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## ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

### Presenting a Model of Employee Non-Participation in Iranian Government Organizations: An Application of the Integrated Approach of Theme Analysis and Fuzzy DEMATEL

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#### ABSTRACT

The study aimed to develop a model of employee disengagement in Iranian government organizations. The research was applied in purpose, descriptive-analytical in nature, and conducted using a sequential mixed-method design. This study proposes a Non-Participation Model for employees in Iranian government organizations. Using Theme Analysis and Fuzzy DEMATEL the study identifies the main psychological, managerial, and cultural factors leading to employee disengagement and explains how these factors interact to create non-participation. In the qualitative phase, effective dimensions and components of disengagement were identified through semi-structured interviews with experts, and data were analyzed using thematic analysis and coding techniques. A researcher-developed questionnaire was administered, and data were analyzed using the fuzzy DEMATEL technique to determine cause-effect relationships and the degree of influence among components. Sampling was non-probability and continued until theoretical saturation. The quantitative phase involved academic experts in human resources and executive experts (senior and middle managers, supervisors) with a minimum of five years of experience in government organizations, selected through purposive non-probability sampling. Findings revealed a disengagement model based on six overarching dimensions and 26 components. The dimensions included: (1) lack of attention to optimal use of human resources (6 components), (2) neglect of cooperation and interactions (3), (3) lack of patronage and support (4), (4) neglect of a critical and empathetic culture (2), (5) lack of attention to employees' psychological needs (5), and (6) weak guidance and leadership (6). The study further prioritized sub-criteria and outlined their interrelations, offering practical recommendations for government organizations. ©authors.

## 1. Introduction

One of the key concepts discussed in the field of human resource management is the concept of employee participation in the organization (Mo & Beh, 2025)

In fact, participation is the process of employee involvement in the strategic/tactical decisions of the organization, which occurs formally/ informally, directly/indirectly, and with a certain degree, level, and limits. The goal of participation is to reduce conflicts and confrontations between managers and employees by involving employees in decision-making (Rai et al., 2017).

Organizational employee participation eliminates silence and paves the way for the emergence of intellectual capital (Constantino & Kristina Karizza, 2022). By increasing employee participation in decision-making, transparency and benefits of the organization are also improved and individual decisions are significantly reduced (Han et al., 2020; Kumagaya et al, 2025). Meanwhile, some researchers consider the most important consequence of employee participation in organizations to be the transfer of power to employees (Maleki et al., 2022). However, although participation in organizations is inevitable and its implementation is necessary, because the decisions made in today's organizations are very complex and internally interdependent, a kind of participation avoidance is abundantly seen among employees within today's organizations (Holmi et al., 2023).

The lack of employee participation in organizations can cause real damage to the productivity and profitability of the organization, and low employee participation remains a permanent problem for organizations of all sizes around the world (Gholipour Sote & Hatami, 2022). In general, the concept of participation avoidance typically refers to the unwillingness of employees to actively participate, due to some anxieties and fears that are typically from previous experiences and their current environmental awareness,

and that employees are simply seeking to maintain their current status quo (conservatism) and are afraid of any expression of opinion and active participation (Tahrani et al., 2022). Participation avoidance or participation phobia, which can impair the effective and active participation of employees in the organization, may be influenced by various factors such as fear, indifference, lack of motivation, etc. However, understanding participation avoidance or participation phobia of employees in the organization is important and key because this is typically an obstacle that, in addition to reducing individual effectiveness at work, prevents employees from fully understanding their potential and talents and has a negative impact on employee performance in the workplace (Powell, 2023). Lack of participation and participation avoidance of employees in the organization's activities is typically a warning signal that warns managers that the employee of the organization is not satisfied with the working conditions or culture of the organization, and therefore, understanding and recognizing this concept and its dimensions and components as much as possible is important and key for managers because this phenomenon is typically a contagious and multidimensional phenomenon that is significantly related to other organizational phenomena (Al-Rousan & Omoush, 2018).

Regarding the concept of participation avoidance, it seems that this phenomenon can be considered and examined from two aspects (Gheiratmand et al, 2025). First, in some organizations, despite the organization's desire, the employees themselves, due to some anxieties and fears that typically stem from previous experiences and their current environmental awareness (including the negative view of the organization's management team towards employees, seeing their current position in the organization in danger, etc.), are simply seeking to maintain their current status (conservatism) and are afraid of any

expression of opinion and active participation (Meisler, 2020). Second, in some other organizations, the aspect of participation avoidance this time can be examined not from the employees' fear but from the managers' perspective. This means that it is the managers of the organization who are afraid of the active participation of their employees for various reasons (including the risk of employees criticizing the organization's current performance, endangering the current position of the management, etc.), and therefore do not show much interest in expanding and deepening employee participation and sometimes seek to dry up the active participation of employees (Takhsha et al., 2022). It should be said that beyond the proposed ideals regarding the importance and effectiveness of employee participation in the organization, in many organizations, especially government organizations, employee participation in organizational decision-making is not very prominent, and therefore examining why many employees do not accept serious participation in the organization is an important and key issue that has attracted the attention of researchers and researchers (Tohirovich et al., 2022).

Among the numerous domestic and foreign studies conducted on the obstacles and reasons for employee non-participation in the organization, the researcher of the present study believes that employee non-participation is sometimes not due to the individual's own desire, but can have more complex aspects and stem from a kind of fear, anxiety, and panic of the individual. In view of what has been stated and the understanding that the phenomenon of non-participation as a new and pervasive phenomenon in most organizations, including government organizations, due to their specific structure, compared to organizations active in the private sector, has so far been less considered, unlike other similar and close phenomena such as organizational fear, communication avoidance, organizational silence, and employee indifference. Therefore, conducting research to clarify this structure and research concept is important because

accurate recognition and understanding of this phenomenon and its factors can provide the basis for eliminating or reducing the impact of destructive phenomena such as: organizational indifference, organizational silence, lack of motivation, and improving the level of organizational creativity.

Therefore, the present study seeks to present a model of employee non-participation in Iranian government organizations (using a combined approach of theme analysis and fuzzy DEMATEL) and in order to achieve this goal, it has raised two key questions: Question one: What are the pervasive and organizing themes of the human resources non-participation model in government organizations? The second question is, what is the relationship between the pervasive and organizing themes related to the participatory model of human resources in government organizations?

## 2. Literature Review

Powell (2023) examined the drivers of organizational silence and strategies to deal with them in a study and ultimately concluded that the most important factors influencing the reduction of organizational silence are the perception of organizational support and the dominance of the meritocracy system in organizations. In his study titled Fear and Emotional Capabilities in Government Organizations: Comparing Some of Their Effects on Employee Well-Being, Mislser (2020) empirically examined a modified mediation model in which fear mediates the relationships between perceptions of organizational politics and job strain and intention to leave the job, and emotional capabilities present in emotional intelligence moderate these mediations. His findings showed that positive emotions shape the improvement of public sector employees. In addition, the findings shed light on the differences in the contribution of emotions and emotional capabilities in the public and private sectors. Masoumi & Faizi (2021) have presented a model for breaking organizational silence in the banking industry in a study. The results of this study showed that organizational culture, management beliefs, improving ethics and

moral climate, management attitude, and laws and regulations are the most important factors affecting the breakdown of organizational silence. Whittington et al (2017) introduced an employee participation model in a study titled *Increasing Employee Participation: An Evidence-Based Approach*, including: participation prerequisites (human resource value chain, productivity management system, reward), meaningful prerequisites in the workplace (transformational leadership) - job meaning (job design) - making work meaningful (integrated faith), which results in employees including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and citizenship behavior.

Mohammadzadeh et al. (2024) in a study titled *Identifying Factors Affecting Organizational Silence and Its Impact on Managers' Decision Making*, state that the factors affecting organizational silence include individual factors (desires and interests, concerns and worries, motivations, individual traits and characteristics), interpersonal factors (communication factors), organizational factors (job factors, organizational culture, management factors, structural factors), and supra-organizational factors (social, cultural, and economic factors) that affect the quality of managers' decision-making, including (accuracy, precision, timeliness, efficiency, confidence, and decision-making follow-up). In a study titled *Designing a Model for Promoting Employee Participation in Defense Policies: Findings from a Mixed Choice Case Study Model (Islamic Republic of Iran Army)*, Angazi Ghods (2023) states that one of the most important challenges in the field of defense policies that has prevented the goals set in macro-programs and policies from being fully achieved is the lack of clarity about the boundaries of employees' duties and authorities, parallel work and duplication of work, and lack of employee participation in defense policies. Tehrani et al. (2022) in a study titled *Designing a Model for Managing Organizational Fear of Employees in Financial Organizations* state that based on the results of this study, the central category was defined in the form of subcategories of communication, performance, and

motivational dimensions. Causal conditions were categorized in the form of categories of internal and external organizational factors, contextual conditions in the form of categories of social and technological context, and intervening conditions in the form of categories of the economic status of society and psychological state that drives organizational fear. Action-reactions were also identified in the form of categories of managing the roots of fear in employees, human resource management actions, behavioral reforms, and cultural actions.

Finally, the consequences were categorized into categories of functional, behavioral, structural, and social damages. Zare et al. (2022) in a study titled *Strategizing the Organizational Fear Management Model for Employees Using the Meta-Composition Model* state that individual, organizational, environmental, and even macroeconomic and social factors cause employee fear in organizations, and this fear will lead to many organizational and individual problems. Therefore, moving towards developing an organizational fear management model will be a necessary step in the next steps.

### 3. Method

This research is applied in terms of purpose, descriptive-analytical in nature, and mixed or mixed design (qualitative-quantitative of sequential type) in terms of method. In such a way that the researcher identified the effective dimensions and components based on conducting semi-structured exploratory interviews with experts and analyzing the data using the theme analysis method in MAXQDA (using the coding method), and in the quantitative part, using a researcher-made questionnaire based on the identified dimensions and components and analyzing the data using the fuzzy DEMATEL technique in Excel, a network of cause and effect relationships and determining the degree of effectiveness and influence of each component on each other was presented. The participants of the present research in the qualitative part included university professors (with a minimum degree of assistant professor in management) and human resources

managers of government organizations (with a minimum of 5 years of work experience).

The sampling method in this part was non-probability and purposeful, and the selection of samples continued until theoretical saturation was achieved. As a result, the researcher was able to access 17 interviews with experts. The demographic description of the interviewees is presented in Table 2. The following steps were also taken to conduct the interview: a) Designing the interview questions b) Selecting individuals for the interview c) Recording and implementing the interviews; It is worth noting that the questions raised during the interview were as follows:

1. In your opinion, what factors can be effective in the emergence of human resource non-participation in government organizations?

2. In your opinion, what are the consequences and outcomes of human resource non-participation in government organizations for the organization? 3. In your opinion, how can the phenomenon of human resource non-participation in government organizations be dealt with? What are your suggested solutions?

4. What is your additional opinion on the subject under discussion?

In addition, in the present study, to examine the validity and reliability of the qualitative data, the proposed criteria according to Guba & Lincoln (1982) were used, which include 4 separate but related criteria: 1. Credibility, 2. Reliability, 3. Confirmability, and 4. Transferability.

To achieve the above-mentioned points, the researcher:

1. To achieve acceptable accuracy for the collected codes, the researcher tried to increase the accuracy of the obtained data and, in a way, increase the validity of the data by presenting the obtained codes to several experts;

2. To review the data, they were presented to the experts in the form of obtained codes and were asked to review the codes and provide suggestions for changing these codes and the themes obtained from their analysis if they had any suggestions; It is worth noting that to ensure reliability, which

implies the consistency of the research findings, the intra-subject agreement method of two coders was used. In this way, in addition to the main researcher who carried out the initial coding, another researcher separately coded the main text.

Accordingly, the closeness of the codes extracted by the two researchers indicates a high agreement between the two coders and indicates its reliability. In this study, Cohen's Kappa reliability coefficient was used to calculate the agreement coefficient between the two coders, the results of which were presented in the research findings section (Table 5). On the other hand, the statistical population in the quantitative section in order to conduct analyses related to the implementation of the fuzzy DEMATEL method consisted of all academic experts in the field of human resources with a minimum of an assistant professorship and more than 5 years of work experience, as well as executive experts including managers (senior and middle) and supervisors active in the field of human resources of government organizations in the country with at least 5 years of management experience in the field of human resources. In this stage, a non-probability purposive sampling method was used. The selected sample size in this stage was 15 experts.

The tool used to collect data in this section is a researcher-made questionnaire based on the dimensions and components surveyed in the qualitative section.

To measure its validity, face validity (a type of qualitative validity based on expert opinion) was used, which was typically approved by the experts of this questionnaire. Also, to measure the questionnaire questions, a Likert scale was used on a 5-point scale, with a minimum score of one and a maximum score of 5. In order to determine the validity and test the consistency of the components (internal correlation), the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient was used, which showed a reliability coefficient of 0.79 for all the questionnaire questions, and therefore the reliability of the questionnaire (due to the fact that the said number was higher than the criterion of 0.7 according to Nunnally (1987) was

confirmed. On the other hand, in the present study, the content analysis method was used to analyze the data in the qualitative part.

The content analysis method is a method for determining, analyzing, and expressing the patterns (themes) existing within the data.

This method, at a minimum, organizes the data and describes it in detail (Braun et al., 2014). Also, for the quantitative part, the researcher used the fuzzy de-mat method. The steps taken to implement this method were as follows:

**Step 1: Designing fuzzy linguistic expressions**

After identifying the criteria, a matrix n in n should be formed where n is the number of criteria. Then, experts are asked to specify the relationships between the criteria with verbal expressions and finally, after collecting the data, they are fuzzy in the following form. For fuzzification, Chang's (1996) fuzzy triangular number is used as follows.

*Table 1. Triangular fuzzy numbers associated with verbal variables*

Triangular fuzzy number	Number scale	Verbal variable
(0.25, 0, 0)	0	No effect
(0.5, 0.25, 0)	1	Very little effect
(75.5,0.0, 0.25)	2	Little effect
(75.1,0.5,0.0)	3	High effect
(1,1,0.75)	4	Very high effect

**Step 2: Calculating the direct correlation matrix using the average of experts' opinions**

In this step, the opinions of different experts are aggregated using the fuzzy average method. Using the following formula:

$$(1) \quad Z_{ij} = \left[ \frac{1}{P} (Z^1 \oplus Z^2 \oplus \dots \oplus Z^P) \right]_{n \times n}$$

Where P is the number of experts, Z<sup>1</sup> is the pairwise comparison matrix of the first expert, Z<sup>2</sup> is the pairwise comparison matrix of the second expert, Z<sup>P</sup> is the pairwise comparison matrix of the Pth expert, and Z is a triangular fuzzy number, Z<sub>ij</sub>= a<sub>ij</sub>, b<sub>ij</sub>,c<sub>ij</sub>.

**Step 3: Calculating the normalized average of expert opinions**

In this step, the initial direct correlation matrix is normalized using the following relation.

$$(2) \quad r = \frac{Z_{ij}}{r} = \left( \frac{a_{ij}}{r} \cdot \frac{b_{ij}}{r} \cdot \frac{c_{ij}}{r} \right) = (a_{ij} \cdot b_{ij} \cdot c_{ij})$$

$$(3) \quad r = \max_{1 \leq i \leq n} \left( \sum_{j=1}^n c_{ij} \right)$$

Where a<sub>ij</sub>, b<sub>ij</sub>, c<sub>ij</sub> are the lower, middle and upper bounds of the triangular fuzzy number, respectively, and r is the sum of the upper bounds of each row.

**Step 4: Calculate the matrix of fuzzy total relation**

In the Fuzzy DEMATEL technique, the fourth step calculating the fuzzy total relation matrix is a critical stage for revealing both direct and indirect influences among system factors. After normalizing the fuzzy direct relation matrix, the objective of this step is to compute a comprehensive matrix that captures the overall interactions among the elements. This matrix, usually denoted as  $\tilde{T}$ , is obtained using the following formula:

$$\tilde{T} = \tilde{D} (I - \tilde{D})^{-1}$$

Where  $\tilde{D}$  represents the normalized fuzzy direct relation matrix and I is the identity matrix. This formulation indicates that the fuzzy total relation matrix incorporates not only direct effects but also a chain of indirect effects (second-order, third-order, and higher), thereby providing a systemic view of the complex interdependencies among factors.

From an analytical perspective, the fuzzy total relation matrix reflects the overall influence exerted by each factor on others and the degree to which it is influenced by the system. Each element of this matrix is a fuzzy number (commonly a triangular fuzzy number) representing the total strength of influence from one factor to another. The significance of this step lies in its ability to uncover hidden and nonlinear dependencies that cannot be identified through direct relationships alone. The results derived from this matrix serve as the basis for calculating

the prominence (D + R) and relation (D – R) indices in subsequent steps, ultimately enabling the construction of the causal diagram and the identification of key driving and dependent factors within the system.

**Step 5: Defuzzify the values**

When the fuzzy operations are performed on the values, we finally reach results that are fuzzy. These fuzzy results are not easily understood and interpreted, so they must be converted to definite (ordinary) numbers.

In general, there are different methods for defuzzification, and in this research, the Rubens method is used. In this relation, *a*, *b*, and *c* are the lower, middle and upper bounds of the triangular fuzzy number, respectively, which are defuzzified as follows:

$$(4) \quad B=(a+2b+c)/4$$

*a*, *b*, and *c* are the lower, middle and upper bounds of the triangular fuzzy number, respectively.

**Step 6: Calculating the degree of influence, influenceability and interaction of each factor**

In this step, the degree of influence, influenceability and interaction of each factor is calculated using the total non-fuzzy matrix in the previous step, as follows:

D: The sum of the elements of each row (total non-fuzzy matrix) shows the degree of influence of each factor.

R: The sum of the elements of each column (total non-fuzzy matrix): Shows the degree of influence of each factor.

D-R: If this value is positive, the variable is a causal variable and if it is negative, it is considered a consequence.

D+R: The degree of influence of the factor in question in the system. The higher this value, the more interaction that factor has with other factors in the system.

**Step 7: Drawing the intensity of influence and intensity of influence (causal effect diagram)**

To draw this diagram, D-R (vertical axis of the diagram) and D+R (horizontal axis of the diagram) are calculated, and the position of each factor is determined in the diagram according to these two values.

**Step 8: Drawing the network relationship graph**

At this stage, in order to draw the network relationships, it is necessary to calculate the threshold value. With this method, partial relationships are ignored and a network of significant relationships is drawn. The threshold calculation formula is as follows:

$$(5) \quad a = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^n tij}{N}$$

**4. Findings**

**Qualitative Findings**

The first question: *What are the overarching and organizing themes of the human resources participation avoidance model in government organizations?*

As mentioned earlier, in the present study, the opinions of 17 experts were used to conduct interviews, and the demographic description of the interviewees is as follows:

**Table 2. Demographic description of the interviewees**

Interviewee	Job	Field of study	Educational Degree	Work Experience	Gender
1	University faculty member with associate degree	Public Administration	Specialized Doctorate	12	Male
2	University faculty member with associate degree	Educational Administration	Specialized Doctorate	17	Male
3	Human Resources Manager active in a government organization	Public Administration	Master's Degree	10	Female
4	University faculty member with associate degree	Business Administration	Specialized Doctorate	14	Female
5	Human Resources Manager active in a government organization	Public Administration	Specialized Doctorate	11	Male
6	Human Resources Manager active in a government organization	Information Technology Engineering	Master's Degree	10	Male
7	University faculty member with full professor degree	Sociology	Bachelor's Degree	25	Male

8	Human Resources Manager active in government organizations	Industrial Management	Specialized Doctorate	20	Male
9	University faculty member with associate degree	Financial Management	Master's Degree	13	Male
10	Human Resources Manager active in government organizations	Marketing Management	Specialized Doctorate	13	Male
11	University faculty member with associate degree	Accounting	Specialized Doctorate	12	Male
12	Human Resources Manager active in government organizations	Public Administration	Specialized Doctorate	12	Male
13	Human Resources Manager active in government organizations	Public Administration	Specialized Doctorate	18	Male
14	University faculty member with associate degree	Educational Administration	Educational Degree	23	Male
15	Human Resources Manager active in government organizations	Public Administration	Specialized Doctorate	19	Male
16	University faculty member with associate degree	Educational Administration	Specialized Doctorate	17	Male
17	Human Resources Manager active in government organizations	Public Administration	Master's Degree	12	Gender

In this section, based on the theme analysis method, the codes identified from the interviews, the aggregation of similar codes (organizing themes) and, consequently, the main identified themes (overarching themes)

with regard to the interviews conducted are listed in Tables 3 and 4. It is worth noting that due to the large number of opinions collected, the following table only includes the opinions of 3 interviewees:

*Table 3. An example of basic themes collected from the interview text along with the relevant codes*

Code specific to the basic subjects enumerated	Basic themes identified from the interview transcripts	Interviewee
1-1	Lack of attention by the organization to teamwork	First person
2-1	lack of attention by the management to feedback received from employees	
3-1	lack of transparent communication at different levels of the organization	
4-1	lack of use of employees' opinions	
5-1	lack of positive outlook towards employees	
6-1	lack of motivation for work among employees	
7-1	lack of concern among managers for the personal development of employees	
8-1	lack of use of individuals' experiences	
9-1	lack of trust in the organizational environment	
10-1	lack of attention to solving employees' problems	
11-1	lack of management's recognition of employees' abilities and capacities	
12-1	lack of freedom of action by employees	
1-2	damaged intra-organizational communications	
2-2	lack of intimacy and closeness of managers towards subordinates	
3-2	weak team building and networking	
4-2	lack of management's support and backing	
5-2	lack of giving employees the authority to act in carrying out assigned tasks	
6-2	lack of transparency in organizational procedures and processes	
7-2	lack of open communication	
8-2	lack of giving employees the opportunity to participate in decision-making	
9-2	lack of effective attendance of employees in meetings and specialized committees	
10-2	lack of a suitable atmosphere for expressing criticism and suggestions	Third person
1-3	lack of mental and emotional involvement of employees in organizational group situations	
2-3	lack of management's attention to promoting teamwork spirit	
3-3	lack of a specific mechanism in Organization to improve the level of employee job motivation	
4-3	Lack of a suitable platform for employee participation	
5-3	Lack of specific policies for encouragement and persuasion	
6-3	Lack of management support for organizational innovation and creativity	
7-3	Lack of appropriate appreciation for employee efforts	
8-3	Lack of effective methods for attracting employee participation	
9-3	Lack of clear, specific, and consistent communications at different levels	
10-3	Lack of management's attention to creating enthusiasm at the organizational level	
11-3	Weak networking in the organization	

A total of 17 interviews were conducted, and 206 codes were extracted. Subsequently, based on the aggregation of the basic theme

codes, organizing and comprehensive themes were formed and presented as components and dimensions of the research model.

**Table 4.** Aggregation of theme codes and formation of organizing and comprehensive themes

Row	Basic Theme Codes Collection	Organizing Themes	Comprehensive themes resulting from the aggregation of similar codes
1	7-10,5-2, 5-5, 4-10 6-13, 7-15, 2-16, 4-6 12-1, 7-6, 3-5 8-2, 5-7, 6-9	Lack of freedom of action and sufficient authority to participate	The organization's lack of attention to the requirements of optimal use of human resources
2	2-14, 8-9, 1-7	Lack of timely feedback to employees	
3	4-1, 2-1,11-8, 1-10, 1-5 6-8, 4-8, 16-1, 2-13	Lack of use of employees' opinions and views	
4	3-8, 9-2, 8-13, 7-13, 16-3	Lack of growth opportunities for employees	
5	7-1, 7-4, 8-4, 5-6, 6-6, 5-9 12-11, 1-13, 8-10, 6-11 2-8, 9-5	Lack of managers' attention to employees' individual development and progress	
6	4-14, 6-4, 10-9, 9-6, 11-1 9-15	Lack of recognition of employees' expectations and demands	
7	1-2, 7-2, 9-3,11-6,11-10,3-1, 10-5, 3-6, 11-9, 6-7, 5-17, 16-7 11-15, 16-8, 16-13	Weak and opaque communications within the organization	The organization's lack of attention to the requirements of cooperation and interactions
8	9-1, 12-6, 2-12, 13-14,11-5 9-8, 7-11, 14-16, 2-7, 8-3	Lack of organization's ability to gain employees' trust	
9	3-2, 11-3, 1-1, 9-10, 1-3 5-8, 2-3, 7-14	Weak team building and networking	
10	8-6,4-2, 8-7, 3-9, 9-11, 17-7 2-4, 1-6, 1-4, 5-3 6-3, 4-4, 2-5, 15-6	Lack of organizational support and support for employees	The organization's lack of attention to the requirements of cooperation and interactions
11	6-5,7-8,8-8, 7-12, 6-17 5-16, 1-15, 11-17, 7-9	Lack of timely and appropriate rewards	
12	7-3, 7-5, 12-9, 17-9	Lack of appreciation and appreciation for employees' performance	
13	5-4, 4-3, 13-6, 4-11,1-12, 6-10 6-14, 12-16, 8-1, 8-12	Lack of appropriate environment in the organization for employee participation	
14	3-7, 3-12, 3-4, 2-2 6-16, 8-11	Lack of cooperation and empathy in the organizational environment	The organization's lack of attention to the requirements of creating a culture that is open to criticism and empathy
15	9-16, 4-15, 7-7, 9-9 2-10, 13-10, 1-14, 10-2	Lack of a creative and critical atmosphere	
16	13-12, 3-14, 10-12, 11-12, 12-12 9-14, 11-14	Lack of employees' belonging and attachment to the organization	
17	5-11, 9-7, 10-1, 12-10	Employees' perception of injustice and neglect in the organization	Lack of attention to the psychological requirements of employees
18	6-1, 2-9, 3-11, 3-13 1-17, 3-3, 11-13, 17-4	Lack of work motivation among employees	
19	5-10, 2-17,10-3, 4-7	Lack of employees' enthusiasm for participation	
20	4-13, 9-12, 2-15, 4-16 3-15, 8-15, 12-15, 4-5	Feeling of insecurity and fear among employees	
21	4-12, 6-12, 1-9, 16-11, 10-6, 5-14	Centralized and bureaucratic structures of the organization	
22	3-10, 6-2, 2-6, 8-17, 10-8 5-15, 8-14	Lack of transparency in organizational procedures and processes	Lack of attention to the requirements of leadership and management
23	1-8, 10-14, 12-14, 10-11 15-10	Lack of management flexibility	
24	10-17, 5-13, 1-11	Lack of attention to meritocracy	
25	5-1, 4-9, 14-10	Lack of managers' positive attitude towards employees	
26	9-13, 10-13, 5-12, 8-5	Existence of discrimination and selective treatment of employees	

Now, considering the findings of Table 4 (output of qualitative analysis based on the application of thematic analysis method performed on statistical codes), 6 dimensions (factors or overarching themes) and 26

components (organizing themes) can be proposed. Now, considering the organizing themes and overarching themes obtained, the proposed conceptual model of the research is proposed as shown in the diagram below.

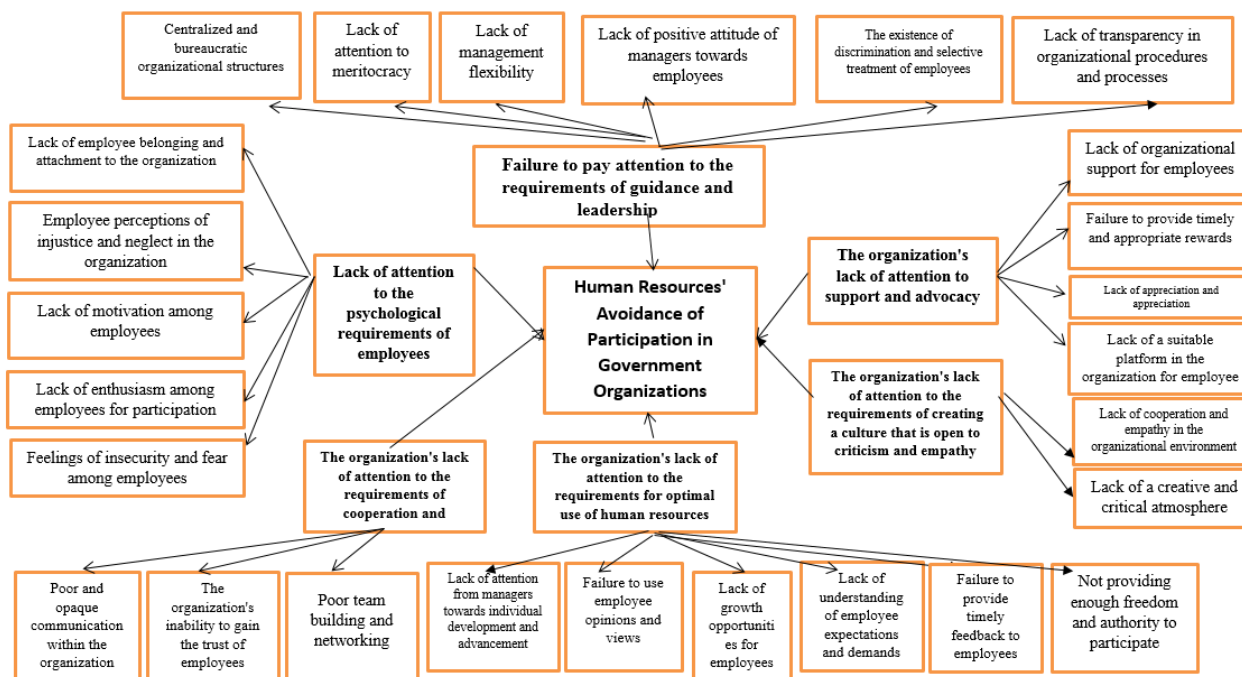


Figure 1. Proposed conceptual model of the research

**- Validation of the dimensions and components presented in the conceptual model presented**

To calculate the level of agreement of the findings obtained in the qualitative part of the research, Cohen's kappa reliability coefficient is used, the relationship of which is as follows:

$$Kappa = Pi = (PAo - PAE) / (1 - PAE) PAo$$

value is the relative agreement observed between the scales or evaluators (agreement between the two coders) PAE value is the percentage of expected agreement This index has a value between zero and one.

Zero indicates complete lack of agreement between the two coders and one indicates the highest level of agreement between the two coders. A value above 0.9 of Cohen's kappa reliability coefficient indicates the highest level of agreement between the coders. The appropriate value of Cohen's kappa reliability coefficient is above 0.6. However,

according to Landis and Koch (1977), the value related to the strength of the kappa agreement can be evaluated as follows:

*Below 0.2: weak / Between 0.21 and 0.4: normal / Between 0.41 and 0.6: average / Between 0.61 and 0.8: good / Above 0.81: excellent.*

In the present study, to examine the level of agreement between observers using the kappa coefficient, two academic experts familiar with the research topic were asked about the importance of the forming components in the two conceptual models of the research (Figure 1) in the form of a 3-option checklist (unimportant = 1, medium importance = 2, and important = 3) and then the kappa coefficient was calculated. The findings of this coefficient are as shown in the table below, which indicates the confirmation of Cohen's kappa reliability coefficient (due to the kappa coefficient numbers being higher than 0.6.

Table 5. Level of agreement between observers (two expert coders)

Components of the research model	Components of the research model	Calculated Interobserver Agreement	Calculated Interobserver Agreement
Lack of freedom of action and sufficient authority for participation	Lack of cooperation and empathy in the organizational environment	(Intercoder Agreement)	(Intercoder Agreement)
Not providing timely feedback to employees	Lack of a creative and critical atmosphere	0.68	0.68

Not using employees' opinions and perspectives	Lack of employees' belonging and attachment to the organization	0.65	0.66
Lack of growth opportunities for employees	Employees' perception of injustice and neglect in the organization	0.75	0.73
Managers' lack of attention to employees' individual development and advancement	Lack of work motivation among employees	0.69	0.77
Not recognizing employees' expectations and demands	Lack of employees' enthusiasm for participation	0.78	0.69
Weak and opaque communications within the organization	Feeling of insecurity and fear among employees	0.77	0.83
Inability of the organization to gain employees' trust	Centralized and bureaucratic structures of the organization	0.62	0.85
Poor team building and networking	Lack of transparency in organizational procedures and processes	0.88	0.89
Lack of organizational support for employees	Lack of management flexibility	0.68	0.66
Lack of timely and appropriate rewards	Lack of attention to meritocracy	0.83	0.69
Lack of appreciation and appreciation of employees' performance	Lack of managers' positive attitude towards employees	0.56	0.73
Lack of a suitable environment in the organization for employee participation	Existence of discrimination and selective treatment of employees	0.69	0.77

**Quantitative Findings**

This section of the research is in line with answering the second question, what is the relationship between the overarching and organizing themes related to the human resources participation avoidance model in government organizations? Based on the dimensions and components identified in the

qualitative section, in this section, the implementation of the fuzzy DEMATEL for the main criteria and related sub-criteria is presented as follows. At the beginning of the work, based on the identified criteria and sub-criteria, the following symbols were used to track the indicators.

*Table 6. Symbol associated with each of the main criteria and sub-criteria of the research model*

Symbol	Sub-criterion	Main criterion
A1	Not providing sufficient freedom and authority to participate	The organization's lack of attention to the requirements of optimal use of human resources (A)
A2	Not providing timely feedback to employees	
A3	Not using employees' opinions and perspectives	
A4	Lack of growth opportunities for employees	
A5	Managers' lack of attention to employees' individual development and progress	
A6	Not recognizing employees' expectations and demands	The organization's lack of attention to the requirements of cooperation and interactions (B)
B1	Weak and opaque communication within the organization	
B2	Inability of the organization to gain employees' trust	
B3	Poor team building and networking	The organization's lack of attention to support and patronage (C)
C1	Lack of organizational support and support for employees	
C2	Lack of timely and appropriate rewards	
C3	Lack of appreciation and appreciation for employees' performance	
C4	Lack of appropriate environment in the organization for employee participation	The organization's lack of attention to the requirements of creating a critical and empathetic culture (D)
D1	Lack of cooperation and empathy in the organizational environment	
D2	Lack of a creative and critical atmosphere	The lack of attention to the psychological requirements of employees (E)
E1	Lack of employees' belonging and attachment to the organization	
E2	Employees' perception of injustice and neglect in the organization	
E3	Lack of work motivation among employees	
E4	Lack of employees' enthusiasm for participation	The lack of attention to the requirements of guidance and leadership (F)
F1	Centralized and bureaucratic structures of the organization	
F2	Lack of transparency in organizational procedures and processes	
F3	Lack of management flexibility	
F4	Lack of attention to meritocracy	
F5	Lack of managers' positive attitude towards employees	
F6	Existence of discrimination and selective treatment of employees	

Implementation of fuzzy DEMATEL of the main criteria of the research model Based on the stages and steps mentioned in the

research methodology section, in this stage, fuzzy DEMATEL of the main criteria of the research model is carried out as follows

(Tables 7 to 12). In the table below, based on experts' opinions is calculated and reported. formula number 1, the fuzzy average of the

**Table 7. Average of experts' opinions**

D			C			B			A									
0.32	0.5	0.73	0.38	0.62	0.83	0.42	0.67	0.85	0	0	0	<b>A</b>						
0.52	0.75	0.92	0.40	0.63	0.87	0	0	0	0.53	0.78	0.95	<b>B</b>						
0.35	0.58	0.78	0	0	0	0.53	0.77	0.88	0.42	0.65	0.83	<b>C</b>						
0	0	0.0	0.42	0.67	0.85	0.52	0.77	0.90	0.22	0.47	0.67	<b>D</b>						
0.38	0.58	0.75	0.45	0.70	0.87	0.35	0.60	0.82	0.38	0.60	0.80	<b>E</b>						
0.25	0.45	0.70	0.17	0.38	0.63	0.10	0.32	0.57	0.28	0.52	0.75	<b>F</b>						
F						E												
0.47			0.72			0.90			0.30			0.53			0.77			<b>A</b>
0.38			0.60			0.82			0.30			0.52			0.73			<b>B</b>
0.22			0.43			0.65			0.25			0.47			0.65			<b>C</b>
0.37			0.60			0.82			0.30			0.53			0.73			<b>D</b>
0.22			0.40			0.65			0			0			0			<b>E</b>
0			0			0			0.35			0.57			0.77			<b>F</b>

In Table 7, based on formulas 2 and 3, the normalized average of expert opinions is calculated and reported.

**Table 8. Normalized average of expert opinions**

C			B			A																					
0.0916	0.1430	0.1842	0.1200	0.1758	0.2122	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	<b>A</b>																		
0.1162	0.1676	0.1946	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0935	0.1494	0.1904	<b>B</b>																		
0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0876	0.1397	0.1920	0.0851	0.1365	0.1847	<b>C</b>																		
0.0778	0.1297	0.1741	0.1140	0.1654	0.2026	0.0678	0.1200	0.1619	<b>D</b>																		
0.0556	0.1040	0.1450	0.0662	0.1144	0.1630	0.0661	0.1180	0.1704	<b>E</b>																		
0.0507	0.0989	0.1464	0.0833	0.1313	0.1801	0.1034	0.1593	0.2005	<b>F</b>																		
F			E			D																					
0.0624			0.1138			0.1663			0.0844			0.1319			0.1764			0.0487			0.1045			0.1489			<b>A</b>
0.0219			0.0694			0.1252			0.0780			0.1339			0.1823			0.1158			0.1716			0.2018			<b>B</b>
0.0357			0.0837			0.1396			0.0980			0.1538			0.1918			0.0942			0.1500			0.1905			<b>C</b>
0.0533			0.0969			0.1527			0.0830			0.1268			0.1643			0.0000			0.0000			0.0000			<b>D</b>
0.0772			0.1247			0.1694			0.0000			0.0000			0.0000			0.0669			0.1191			0.1636			<b>E</b>
0.0000			0.0000			0.0000			0.0471			0.0870			0.1428			0.0807			0.1321			0.1804			<b>F</b>

In Table 9, the total fuzzy relationship matrix is calculated and reported.

**Table 9. Calculation of the fuzzy relationship matrix**

C			B			A																					
0.1348	0.3429	1.1234	0.1650	0.3893	1.2410	0.0512	0.2251	1.0226	<b>A</b>																		
0.1580	0.3686	1.1364	0.0612	0.2475	1.0720	0.1374	0.3600	1.1869	<b>B</b>																		
0.0492	0.2149	0.9763	0.1373	0.3596	1.2364	0.1273	0.3414	1.1866	<b>C</b>																		
0.1216	0.3238	1.0858	0.1589	0.3720	1.2011	0.1130	0.3226	1.1296	<b>D</b>																		
0.0931	0.2838	1.0205	0.1095	0.3125	1.1249	0.1041	0.3028	1.0902	<b>E</b>																		
0.0945	0.2906	1.0607	0.1304	0.3377	1.1802	0.1407	0.3451	1.1524	<b>F</b>																		
F			E			D																					
0.0891			0.2674			1.0128			0.1272			0.3304			1.1293			0.0987			0.3210			1.1331			<b>A</b>
0.0555			0.2374			0.9879			0.1256			0.3399			1.1393			0.1573			0.3789			1.1760			<b>B</b>
0.0664			0.2428			1.0014			0.1387			0.3459			1.1491			0.1356			0.3529			1.1713			<b>C</b>
0.0805			0.2471			0.9754			0.1248			0.3179			1.0896			0.0502			0.2167			0.9717			<b>D</b>
0.0981			0.2572			0.9499			0.0397			0.1862			0.9040			0.1040			0.3031			1.0666			<b>E</b>
0.0283			0.1528			0.8391			0.0897			0.2766			1.0682			0.1199			0.3229			1.1183			<b>F</b>

In Table 10, the defuzzification of values based on Formula 4 is calculated and reported.

**Table 10. Non-fuzzy full correlation matrix**

F	E	D	C	B	A	
0.3883	0.4532	0.4442	0.4614	0.5122	0.3568	<b>A</b>
0.3602	0.4607	0.4952	0.4829	0.3813	0.4822	<b>B</b>
0.3672	0.4677	0.4751	0.3418	0.4890	0.4689	<b>C</b>
0.3673	0.4386	0.3424	0.4415	0.4948	0.4464	<b>D</b>

0.3717	0.3080	0.4227	0.4011	0.4386	0.4262	E
0.2708	0.4036	0.4457	0.4124	0.4660	0.4680	F

In Table 11, the degree of influence, calculated and presented using the total non-impact, and interaction of each factor is fuzzy matrix in the previous step.

Table 11. Prioritization and internal relationships of the main dimensions of the research

Criteria	D-R	D+R	R	D
			The degree of influence of each factor	The degree of influence of each factor
A	-0.0511	5.2478	2.6495	2.5984
B	-0.1312	5.4239	2.7776	2.6463
C	0.0414	5.1393	2.5490	2.5903
D	-0.1045	5.1443	2.6244	2.5199
E	-0.1677	4.8938	2.5307	2.3630
F	0.2815	4.5939	2.1562	2.4377

Now, based on the D-R and D+R values obtained from the above table, the cause-and-effect diagram of the main criteria of the research model is drawn as follows. This diagram indicates the degree of influence and impact between the criteria and their importance. The horizontal axis of the diagram indicates the importance of the criteria and the vertical axis indicates the effectiveness and impact of the criteria. As the aforementioned findings state: Given the

higher D+R value associated with criterion B, the organization's lack of attention to the requirements of cooperation and interactions, the level of influence of this factor in the system is greater than other criteria. Also, given the lower D-R value associated with criterion E, the lack of attention to the psychological requirements of employees, the level of influence of this factor in the system is greater than other criteria.

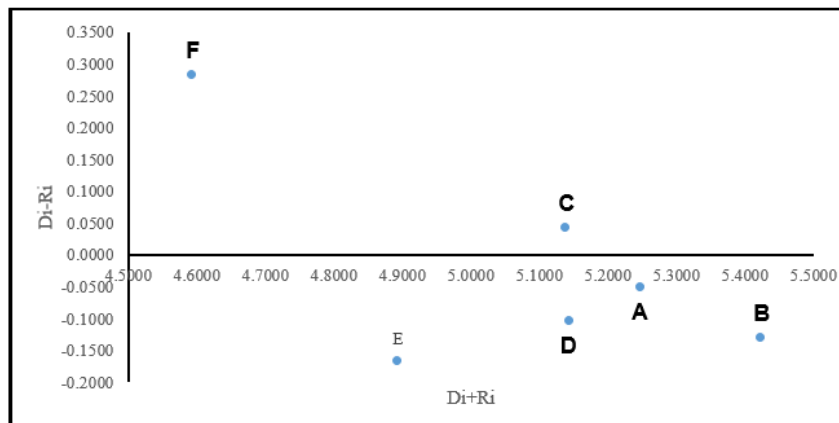


Figure 2. Cause and effect diagram of the main criteria of the research model

Also, the threshold value for the main criteria of the research model has been calculated using formula number 5, which is 0.4237. Based on this value, the type of interaction of each criterion is listed in the table below. Also, based on the output of this table, the network relationship map of the main criteria of the research model (Figure

2) has been drawn. So that the number zero indicates the absence of a relationship (the absence of an arrow in the network relationship map) and the number one refers to the presence of a relationship (the presence of an arrow in the network relationship map).

Table 12. Interaction of the main criteria of the research model based on comparison with the threshold value

G	F	E	D	C	B	A	
0	1	0	1	0	1	0	A
0	1	0	1	0	0	1	B
0	1	0	1	0	1	1	C
0	0	0	0	0	1	1	D

0	1	0	1	0	1	1	E
1	0	0	1	1	1	1	F
0	1	0	1	1	1	1	G

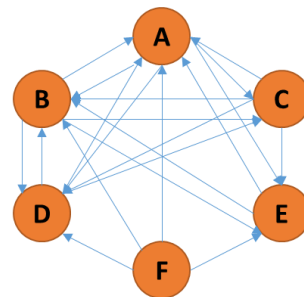


Figure 2. Network relationship map of the main criteria of the research model

Implementing fuzzy DEMATEL for sub-criteria of the research model It should be said that the steps taken to implement fuzzy DEMAT for sub-criteria of the research model are the same as the main criteria mentioned earlier. Here, to prevent the work

from becoming too bulky, only the prioritization table and internal relationships of the sub-criteria (Table 13) and also the level of interaction of the sub-criteria based on comparison with the threshold level (Table 14) are given separately:

Table 13. Prioritization and internal relationships of the sub-criteria of the research model separately

R	D	D-R	D+R	Sub-criteria
2.2571	1.894474	-0.3626	4.1516	A1
1.9358	2.05977	0.1240	3.9955	A2
2.2818	2.129666	-0.1522	4.4115	A3
2.1739	2.094699	-0.0792	4.2686	A4
2.2303	2.317507	0.0872	4.5478	A5
1.8860	2.348138	0.4622	4.2341	A6
1.7057	1.370466	-0.3353	3.0762	B1
1.4657	1.425961	-0.0397	2.8916	B2
1.2041	1.540529	0.3364	2.7447	B3
2.1550	2.00793	-0.1471	4.1629	C1
2.0229	2.059222	0.0363	4.0822	C2
1.9585	2.179719	0.2212	4.1382	C3
1.9086	1.817561	-0.0911	3.7262	C4
9.4395	9.340584	-0.0990	18.7801	D1
9.3406	9.439535	0.0990	18.7801	D2
2.9049	2.579845	-0.3251	5.4848	E1
2.1712	2.80138	0.6301	4.9726	E2
2.7917	2.696413	-0.0953	5.4881	E3
2.6895	2.486398	-0.2031	5.1759	E4
2.3238	2.86268	0.5389	5.1865	F1
2.8325	2.728129	-0.1044	5.5606	F2
3.0927	2.441961	-0.6508	5.5347	F3
2.9000	2.7383	-0.1617	5.6383	F4
2.6574	2.656553	-0.0009	5.3140	F5
2.7662	2.999795	0.2336	5.7660	F6

The findings of the above table show that Regarding the sub-criteria of the organization's lack of attention to the requirements of optimal use of human resources, given the higher D+R value associated with criterion A5, managers' lack of attention to the individual development and advancement of employees, the level of influence of this factor in the system is greater than other criteria.

This is while considering the lower D-R value associated with criterion A1, the lack of sufficient freedom of action and authority for participation, the level of influence of this factor in the system is greater than other criteria. Regarding the sub-criteria of the organization's lack of attention to the requirements of cooperation and interactions, given the higher D+R value associated with criterion B1, weak and opaque intra-

organizational communications, the level of influence of this factor in the system is greater than other criteria.

This is while considering the lower D-R value associated with criterion B1, weak and opaque intra-organizational communications, the level of influence of this factor in the system is greater than other criteria. Regarding the sub-criteria of the organization's lack of attention to patronage and support, given the higher D+R value associated with criterion C1, the lack of organizational support and support for employees, the level of influence of this factor in the system is higher than other criteria.

However, given the lower D-R value associated with criterion C1, the lack of organizational support and support for employees, the level of influence of this factor in the system is higher than other criteria. Regarding the sub-criteria of the organization's lack of attention to the requirements of creating a critical and empathetic culture, given that the sub-criteria of the organization's lack of attention to the requirements of creating a critical and empathetic culture included two sub-criteria D1 and D2, the D+R value associated with these two sub-criteria is the same (the same level of influence).

On the other hand, regarding the D-R value, sub-criteria D1, the lack of

cooperation and empathy in the organizational environment, has lower values, and therefore its level of influence in the system is higher than the other criteria. Regarding the sub-criteria of not paying attention to the psychological requirements of employees, given the higher D+R value associated with criterion E3, lack of work motivation among employees, the level of influence of this factor in the system is greater than other criteria. This is while considering the lower D-R value associated with criterion E1, lack of belonging and attachment of employees to the organization, the level of influence of this factor in the system is greater than other criteria.

Regarding the sub-criteria of not paying attention to the requirements of guidance and management, given the higher D+R value associated with criterion F6, the existence of discrimination and selective treatment of employees, the level of influence of this factor in the system is greater than other criteria. This is while considering the lower D-R value associated with criterion F3, lack of management flexibility, the level of influence of this factor in the system is greater than other criteria. The table below also shows the level of interaction of the sub-criteria of the research model based on comparison with the threshold level associated with the separation of each sub-criteria.

**Table 14.** The interaction rate of the sub-criteria of the research model based on comparison with the threshold rate related to separation

A6	A5	A4	A3	A2	A1	
0	0	0	0	0	0	A1
0	1	1	1	0	1	A2
0	1	1	0	0	1	A3
0	1	0	1	0	1	A4
1	0	1	1	0	1	A5
0	1	1	1	1	1	A6
Calculated threshold value: 0.3570						
		B3	B2	B1		
		0	1	0		B1
		0	0	1		B2
		0	1	1		B3
Calculated threshold value: 0.4881						
C4	C3	C2	C1			

1	0	1	0	C1		
1	1	0	1	C2		
1	0	1	1	C3		
0	0	0	1	C4		
Calculated threshold value: 0.5073						
		D2	D1			
		1	0	D1		
		0	1	D2		
Calculated threshold value: 4.7115						
E4	E3	E2	E1			
1	1	0	0	E1		
1	1	0	1	E2		
1	0	0	1	E3		
0	1	0	1	E4		
Calculated threshold value: 0.6635						
F6	F5	F4	F3	F2	F1	
1	1	1	1	1	0	F1
1	1	1	1	0	0	F2
0	0	1	0	0	0	F3
1	0	0	1	1	0	F4
0	0	1	1	1	0	F5
0	1	1	1	1	0	F6
Calculated threshold value: 0.4613						

### 5. Discussion

This research aimed to present a model of employee non-participation in Iranian government organizations and relied on a mixed method (qualitative-quantitative sequential). In a way that based on conducting semi-structured exploratory interviews with experts and analyzing data using the identified theme analysis method, in the quantitative part, using a researcher-made questionnaire based on the identified dimensions and components and analyzing data using the fuzzy DEMATEL technique, a network of cause and effect relationships and determining the degree of effectiveness and influence of each component on each other was presented. The research findings in the qualitative part showed that the model of employee non-participation in Iranian government organizations can be presented based on 6 dimensions (overarching themes) and 26 components (organizing themes).

Our findings align closely with the contemporary literature on *organizational*

*silence*: Factors we identified as root causes (fear of negative consequences, weak upward communication channels, and leadership shortcomings) mirror international evidence that silence often stems from contextual and cultural constraints rather than individual unwillingness to speak up. This supports interpreting non-participation in Iranian government organizations not simply as passive withdrawal but as socially situated silence shaped by perceived risks and ineffective voice mechanisms (Yağar et al, 2023).

The model’s psychological pathway (anxiety/avoidance → reduced participation) also resonates with recent work on workplace/participation phobia and related anxiety-driven avoidance behaviors: empirical studies show that work-related anxiety and phobic responses reduce employees’ willingness to engage and increase withdrawal from participatory processes, which helps explain the

“participation phobia” patterns in our Theme Analysis and the causal influence mapped by Fuzzy DEMATEL (Jasiulek et al., 2023).

These dimensions included the organization's lack of attention to the requirements of optimal use of human resources (6 components), the organization's lack of attention to the requirements of cooperation and interactions (3 components), the organization's lack of attention to patronage and support (4 components), the organization's lack of attention to the requirements of creating a critical and empathetic culture (2 components), the lack of attention to the psychological requirements of employees (5 components), the lack of attention to the requirements of guidance and leadership (6 components). In explaining these dimensions and the related components in shaping the participation avoidance model, it can be stated that:

1. Regarding the dimension of the organization's lack of attention to the requirements of optimal use of human resources, such a problem can typically lead to the selection of inefficient, dissatisfied and inconsistent forces with the organization's goals, and as a result, the participation of such incompetent and irrelevant people affects the organization's performance, and therefore organizations lose the opportunity to develop human capital and their active participation.

2. Organizational inattention to cooperation and interactions: Organizations that ignore the culture of cooperation face the formation of organizational islands and lack of synergy in different parts of the organization. Reduced interaction between units leads to waste of resources, duplication of work, and a decrease in the speed of response, and employees in such an environment feel isolated, teamwork spirit is weakened, and they avoid active participation.

3. Organizational inattention to employee support: Organizational inattention to employees leads to a decrease in psychological security and a feeling of helplessness in the workplace. In the absence of support, employees take fewer risks and their creativity is suppressed. Also, the lack

of support in crises increases stress and job burnout, which causes employees to distance themselves from any active and effective participation

4. Organizational inattention to an empathetic and critical culture: Ignoring a culture of empathy and criticality creates an atmosphere of fear, distrust, and suppression. Employees in such an organization avoid expressing their views and problems. The opportunity for organizational learning, error correction, and performance improvement is lost, and as a result, the organization will suffer from intellectual stagnation and resistance to change.

5. The organization's lack of attention to the psychological requirements of employees: An organization that is indifferent to the psychological needs of employees such as respect, motivation, meaning, and security threatens the mental health of its forces. Ignoring these issues leads to a loss of concentration, increased errors, depression, chronic stress, and job dissatisfaction, which can typically seriously affect employee job satisfaction and active participation.

6. The organization's lack of attention to the requirements of guidance and leadership:

The lack of effective leadership causes employee confusion, lack of motivation, and lack of a clear vision. In such circumstances, employees without guidance suffer from aimlessness, incoherence, and reduced organizational loyalty, and practically renounce meaningful and effective participation, and a superficial and temporary work culture prevails throughout the organization. On the other hand, the findings of the quantitative section also showed that among the six criteria of the study, the effectiveness of the criterion of the organization's lack of attention to the requirements of cooperation and interactions in the system is greater than other criteria. In addition, the effectiveness of the factor of the lack of attention to the psychological requirements of employees in the system is greater than other criteria. In the following, the prioritization and internal relationships of the sub-criteria, as well as the level of interaction of the sub-criteria based on

comparison with the threshold level, were presented separately. In such a way that the findings indicated that regarding the sub-criteria of the organization's lack of attention to the requirements of optimal use of human resources, the effectiveness of the sub-criteria of managers' lack of attention to the individual development and progress of employees is greater than other sub-criteria.

Regarding the sub-criteria of the organization's lack of attention to the requirements of cooperation and interactions, the effectiveness of the sub-criteria of weak and opaque intra-organizational communications is greater than other sub-criteria. Regarding the sub-criteria of the organization's lack of attention to patronage and support, the effectiveness of the sub-criteria of the organization's lack of support and support for employees is greater than other sub-criteria. Regarding the sub-criteria of the organization's lack of attention to the requirements of creating a critical and empathetic culture, the effectiveness of both sub-criteria is the same. Regarding the sub-criteria of the lack of attention to the psychological requirements of employees, the effectiveness of the sub-criteria of the lack of work motivation among employees is greater than the other sub-criteria. Regarding the sub-criteria of the lack of attention to the requirements of leadership and management, the effectiveness of the sub-criteria of the existence of discrimination and selective treatment of employees is greater than the other sub-criteria.

The findings of this study reveal that employee non-participation in Iranian government organizations is predominantly influenced by structural bureaucracy, centralized decision-making, low organizational trust, fear of consequences for expressing opinions, and lack of motivational systems. These factors align with previous research conducted by Hofstede (2010) and Denhardt (2003), who also emphasized that hierarchical structures and authoritarian leadership patterns reduce employee engagement. However, unlike Western research, which often highlights individual attitudes and personal preferences as major causes of non-participation (e.g.,

Morrison & Milliken, 2000), this study identifies systemic and cultural determinants—such as administrative traditionalism, ambiguity in responsibilities, and political sensitivity of public institutions—as the primary sources of silence and disengagement among employees.

Furthermore, while studies by Vakola & Bouradas (2005) and Pinder & Harlos (2001) suggest that organizational silence is mostly a psychological response to poor leadership or fear of isolation, our results indicate that in Iranian government organizations, silence is reinforced by formal rules, evaluation systems, and the absence of clear legal protection for employees who voice concerns. This demonstrates that employee non-participation in Iran is not merely a behavioral phenomenon but a consequence of institutional mechanisms. Compared to Rahimnia & Hassanzadeh (2019) in the Iranian context, our integrated approach using Theme Analysis and Fuzzy DEMATEL offers a more structural and quantitative understanding of causal relationships among the factors influencing non-participation.

The scientific contribution of this research lies in developing a comprehensive and causal model of employee non-participation in government organizations by integrating While previous studies have addressed organizational silence or lack of employee engagement separately, this study scientifically advances the field by:

- Identifying latent themes through qualitative analysis and transforming them into measurable variables;
- Determining the cause–effect relationships among factors with a fuzzy multi-criteria decision-making approach;
- Producing a validated conceptual model that explains how structural, cultural, and psychological elements interact to create employee non-participation in public organizations.

This integrated methodology not only contributes to theory-building in public administration and organizational behavior but also provides a replicable framework for future research in other cultural and

administrative contexts. Scientifically, the study bridges the gap between abstract qualitative insights and actionable quantitative prioritization, thereby enhancing the accuracy and depth of modeling employee silence and non-participation.

## 6. Conclusion

Presenting a model of employee disengagement in Iranian government organizations, relying on a mixed method (qualitative-quantitative, sequential type), can be used in different areas. Therefore, it seems that within the scope of the present study, the proposed solutions should focus on each of the sub-criteria that have the highest impact. Therefore, the suggestions are presented as follows:

### ***1. Suggestions related to the sub-criterion of managers' lack of attention to the personal development and advancement of employees:***

- ✓ Holding training courses for managers in the fields of development-oriented leadership or intra-organizational coaching in order to improve their level of awareness and understanding of the importance of the organization's human capital;
- ✓ Designing and compiling career growth or personal development programs by managers and with the effective participation of employees.
- ✓ Managers' attention to holding regular and continuous development meetings with employees to review progress, identify obstacles, and provide constructive feedback.

### ***2. Suggestions related to the sub-criterion of weak and opaque intra-organizational communication:***

- ✓ Developing and implementing an organizational communication map in order to identify communication barriers and bottlenecks in the organization, identifying key employees in the information exchange process in the organization, specifying channels, routes, and methods of transparent transfer between different units and departments of the organization.

- ✓ Promoting a culture of transparent and frank dialogue by the organization's management by using various incentive and persuasive tools;
- ✓ Continuous feedback on the quality and quantity of information transferred in different departments of the organization and efforts to improve the organization's communication processes based on this feedback.

### ***3. Suggestions related to the sub-criterion of lack of organizational support and support for employees:***

- ✓ Launching various career, psychological, and... Counseling units for the organization's employees by employing experts and specialists;
- ✓ Holding regular and continuous brainstorming and open dialogue meetings to listen to the concerns of employees;
- ✓ Identifying support barriers based on feedback from employees and trying to remove these barriers with the cooperation of employees.

## 4.

### ***Suggestions related to the sub-criterion of lack of motivation among employees:***

- ✓ Design and implement a multi-layered motivation system (material and spiritual) in order to regularly encourage superior performance and active participation of employees;
- ✓ Diversify the types of authority, duties and responsibilities of individuals;
- ✓ Involve individuals in new, creative and challenging projects.

### ***5. Suggestions related to the sub-criterion of the sub-criterion of discrimination and selective treatment of employees:***

- ✓ Develop and implement an organizational justice charter and communicate it to the entire organization in order to eliminate the roots of discrimination and injustice in the organization;
- ✓ Establish a system for monitoring and reporting violations in the form of intelligent systems and continuously provide feedback obtained from it;

- ✓ Promoting equal opportunities for growth and development through free and unrestricted access for all to all types of in-house training, participation and activity in projects, and preventing monopolization by individuals or profit-seeking units in the organization.

In addition, the proposed Non-Participation Model can inform **knowledge-driven human resource systems**, helping organizations identify disengagement patterns, design targeted interventions, and enhance employee involvement through data-informed decision-making.

### Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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