Education System of Qom Province

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A B S T R A C T

Purpose: This study aimed to design and validate a model for human capital excellence with a cultural approach in the educational system of Qom Province.

Methods and Materials: This applied research was conducted using a sequential mixed-methods design with an exploratory approach. In the qualitative phase, systematic literature review and expert interviews were used to extract key dimensions and indicators of culturally grounded human capital excellence. Twenty experts in education and human resource management were selected through purposive sampling. The Delphi technique was employed to refine indicators. In the quantitative phase, a sample of 250 educational staff in Qom was surveyed using a researcher-made questionnaire. The data were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) via SmartPLS 3, with additional validity and reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha, convergent and discriminant validity, and content validity measures.

Findings: The results showed that the model had good fit indices (GoF = 0.683; R^2 = 0.886 for the main construct), indicating strong predictive power and structural coherence. The path coefficients for the three main dimensions—individual (β = 0.941), group (β = 0.933), and organizational (β = 0.785)—were all significant at $p < 0.01$. Subcomponents such as skills and competencies, cultural communication, collaborative work, and leadership systems exhibited high factor loadings (all above 0.79), confirming their critical role in the conceptual framework. The Q^2 values for predictive relevance of constructs ranged from 0.234 to 0.292, suggesting acceptable forecasting strength.

Conclusion: The findings confirm that a culturally adapted model of human capital excellence is both statistically valid and contextually relevant for Qom's educational system. Emphasizing cultural sensitivity, collaboration, and institutional support can significantly enhance the quality and sustainability of human capital in education.

Keywords: *Excellence, Human Capital, Cultural Approach, Education, Thematic Analysis*

1. Introduction

In the contemporary era of educational transformation and innovation, the notion of human capital excellence has garnered increasing attention as a critical pillar for the sustainable development of educational systems. Human capital, encompassing knowledge, competencies, skills, attitudes, and values of individuals within an organization, plays a vital role in shaping institutional performance and driving systemic progress (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). Within the educational context, particularly in dynamic and culturally rich environments such as Iran's Qom Province, it is imperative to explore human capital through a culturally responsive lens to ensure both equity and efficacy in pedagogical practices and administrative functions (Ebrahimi et al., 2021). The integration of cultural dimensions into human capital models fosters inclusive and adaptable educational ecosystems that address the diverse needs of learners and educators alike (Deardorff, 2016).

The dynamic interplay between organizational culture and human resource practices further accentuates the importance of culture-driven approaches to human capital excellence. Scholars such as Hofstede have emphasized how national and organizational cultures influence employee behavior, management strategies, and institutional structures (Hofstede, 2011). In educational organizations, these cultural norms shape professional conduct, learning interactions, and policy implementation, necessitating models that accommodate both global standards and local sensibilities (Shehadeh & Abu Al-Haija, 2024). Within Qom's educational landscape—deeply rooted in religious heritage and sociocultural complexity—the development of a culturally-informed human capital excellence model becomes not only relevant but essential for systemic alignment and responsiveness.

The drive toward excellence in educational institutions is not only a national policy imperative but also an operational necessity in the face of global competition, technological advancement, and social diversity. As emphasized by Wiśniewska and Grudowski, excellence culture in educational institutions is characterized by values such as continuous improvement, innovation, accountability, and inclusivity (Wiśniewska & Grudowski, 2024). When these values are embedded within human resource structures and cultural mechanisms, they enable schools to transcend conventional limitations and evolve into adaptive, learning-oriented organizations. Indeed, excellence in human capital within schools directly translates into enhanced teaching quality, improved student outcomes, and higher institutional resilience (Selgi et al., 2021).

A growing body of research supports the need to customize excellence frameworks to the particular social, economic, and cultural contexts of their implementation. As demonstrated by Yahyipour et al., human capital excellence models designed for the Iranian context must be tailored to local organizational and environmental realities, such as centralized educational governance, cultural conservatism, and evolving technological capacities (Yahyipour et al., 2022). Such models require not only the technical apparatus of human resource management but also the cultural literacy necessary to interpret and respond to the sociocultural dynamics embedded in educational institutions. The present study builds upon this recognition by integrating a cultural approach into the design of a human capital excellence model specifically for the Qom Province education system, thereby addressing the need for locally resonant and culturally adaptive strategic planning.

The cultural approach to human capital excellence emphasizes competencies such as intercultural awareness, inclusivity, collaboration, and adaptability—traits essential for educational professionals operating in increasingly diverse and complex environments (Deardorff, 2016; Liu et al., 2021). Teachers and administrators must be equipped not only with subject-matter expertise and pedagogical skill, but also with the cultural sensitivity to navigate pluralistic classrooms and engage diverse stakeholders. Ebrahimi et al. stress the role of culturally relevant pedagogy in empowering teachers to recognize and respond to the unique identities and cultural backgrounds of their students, thereby promoting equity and engagement (Ebrahimi et al., 2021). Moreover, training initiatives and professional development programs must cultivate intercultural competence as a core component of teacher excellence in diverse communities such as Qom.

From an organizational behavior perspective, culture is also a determinant of innovation, commitment, and performance. Nafchi and Mohelská found that organizational culture serves as an indicator of institutional readiness to embrace transformation and innovation, especially in the context of Industry 4.0 and digital modernization (Nafchi & Mohelská, 2020). When translated into educational settings, this perspective underscores the importance of fostering a progressive, open, and culturally respectful atmosphere within schools. Such environments encourage staff participation, innovation in teaching strategies, and collaboration across roles and departments—

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all of which contribute to human capital excellence (Hughes, 2018). In Qom's traditional and often conservative educational institutions, balancing such modernizing tendencies with cultural values is a delicate but essential endeavor.

Studies on the role of leadership, motivation, and structural alignment in achieving excellence further reinforce the significance of culturally responsive models. Tadić and Barać argue that investments in human capital, when aligned with cultural and structural enablers, yield tangible outcomes in institutional performance and stakeholder satisfaction (Tadić & Barać, 2023). Likewise, Paramita et al. have shown that organizational commitment and job satisfaction are significantly influenced by cultural congruence between individual values and institutional norms (Paramita et al., 2020). These findings are particularly salient for Qom's educational leadership, which must align strategic objectives with deep-seated cultural frameworks in order to mobilize and retain a motivated and capable workforce.

Another vital consideration is the link between organizational excellence and digital transformation, especially in post-pandemic education systems. Margherita's systematization of human resource analytics emphasizes the necessity of integrating data-driven decision-making into HR planning to optimize talent management and institutional agility (Margherita, 2022). In culturally sensitive settings, such analytical approaches must be harmonized with normative values and ethical considerations, ensuring that data usage respects cultural codes and reinforces inclusive practices. This duality between efficiency and cultural fit represents a defining challenge in developing a culturally attuned excellence model in regions like Qom.

Furthermore, empirical evidence highlights that excellence in human capital development is not solely an outcome of internal management practices but is also shaped by broader socioeconomic and policy environments. Gruzina et al. point out that human capital dynamics are closely intertwined with economic development cycles and societal trends, meaning that excellence initiatives must be responsive to macro-level changes (Gruzina et al., 2021). Alizadeh's pathology of human resource management within Iran's NAJA organization also reveals systemic constraints and policy misalignments that can undermine human capital development if left unaddressed (Alizadeh, 2019). Hence, a comprehensive model of human capital excellence in education must incorporate contextual analysis and policy integration to sustain long-term impact.

At a micro level, initiatives to enhance human capital must focus on psychological, motivational, and ethical dimensions. Ghanbari Nasrabadi et al. developed a psychological capital training package rooted in Islamic values, illustrating how culturally grounded interventions can enhance organizational excellence and personal fulfillment simultaneously (Ghanbari Nasrabadi et al., 2019). Similarly, Mesfin et al. demonstrated the correlation between perceived organizational culture and job satisfaction in healthcare settings, a finding equally applicable to schools where staff morale directly affects educational quality (Mesfin et al., 2020). In the Qom context, where value-laden education and cultural identity are deeply intertwined, attention to such internal factors is not just beneficial—it is imperative.

Finally, any model of human capital excellence in education must account for the multi-level, multi-stakeholder nature of school ecosystems. Zamaniyan et al. employed artificial intelligence techniques to prioritize managerial competencies within Iran's gas sector, suggesting that sophisticated tools can also be applied to identify competency gaps and optimize human resource strategies in education (Zamaniyan et al., 2021). Such integrative, evidence-based approaches are essential for ensuring that the model developed is not only theoretically sound but also operationally viable.

In sum, the development of a culturally responsive model for human capital excellence in Qom Province's educational system is both timely and necessary. This study aimed to design and validate a model for human capital excellence with a cultural approach in the educational system of Qom Province.

2. Methods and Materials

This study falls under the category of applied research. The data were designed in a mixed and sequential format, with an exploratory approach followed by a descriptive-analytical one, incorporating both inductive and deductive methods. In the qualitative phase, the first stage of the statistical population included all scientific articles and academic works available in domestic and international databases, as well as documents and regulations related to the research domain. At this stage, 20 articles were selected through purposive non-random sampling based on the PRISMA guidelines. The selection criteria for the articles

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included recency, relevance to the research topic, high scientific quality, and diversity of perspectives.

In the second stage, which involved the Delphi technique, the statistical population comprised faculty members and researchers specializing in business management, organizational behavior, and human resource management. Considering that the typical number of experts on a Delphi panel ranges from 10 to 30, 20 experts were selected for this study who were directly or indirectly associated with human capital excellence and cultural issues. The criteria for selecting experts included holding a doctoral degree, having teaching experience, and possessing practical expertise in related fields.

In the quantitative phase, the statistical population consisted of all employees of the Qom Department of Education, considered the primary respondents. Based on the recommendations of theorists, a minimum sample size of 200 is suggested for structural equation modeling. In this study, 256 respondents were selected using convenience sampling, and the questionnaire was distributed both online and in person. After excluding six incomplete questionnaires, data analysis was conducted on 250 valid responses.

The data collection instrument in the qualitative phase involved a systematic review of literature and reputable scientific sources. This process included thorough searches in academic databases and relevant articles, and content validity at this stage indicated comprehensive conceptual coverage in the existing literature. A flow diagram was used to screen the articles, with clear limitations set in terms of time, location, and subject matter. Internal validity results confirmed that the findings were not influenced by external factors and were accurately explained. Validation was performed using a 27-item checklist based on the PRISMA model and Cohen's Kappa coefficient to measure agreement.

In the second stage of the qualitative phase (Delphi technique), a Delphi worksheet was designed, and experts were asked to provide their opinions and suggestions regarding the proposed indicators. The validity of the Delphi worksheet was ensured through the formulation of simple and clear questions. Moreover, the reliability of the Delphi worksheet was assessed using internal consistency and temporal stability methods, both of which confirmed the reliability of the tool.

In the quantitative phase, data were collected through researcher-made questionnaires. The internal validity construction process of the questionnaire included a systematic review of literature and article screening, which resulted in the identification of 20 key articles. These factors served as the basis for the development of Delphi worksheet items, and through expert consensus in three final rounds, they were localized. The questionnaire consisted of 43 items rated on a Likert scale, aimed at evaluating and validating human capital excellence from a cultural perspective. To assess the content validity of the questionnaire, content validation and Lawshe's method were employed. Additionally, construct validity was assessed using both convergent and discriminant validity via SmartPLS 3 software. The reliability of the measurement instrument was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and other reliability criteria, with the results indicating the instrument was reliable.

3. Findings and Results

Table 1 presents the basic themes, organizing themes, global themes, interviewee codes, frequencies, and related sources.

Table 1

Classification and Naming of All Extracted Themes from the Systematic Literature Review and Expert Interviews

Dimension	Component	Indicator	Source	Interviewee Code
Individual	Skills and Competencies	Teachers' level of education and specialization in disciplines related to education and their ability to teach cultural concepts	—	I2, I9, I15, I17
		Ability to adapt to diverse cultural conditions and environments	(Paramita et al., 2020)	—
		Ability to use financial software such as account management systems, CRM, and e-payment platforms	(Margherita, 2022; Shehadeh & Abu Al-Haija, 2024)	—
		Work experience	(Nafchi & Mohelská, 2020)	—
		Flexibility in accepting different cultures	(Tadić & Barać, 2023)	I12, I9, I17, I20, I4

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		Ability to interact with clients and provide financial advice using digital tools	(Margherita, 2022; Mesfin et al., 2020; Nafchi & Mohelská, 2020)	—
		Creativity and innovation	(Alizadeh, 2019)	—
	Personal Development and Learning	Teachers' understanding of various cultures and ability to create inclusive environments for culturally diverse students	(Ebrahimi et al., 2021)	I3, I8, I20, I6, I19
		Awareness of cultural differences	(Deardorff, 2016)	—
		Participation in cultural and professional workshops	—	I2, I7, I4, I5, I10, I11, I12
		Teachers' motivation and commitment to improve educational quality and human capital	—	I1, I8, I7, I13, I18
		Attitudes toward knowledge construction	(Ebrahimi et al., 2021)	—
Group	Collaboration and Teamwork	Ability to collaborate with colleagues	(Zamaniyan et al., 2021)	—
		Collaboration and experience-sharing among teachers on cultural and educational matters	—	I6, I4, I9, I12, I20, I18
		Existence of learning groups to share best practices	—	I1, I9, I10, I14, I16, I17, I20
		Participation in diverse social and cultural activities	(Paramita et al., 2020)	—
	Interpersonal Communication	Highly structured communication and fast feedback	(Hughes, 2018)	—
		Teachers' communication with students and families regarding values and local cultures	—	I5, I6, I10, I14
		Ability to build social networks in multicultural contexts	(Shehadeh & Abu Al-Haija, 2024)	—
		Empathy toward others' experiences from their cultural perspective	(Gruzina et al., 2021)	—
		Parental involvement in school cultural-educational activities	—	I9, I7, I3, I21, I4, I10, I15
		Joint cultural events among culturally diverse students	—	I9, I3, I10, I4, I5, I18, I17
		Effective communication with individuals from other cultures	(Deardorff, 2016)	—
Organizational	Organizational Culture	Perceived organizational support	(Margherita, 2022)	—
		Value creation for all stakeholders	(Liu et al., 2021)	—
		Culture in educational institutions and support for cultural innovation	—	I9, I1, I3, I6, I5, I15, I14, I16, I20
		Infrastructure development	(Wiśniewska & Grudowski, 2024)	—
		Enabling space for experimentation and exposure to cultural experiences	(Liu et al., 2021; Tadić & Barać, 2023; Yahyipour et al., 2022)	—
	Organizational Structure	Simple organizational structure	(Hughes, 2018)	—
		Delegation of authority to teachers and principals in educational-cultural planning	—	I5, I7, I6, I3, I13, I11
		Transparent structure defining roles and responsibilities	—	I5, I12, I10, I6, I17, I20, I19
		Participation in decision-making and policy processes	—	I20, I6, I3, I15
		Minimal clerical staff	(Hughes, 2018)	—
	Leadership and Management	Participatory leadership empowering staff input	(Mesfin et al., 2020)	I13, I14, I4, I11
		Educational policies emphasizing culture and diversity	—	I1, I9, I10, I15, I14, I16
		Role of digital leadership in promoting innovation	(Yahyipour et al., 2022)	—
		Realistic and effective decision-making	(Anwar & Abdullah, 2021)	—
		Value-driven leadership and attention to professional development	(Alizadeh, 2019)	I20, I14, I4, I13, I19, I17, I15
	Reward and Motivation Systems	Existence of formal/informal reward systems for educational/cultural contributions	(Tadić & Barać, 2023)	I7, I10, I13, I20
		Positive, supportive work environment fostering belonging	—	I9, I5, I7, I10, I11, I16, I20
		Encouraging knowledge sharing as a motivational factor	—	I5, I7, I9, I10, I6, I17, I20
		Provision of training and professional development to enhance teachers' self-worth	—	I2, I6, I7, I12, I10, I18, I20, I19
		Talent identification	(Shehadeh & Abu Al-Haija, 2024)	—

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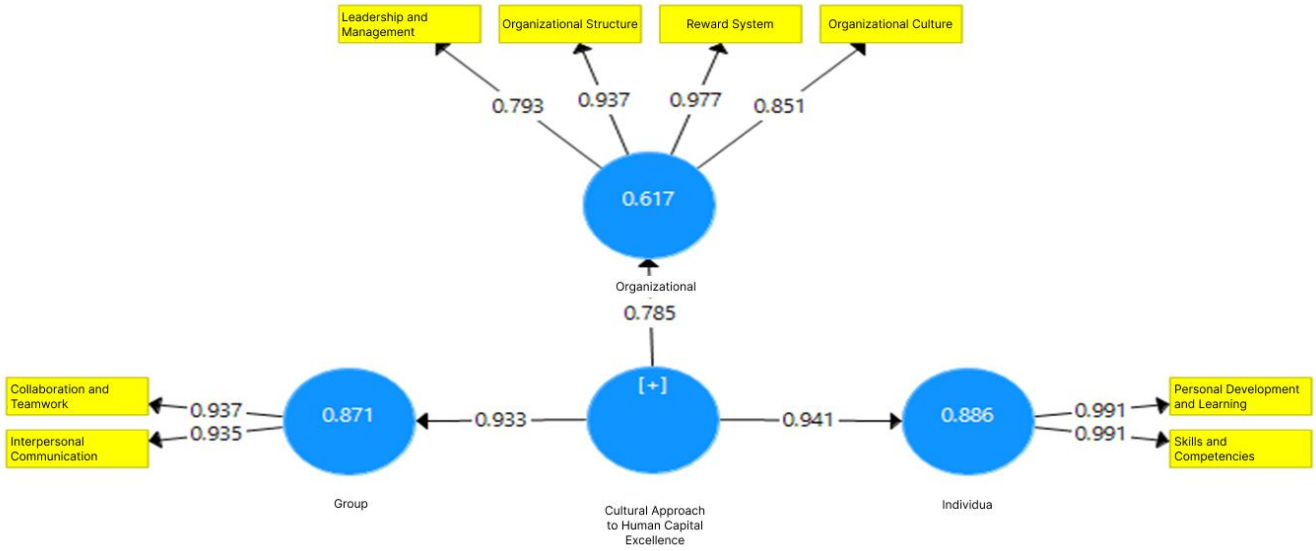
five levels, which reflects the frequency of the codes. In the next step, in order to evaluate the model, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was utilized. Accordingly, after designing the model structure, adding model constraints, and selecting the maximum likelihood estimation method, the model was executed, and the path diagram was generated. The following figures represent the fitted path diagrams based on the empirical data.

Figure 1

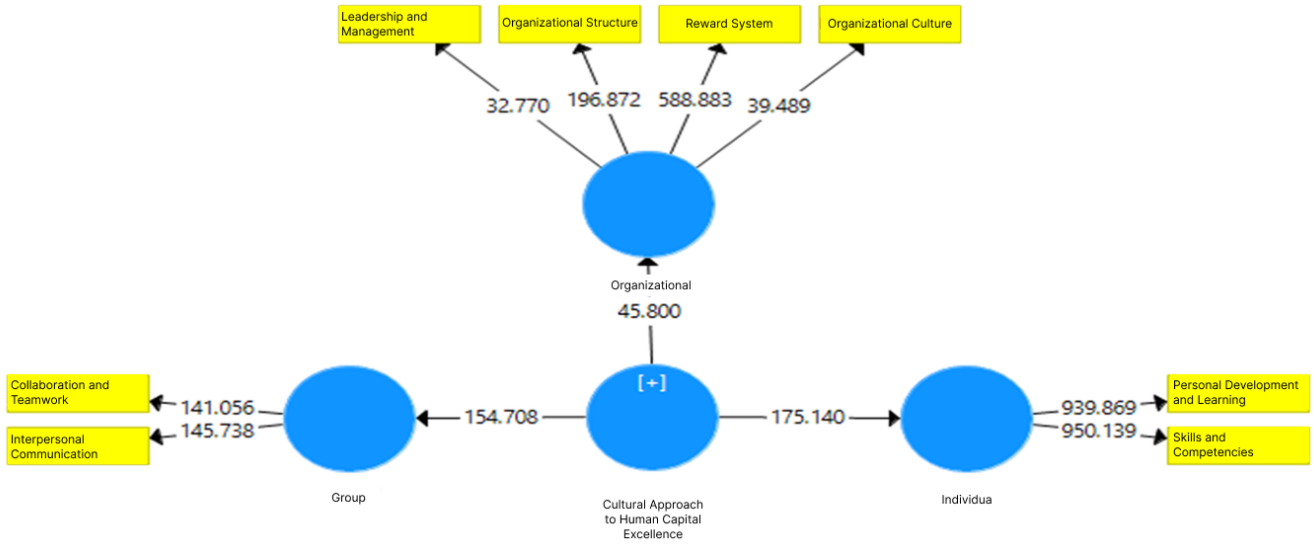
Graphical Representation of Path Coefficients in the Model of Human Capital Excellence with a Cultural Approach in Qom Province's Educational System



The next figure illustrates the significance levels of the path coefficients.

Figure 2

Graphical Representation of Significance Coefficients in the Model of Human Capital Excellence with a Cultural Approach in Qom Province's Educational System



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The following table displays the path coefficients along with their t-values and their status. As can be seen, all proposed paths have been confirmed.

Table 2

Path Coefficients, t-values, and Their Statistical Significance

Path	Path Coefficient	t-value	Status
Human Capital Excellence with Cultural Approach ← Individual Factors	0.941	175.140	Confirmed
Human Capital Excellence with Cultural Approach ← Group Factors	0.933	154.708	Confirmed
Human Capital Excellence with Cultural Approach ← Organizational Factors	0.785	45.800	Confirmed

The purpose of evaluating the overall model fit is to determine how well the entire model aligns with the empirical data used. Structural Equation Modeling is a combination of confirmatory factor analysis and multivariate regression analysis. In this approach, the overall model test includes both the measurement model assessment (for reliability and validity) and the structural model assessment (for path coefficients and explained variance).

The R^2 index for endogenous latent variables represents the influence of independent variables on dependent variables. Threshold values of 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67 are considered benchmarks for weak, moderate, and strong explanatory power, respectively. For the present model, R^2 values were calculated as 0.886, 0.617, and 0.871.

This index indicates how much of the variability in the indicators (items) is explained by their corresponding constructs. The average communality index, used to determine convergent validity, was found to be 0.59.

This index is calculated using the geometric mean of the average R^2 and average communality index for the entire model. The formula is:

$$GoF = \sqrt{(\text{average communality} \times \text{average } R^2)} = \sqrt{(0.59 \times 0.791)} = 0.683$$

Since the calculated GoF value for the research hypothesis model exceeds 0.36, this indicates a good model fit.

This index reflects the model's predictive relevance for dependent variables. Threshold values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate weak, moderate, and strong predictive power, respectively. The Q^2 values for the study's variables were 0.292, 0.234, and 0.285, all within the desirable range. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the model demonstrates acceptable predictive power across the variables.

The Non-Normed Fit Index indicates how well the proposed model improves the fit by comparison to a null model. Values greater than 0.90 are considered acceptable. For the current model, the NFI was calculated to be 0.975, confirming the appropriateness of the model structure.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the tested model exhibits a good fit with the sample data. Moreover, since all factor loadings for observed variables exceed 0.4 and are statistically significant at levels above 1.96, the constructs within this model demonstrate satisfactory construct validity.

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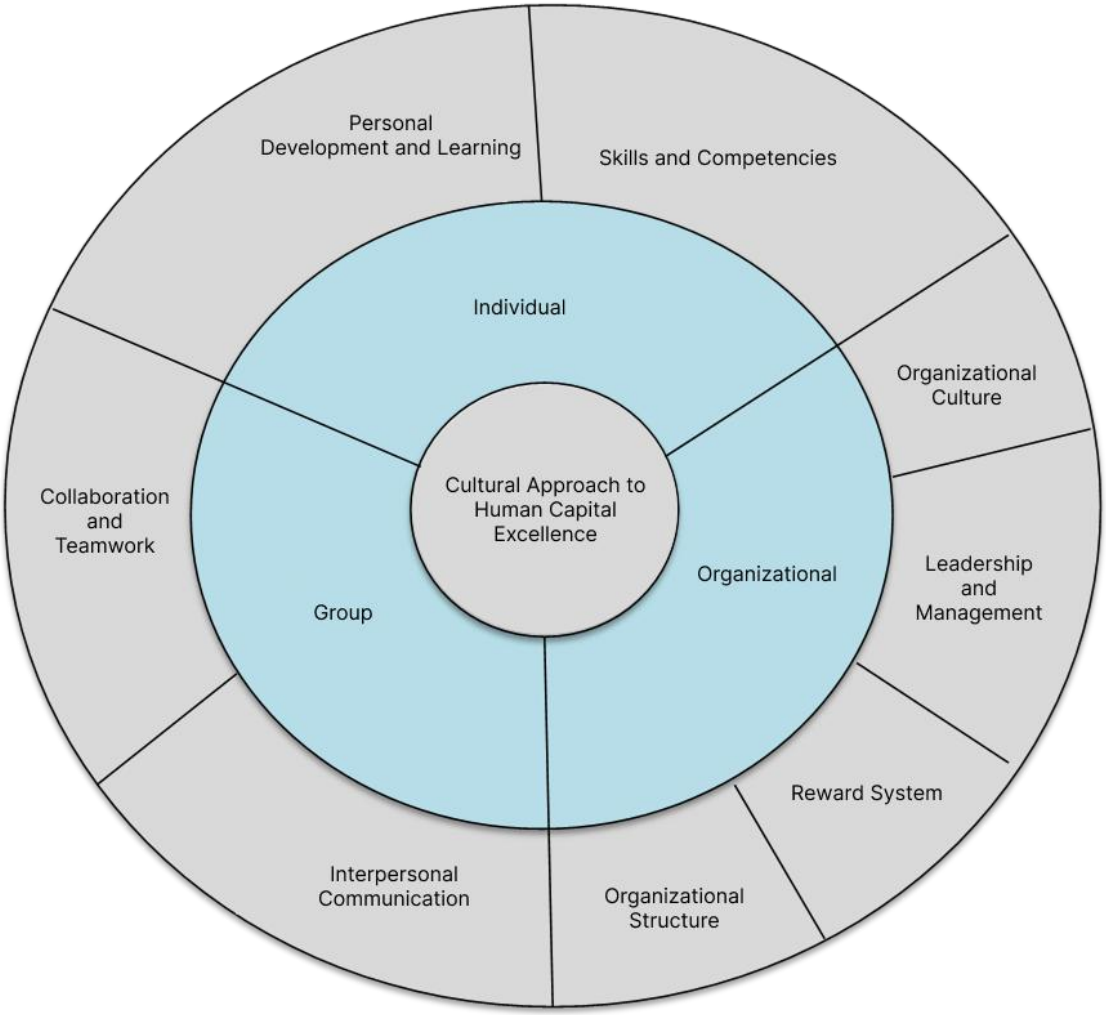
Figure 3

The Model of Human Capital Excellence with a Cultural Approach in the Educational System of Qom Province



4. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study confirmed the significant impact of individual, group, and organizational factors on human capital excellence with a cultural approach in the educational system of Qom Province. The structural equation modeling results revealed strong and statistically significant path coefficients: 0.941 for individual factors, 0.933 for group factors, and 0.785 for organizational factors. These results collectively demonstrate that cultural considerations at all levels of educational functioning play a pivotal role in shaping the quality, resilience, and productivity of human capital in schools. Among the three domains, individual factors had the strongest influence, underscoring the centrality of personal competencies, intercultural awareness, and continuous learning in educational excellence.

The significance of individual-level factors such as skills, competencies, and intercultural sensitivity aligns closely with the frameworks proposed by Deardorff (2016), who emphasizes intercultural competence as an essential learning outcome in internationalized educational contexts (Deardorff, 2016). In the culturally rich environment of Qom, the ability of teachers and administrators to navigate cultural complexities is indispensable. Liu et al. also stress that cultural competence is not a static trait but a developmental process that should be embedded in

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professional learning and HR development systems (Liu et al., 2021). Furthermore, the recognition of personal motivation, adaptability, and innovation as essential indicators of human capital excellence confirms earlier findings by Hughes, who identified ambidextrous capabilities—simultaneous exploration and exploitation—as key to sustained organizational performance (Hughes, 2018).

Group-level factors, including collaboration, teamwork, and interpersonal communication, also exhibited a strong and positive influence on human capital excellence. These findings reinforce the literature that sees social capital and relational coordination as catalysts for professional growth and organizational learning. Ebrahimi et al. underscore the need for culturally relevant pedagogical communities, where teachers learn from one another and collectively reflect on how best to serve diverse student populations (Ebrahimi et al., 2021). The strong effect of group processes in the current study further aligns with Putnam's theory of social engagement, wherein participation in diverse social settings fosters trust, shared goals, and mutual accountability—ingredients essential for educational improvement in pluralistic societies (Selgi et al., 2021). Moreover, these results mirror findings by Yahyipour et al., who illustrated how collaborative learning environments and horizontal decision-making improve teacher engagement and human capital development in Iranian educational settings (Yahyipour et al., 2022).

Organizational factors—including structure, leadership, culture, and reward systems—though slightly less impactful than individual and group dimensions, were still significantly associated with human capital excellence. This echoes previous research indicating that institutional support structures and cultural climate are indispensable for employee empowerment and educational transformation. According to Hofstede, organizational culture not only defines what is valued within an institution but also guides how individuals behave within it (Hofstede, 2011). In the context of this study, educational institutions that cultivated inclusive values, distributed leadership, and professional autonomy were more likely to foster excellence in human capital. Additionally, the findings correspond with the work of Anwar and Abdullah, who demonstrated that structured HR practices—when aligned with cultural values—enhance overall organizational performance (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021).

The role of organizational culture as a predictor of performance has been widely discussed in both public and private sector literature. For instance, Eniola et al. found that organizational culture strongly mediates the effectiveness of total quality management in Nigerian SMEs (Eniolaa et al., 2019). Likewise, Nafchi and Mohelská linked cultural openness and digital readiness to organizational innovation in Industry 4.0 contexts (Nafchi & Mohelská, 2020). In line with these studies, the present findings indicate that culturally coherent school cultures that support innovation, professional growth, and shared decision-making are crucial in the development and retention of high-performing educational staff. The application of these principles within Qom's educational system—where tradition, religion, and local norms heavily shape administrative practices—offers a unique confirmation of these globally validated insights.

In addition, the model's predictive strength, as evidenced by Q^2 values above the 0.2 threshold and an overall GOF index of 0.683, confirms that the cultural approach adopted in this study provides not only statistical validity but also practical relevance. The findings support the claim made by Shehadeh and Abu Al-Haija that human resource practices must be evaluated through culturally and institutionally relevant frameworks in order to achieve institutional excellence (Shehadeh & Abu Al-Haija, 2024). Moreover, the strong explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.886$ for the full model) substantiates the arguments made by Margherita, who emphasizes the role of analytics and structured modeling in HR systems to identify performance levers and competence gaps (Margherita, 2022).

Leadership emerged as an integral organizational factor contributing to human capital excellence. The study validated that participatory leadership styles, digital facilitation, and value-based management play a significant role in mobilizing teachers toward collaborative and culturally responsive educational goals. These results are in agreement with the findings of Tadić and Barać, who highlighted the transformative power of leadership investment in business excellence through human capital development (Tadić & Barać, 2023). Similarly, Mesfin et al. identified leadership's role in shaping organizational culture and job satisfaction in Ethiopian primary hospitals, showing the cross-sectoral relevance of these constructs (Mesfin et al., 2020). In educational institutions, where value transmission and personal development are central to the mission, leadership grounded in cultural empathy and vision is especially critical.

Reward and motivation systems also received empirical validation in this study, particularly in their informal dimensions. Teachers and administrators in Qom

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emphasized that recognition, appreciation, and a sense of belonging played stronger roles in motivating them than purely financial incentives. This complements the psychological capital framework proposed by Ghanbari Nasrabadi et al., which integrates Islamic ethical principles to enhance employee commitment and institutional excellence (Ghanbari Nasrabadi et al., 2019). Cultural recognition as a motivator not only enhances job satisfaction but also reinforces identity and purpose in value-driven contexts like Qom, where teaching is often viewed as a religious and national duty.

Furthermore, the hierarchical structuring of the model—visualized in the path diagrams—suggests a multidimensional and multilevel interaction between individual, group, and organizational dynamics. This confirms the need for comprehensive and integrated models in human capital research. As Zamaniyan et al. demonstrated through their AI-based prioritization of managerial competencies, modeling complex human systems requires a layered understanding of role expectations, competency frameworks, and performance metrics (Zamaniyan et al., 2021). The present study extends this approach by contextualizing those competencies within the cultural and educational landscape of Qom, offering a refined and applicable model for similar regions.

This study also provides evidence in support of integrating culturally grounded educational design with operational HR models. Paramita et al. showed that when organizational commitment is culturally congruent with personal beliefs, performance improves and attrition declines (Paramita et al., 2020). The alignment of professional identity with cultural values, as illustrated in this research, suggests that human capital excellence is not merely a matter of skills and training, but a product of value harmonization, ethical coherence, and contextual relevance.

Despite the strengths of this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the sample was geographically restricted to Qom Province, which, due to its unique socioreligious context, may limit the generalizability of findings to other regions. The cultural specificity that enriches this model may also narrow its direct applicability elsewhere without adaptation. Second, while the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods strengthened the model's validity, the reliance on self-reported data from interviews and questionnaires may have introduced bias. Third, although the model achieved high statistical fit, dynamic factors such as policy changes, leadership turnover, and shifts in educational priorities were not longitudinally tracked, which may affect the stability of the model over time.

Future studies should expand the geographic scope of sampling to include multiple provinces or countries with diverse cultural and educational profiles to test the universality and adaptability of the proposed model. Comparative studies between religious and secular educational systems could offer deeper insights into the cultural nuances of human capital development. Additionally, longitudinal designs would be valuable in assessing the evolution of cultural competencies and organizational maturity over time. The integration of emerging technologies such as AI and machine learning to track and predict human capital development trends could also enrich the field of educational HR analytics.

Educational policymakers and administrators should embed cultural responsiveness as a core element of human resource development plans. Teacher training programs should include structured modules on intercultural competence, inclusive pedagogy, and collaborative learning. Schools should foster open organizational cultures that balance traditional values with innovative practices, enabling both individual excellence and collective growth. Leadership development programs should emphasize participatory styles and value-based decision-making to empower staff and align institutional goals with cultural expectations. Finally, recognition systems—formal and informal—should be designed to honor contributions that reflect not just academic performance, but also ethical commitment and cultural sensitivity.

Authors' Contributions

Authors equally contributed to this article.

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

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were under the ethical standards of the institutional and, or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

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