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Designing a Model for the Dimensions of Competency-Based Managerial Governance: A Smart Administrative System Approach

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Abstract

The present study aims to design a model of the dimensions of merit-based managerial governance with an intelligentization approach to the administrative system. In the qualitative phase, the research method was descriptive-exploratory, employing the meta-synthesis method. In the quantitative phase, a descriptive-survey approach was adopted using Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM).




The statistical population in the qualitative phase (meta-synthesis section) consisted of 415 articles in the fields of merit-based managerial governance and intelligent organizations. Using the Sandelowski and Barroso method, 45 articles were selected as the sample. Among 20 experts, 15 were purposively selected to participate in a focus group discussion regarding the dimensions of the model.

In the quantitative phase, 15 experts were engaged to respond to the CASP questionnaire and complete self-interaction matrices within the framework of Interpretive Structural Modeling.

The results of the meta-synthesis identified 38 components within 125 indicators. Through the focus group process, 20 components were categorized into 10 dimensions, including process governance, structural and organizational governance, managerial governance, ethics-oriented governance, economic and social governance, legal and regulatory governance, benevolent behavior governance, technology- and expertise-oriented governance, and political governance.

Finally, using the Interpretive Structural Modeling method, the proposed model was designed and the types of variables were determined.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

After World War II, governance emerged as a new concept in the development literature. In 1989, the World Bank first used the term governance to describe the need for institutional reforms in African countries. Subsequently, the concept of good governance was used by the President of the World Bank to refer to efficient public services, a reliable judicial system, and an accountable government (Kamrani et al., 2023). On the other hand, in the knowledge era, intelligence is one of the undeniable requirements for organizational survival and represents the total knowledge that an organization possesses about the environment in which it competes. In fact, an intelligent organization should function as a system in which participatory decision-making is adopted, employee collaboration and team building are considered fundamental principles, and decentralization is encouraged in order to facilitate organizational learning and process integration (Mehdibeigi & Yaghoubi, 2021).

In the contemporary era, attention to the characteristics of merit-based governance based on religious teachings and adopting them as a model is of considerable importance, as it can provide a guiding framework for Islamic governments (Tahmasbi Baldaji, 2023). Nahj al-Balagha, like a shining sun, has continuously illuminated the course of history, guiding sincere seekers of truth and satisfying the spiritual thirst of those in search of knowledge. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the concept of merit-based governance based on the teachings of Amir al-Mu'minin (Imam Ali, peace be upon him). Accordingly, the research question addressed in this study is: What is the model of merit-based governance for an intelligent organization based on the teachings of Nahj al-Balagha?

To clarify the theoretical gap in the literature, previous studies such as Newman et al. (2022), Ismail and Al-Assa'ad (2020), Dovali et al. (2023), Yaghoubi et al. (2022), Zohrabi et al. (2022), and Saberifar (2020) have examined factors related to intelligent governance, including the strength of democracy, smart businesses, social cohesion, policies and regulations, and intelligent economic competition. These studies have also discussed challenges of intelligent governance such as the lack of digital infrastructure development, gaps in data and statistics within governance systems, digital security issues, challenges related to digital literacy, weaknesses in inter-organizational information integration, and limitations in big data visualization and dashboarding in governance systems. Moreover, some studies have addressed elements of intelligent organizations, including intelligent mobility, intelligent living, intelligent people, intelligent economy, and intelligent environment.

Furthermore, studies on governance within Nahj al-Balagha, such as those by Montazeri et al. (2018) and Rastegar and Mousavi Davoudi (2022), have identified factors such as religious transparency, behavioral transparency, structural transparency, economic transparency, rule of law, public participation, openness to criticism and accountability, responsibility and responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, and meritocracy as components of merit-based governance. However, a review of previous research indicates that most studies have examined good governance or merit-based governance separately. Few studies have attempted to design a comprehensive model of merit-based governance specifically for organizations. Therefore, considering the above, the main research question of this study is: How can a

model of the dimensions of merit-based managerial governance be designed with an intelligentization approach to the administrative system?

Theoretical Framework

Merit-Based Governance

Merit-based governance encompasses the mechanisms and processes through which citizens, groups, and civil institutions pursue their interests, exercise their legal rights, and fulfill their obligations. In general, governance emphasizes the concept of partnership rather than mere participation (Bagherzadeh Khodashahri et al., 2023).

Intelligent Organization

Intelligent organizations need to adapt to their environment in order to perform smart and timely actions (Hamidzadeh et al., 2023). In the global knowledge economy, the task of an intelligent organization is to address the problem of knowledge obsolescence by providing timely access to learning content and identifying the best ways to obtain knowledge resources that are increasingly distributed (Gope et al., 2018). The development of this concept toward becoming a society reflects the emergence of intelligent organizations (Mehdibeigi & Yaghoubi, 2021).

Dovali et al. (2023), in a study entitled *Designing an Organizational Intelligentization Model*, stated that the categories related to the concept of intelligentization include tools for adapting to environmental changes, transformation into a learning organization, and the use of technology. The causal subcategories include organizational factors, human factors, technical factors, and economic factors. The contextual conditions include organizational culture, decision-making infrastructures, legal infrastructures, and business skills, while the strategic categories include decision-making strategies, economic strategies, cultural development, and the provision of infrastructures.

Tahmasbi Baldaji (2023), in a study entitled *Analyzing the Characteristics of Merit-Based Governance Based on Nahj al-Balagha*, examined the key indicators of merit-based governance and analyzed them within cognitive, political, social, and economic dimensions.

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Research Findings

To analyze the research findings, the meta-synthesis method and Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) were employed. The results of the meta-synthesis indicated that 38 components were identified within 125 indicators. Through the use of a focus group, these components were consolidated into 20 components across 10 dimensions, including: process governance, structural and organizational governance, managerial governance, ethics-oriented governance, economic and social governance, legal governance, benevolent-behavior governance, technology- and expertise-oriented governance, and political governance. Finally, using the Interpretive Structural Modeling method, the proposed model was designed and the types of variables and their relationships were determined.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to design a model of merit-based managerial governance dimensions with an approach toward the intelligentization of the administrative system. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of previous studies, including those by Dovali et al. (2023), Tahmasbi Baldaji (2023), Manouchehri and Karimi (2023), Nasuri (2023), Alavian et al. (2023), Nohadi and Siahkali Moradi (2021), Montazeri et al. (2018), Falletta and Combs (2019), Pazireh et al. (2019), and Istudor et al. (2016). Nohadi and Siahkali Moradi (2021) indicated that the greatest difference between the two types of governance lies in accountability. There are also major differences in combating corruption; however, there is less divergence between the two governance types in terms of transparency and rule of law. Governance in the Islamic Republic of Iran differs from other governance systems in the world. The primary distinction lies in the fact that governance within an Islamic system must be grounded in Sharia principles. Another important issue concerning good governance is legislation. Lawmaking requires thoughtful consideration and research; therefore, since institutions such as the Guardian Council and some other bodies operate at the final stage of the legislative process, intermediary institutions should play a more active role in supporting the legislative process so that public issues can be addressed more accurately and effectively.