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Design and Explanation of a Human Capital Management Model in the Department of Education of Khuzestan Province Based on the Seventh Development Plan Approach

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to design and explain a comprehensive human capital management model in the Department of Education of Khuzestan Province based on the requirements and obligations of the Seventh Development Plan. In terms of objective, this study was applied research, and in terms of methodology, it employed a qualitative approach using thematic analysis. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 12 experts, including university professors and managers of the Department of Education in Khuzestan Province, who were selected through purposive and snowball sampling methods. Data analysis was conducted using the MAXQDA software. Based on data coding and analysis, the final model was identified and developed in the form of six main categories: "Development of Teachers' Professional Competencies," "Talent Management and Succession Planning," "Compensation and Motivation System," "Performance and Productivity Management," "Organizational Culture and Climate," and "Strategic Human Resource Planning." The implementation of this six-dimensional model, through aligning teacher recruitment, development, and retention processes with the macro-level objectives of the Seventh Development Plan, can contribute significantly to addressing the indigenous challenges of Khuzestan Province, such as shortages of specialized personnel and motivational needs, while simultaneously enhancing productivity and continuously improving the quality of the educational system.

Keywords: Human capital management; Education; Seventh Development Plan; Thematic analysis; Khuzestan Province.

1. Introduction

Human capital management has emerged as one of the most strategic dimensions of organizational development in contemporary educational systems. In today's knowledge-based society, educational organizations are no longer evaluated solely on the basis of infrastructure, curriculum, or administrative efficiency; rather, the quality, competency, adaptability, and professional development of human resources have become the primary determinants of institutional effectiveness and sustainable educational improvement. Teachers, school leaders, and educational administrators constitute the core intellectual and social capital of educational systems, and the capacity of these individuals to continuously develop their competencies directly affects the quality of teaching, student achievement, organizational innovation, and national development. Consequently, the development of comprehensive human capital management models in education has gained increasing



attention among researchers and policymakers worldwide (Norman et al., 2025; Yonson, 2025; Zhao, 2025). Educational systems are currently confronted with complex environmental, technological, and social changes that require educational personnel to possess advanced professional competencies, digital literacy, adaptive capabilities, and innovative thinking. Under such circumstances, traditional administrative approaches to human resource management are no longer sufficient, and strategic, competency-based, and developmental approaches have become necessary for improving organizational performance and educational quality (Babayi & Babayi, 2025; Richter et al., 2025; Sahlin, 2025).

Professional development has therefore become one of the central pillars of educational reform and sustainable organizational effectiveness. Recent studies emphasize that continuous professional development contributes significantly to enhancing teachers' instructional competence, reflective practice, emotional intelligence, and technological readiness. Effective professional development systems are no longer limited to short-term training workshops; instead, they encompass integrated systems of mentoring, collaborative learning, reflective practice, digital learning environments, and competency-based evaluation mechanisms (Alrumaih, 2025; Babayiğit et al., 2025; Dunn et al., 2025). In educational organizations, professional development not only improves individual performance but also strengthens organizational learning, institutional culture, innovation capacity, and strategic adaptability. The increasing integration of artificial intelligence, digital educational platforms, and data-driven learning environments has further transformed the nature of teachers' professional competencies and human capital development requirements (Azarabadi et al., 2025; Hashemi Juybari, 2025; Hubbard & Schulze, 2025). Consequently, educational organizations must redesign their human capital management systems in alignment with technological developments, strategic educational objectives, and emerging societal expectations.

One of the critical dimensions of modern human capital management in education is competency development. Competency-based management approaches emphasize that educational personnel should possess a combination of specialized, behavioral, technological, social, and leadership competencies to effectively perform in dynamic educational environments. Competency development frameworks enable educational organizations to align recruitment, training, performance evaluation, promotion, and succession planning processes with organizational goals and professional standards. Research demonstrates that competency-based professional development positively influences teacher effectiveness, innovative behavior, and organizational productivity (Berradia, 2025; Ramezani & Mirkazemi, 2025; Richter et al., 2025). Moreover, leadership practices play a decisive role in facilitating competency enhancement and institutional transformation. Educational leaders who support collaborative learning, participatory management, and reflective organizational culture contribute significantly to the professional growth and organizational commitment of teachers and staff members (Nhlumayo & Mabeleng, 2025; Sahlin, 2025; Yousefzadeh Chousari & Amiri Mehraban, 2024). Therefore, contemporary educational systems increasingly require strategic models that integrate leadership development, competency enhancement, organizational learning, and continuous professional growth.

Talent management and succession planning have also become increasingly important components of human capital management in educational institutions. Educational organizations face substantial challenges related to workforce aging, teacher shortages, recruitment inefficiencies, and leadership discontinuity. These challenges necessitate systematic mechanisms for identifying, attracting, developing, and retaining talented educational personnel. Talent management systems allow organizations to recognize high-potential individuals, create differentiated professional growth opportunities, and ensure leadership continuity through structured succession planning programs (Babayiğit et al., 2025; Grigg, 2025; Maspupah et al., 2025). In the context of education, succession planning is particularly critical because educational leadership directly affects institutional stability, strategic implementation, and educational effectiveness. Research indicates that organizations with effective succession planning systems demonstrate greater resilience, improved organizational continuity, and stronger institutional learning capacities (Nhlumayo & Mabeleng, 2025; Sahlin, 2025). Furthermore, talent retention strategies such as professional empowerment, organizational support, career development pathways, and recognition systems can enhance job satisfaction and reduce professional burnout among educational personnel (Babayi & Babayi, 2025; Ramezani & Mirkazemi, 2025; Yonson, 2025).

Another major issue in contemporary educational management is the design of effective compensation, motivation, and welfare systems. Human capital management literature consistently demonstrates that compensation systems influence



employee motivation, organizational commitment, productivity, and professional identity. In educational settings, inadequate compensation structures and limited welfare support can negatively affect teacher motivation, professional engagement, and organizational loyalty. Therefore, modern human capital management models emphasize competency-based compensation, performance-based incentives, recognition systems, and comprehensive welfare services as critical mechanisms for improving educational effectiveness and human resource sustainability (Babayi & Babayi, 2025; Berradia, 2025; Zanganeh, 2024).

Page | 3 Recognition and appreciation systems also contribute significantly to teachers' professional identity and intrinsic motivation. Emotional support, reflective appreciation practices, and participatory professional cultures strengthen teachers' sense of belonging and professional value (Dunn et al., 2025; Geron, 2025). Consequently, educational systems require integrated motivational and compensation frameworks that address both material and psychological dimensions of professional satisfaction.

Performance management and organizational productivity constitute additional foundational dimensions of strategic human capital management. Contemporary educational systems increasingly rely on multidimensional performance evaluation systems that incorporate competency assessment, reflective feedback, collaborative evaluation, and developmental monitoring. Traditional evaluation approaches that focus solely on administrative compliance or student examination results are insufficient for capturing the complexity of educational performance. Competency-based performance management systems provide opportunities for continuous feedback, professional coaching, self-assessment, and developmental planning (Norman et al., 2025; Richter et al., 2025; Yousefzadeh Chousari & Amiri Mehraban, 2024). Research also highlights that productivity in educational organizations is closely associated with organizational learning, digital integration, participatory leadership, and process optimization (Azarabadi et al., 2025; Glavatskikh & Pushina, 2025). The increasing use of digital technologies, educational platforms, and artificial intelligence tools has transformed educational productivity and expanded opportunities for continuous monitoring, resource optimization, and collaborative learning. Consequently, effective human capital management in education requires integrated performance systems that combine competency evaluation, professional development, technological support, and organizational effectiveness strategies.

Organizational culture and climate also play a vital role in shaping the success of human capital management initiatives in educational systems. Organizational culture influences employee motivation, professional identity, innovation, communication, and resistance to change. Educational institutions characterized by collaborative, trust-based, and learning-oriented cultures are more capable of supporting professional development, knowledge sharing, and organizational innovation (Dunn et al., 2025; Geron, 2025; Glavatskikh & Pushina, 2025). Participatory leadership and ethical organizational values further contribute to institutional cohesion and professional commitment. Studies demonstrate that educational organizations that foster transformational leadership, organizational trust, and innovation-oriented environments are more successful in implementing educational reforms and sustaining professional learning communities (Nhlumayo & Mabeleng, 2025; Norman et al., 2025; Sahlin, 2025). Furthermore, the promotion of ethical values and professional identity strengthens teachers' emotional engagement and supports the development of resilient educational systems capable of adapting to environmental and technological transformations (Geron, 2025; Yonson, 2025).

Strategic human resource planning has therefore become essential for ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of educational systems in rapidly changing environments. Strategic planning approaches enable educational organizations to forecast workforce needs, align human resource strategies with educational goals, and effectively manage organizational transformation. Sustainable human resource management practices emphasize long-term organizational adaptability, workforce development, and institutional resilience (Norman et al., 2025; Zanganeh, 2024). The integration of digital innovation, competency development, leadership preparation, and organizational transformation strategies has become increasingly necessary in modern educational management. Moreover, the emergence of Generation Z employees and the growing influence of artificial intelligence require educational organizations to redesign traditional human capital management models in ways that support technological integration, adaptive learning, and innovation-oriented professional development (Azarabadi et al., 2025; Hashemi Juybari, 2025; Hubbard & Schulze, 2025). In this context, strategic human capital management models must move beyond administrative functions and operate as comprehensive developmental systems that integrate professional growth, organizational learning, leadership development, digital transformation, and sustainable organizational effectiveness.



Despite the growing significance of human capital management in educational systems, many educational organizations continue to face challenges related to fragmented professional development policies, weak competency frameworks, insufficient succession planning, ineffective performance evaluation systems, and limited integration of digital innovation into human resource management practices. In Iran, and particularly within provincial educational systems, there remains a need for context-specific human capital management models aligned with national development strategies and contemporary educational transformations. The Seventh Development Plan emphasizes modernization, competency enhancement, digital transformation, organizational efficiency, and sustainable educational improvement, thereby necessitating the development of integrated human capital management frameworks that address these priorities. However, limited qualitative research has comprehensively examined the dimensions, components, and strategic mechanisms required for designing such models within the educational context of Khuzestan Province (Fattah Ali Begi et al., 2025; Ghorejili, 2025; Ramezani & Mirkazemi, 2025). Therefore, identifying the key dimensions of human capital management from the perspectives of educational experts and administrators can contribute significantly to policy development, organizational reform, and educational effectiveness.

Accordingly, the present study aimed to design and explain a human capital management model in education based on the approach of the Seventh Development Plan in the Department of Education of Khuzestan Province.

2. Methods and Materials

In terms of objective, this study was applied research, and in terms of methodology, it was a qualitative study employing a thematic analysis approach. The primary objective was to design and explain a human capital management model in education based on the Seventh Development Plan approach in the Department of Education of Khuzestan Province. This objective was achieved through the extraction and in-depth analysis of experts' experiences and perspectives. The statistical population consisted of experts familiar with human capital management in education and included two main groups: university professors in the field of human resource management and managers from the Deputy of Planning and Human Resource Development of the Department of Education in Khuzestan Province. Sampling was conducted using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Initially, information-rich individuals who provided a strong understanding of the phenomenon under investigation were selected, and subsequently, additional experts were identified through referrals from the initial interviewees. Specific criteria were considered for selecting experts, and participants were required to possess at least one of the following qualifications: documented studies related to the topic, completion of at least one related research project, publication of at least one article in the field, translation or authorship of a related book, teaching experience in relevant fields, or executive managerial experience in the Deputy of Planning and Human Resource Development of the Department of Education in Khuzestan Province. Interviews continued until theoretical saturation was achieved, and saturation was ultimately reached after interviewing 12 experts.

The data collection instrument was a semi-structured interview designed around five main questions. The interview questions were developed through a review of the research literature and consultation with supervisory and advisory professors. The questions focused on identifying the components, dimensions, and indicators of human capital management in education based on the Seventh Development Plan approach. Interviews were conducted according to the stages proposed by Cohen and Manion (Cohen & Manion, 1986), which included determining the research objective, designing the interview guide, conducting interviews, transcribing interview texts, analyzing the data, and preparing the final report. All interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim. To ensure research validity, triangulation was employed through the use of different data collection methods (document analysis and in-depth interviews), multiple data sources (university professors and executive managers), and continuation of interviews until convergence and consistency of findings were achieved. Furthermore, the interview questions were reviewed and approved by supervisory professors, advisory professors, and field experts. To ensure reliability, a standard qualitative procedure and a systematic documentation process were utilized. The preliminary findings were reviewed by research colleagues, and the researcher continuously compared and aligned the extracted codes with the research documents. In addition, to ensure the quality of the study, the ten criteria proposed by Whittemore et al. (Whittemore et al., 2001), including credibility, authenticity, criticality, integrity, sensitivity, congruence, creativity, thoroughness, explicitness, and contextuality, were considered. Moreover, to enhance reliability, diversity and



integration in data sources were maintained, and experts were selected from different universities and professional teams to ensure the collection of diverse perspectives and viewpoints.

The data analysis method was thematic analysis conducted using the MAXQDA software. Thematic analysis is a method for extracting and identifying significant issues within textual data and consists of six main stages: familiarization with the data through repeated reading and active engagement with interview transcripts; generation of initial codes representing interesting features of the data; searching for themes by categorizing different codes into potential themes; reviewing themes at the levels of coded summaries and the entire dataset; defining and naming themes by specifying the essence of each theme and the aspects of data represented within it; and finally, preparing the report and presenting the final research model. Throughout this process, the researcher continuously moved back and forth between the dataset, coded summaries, and analytical interpretations to extract basic, organizing, and overarching themes, ultimately designing and explaining the human capital management model in education based on the Seventh Development Plan approach.

3. Findings and Results

After coding the conducted interviews, the findings were analyzed using thematic analysis, and the final research categories were identified.

Table 1. Final Identified Themes

Row	Interviewee Codes	Primary Themes	Secondary Themes	Main Categories
1	Q7	Revising teachers' professional standards	Enhancement of Specialized Competencies	Development of Teachers' Professional Competencies
2	Q2	Designing a comprehensive needs-based in-service training system	Enhancement of Specialized Competencies	
3	Q1, Q11	Development of teaching skills based on modern technologies	Enhancement of Specialized Competencies	
4	Q11, Q12	Enhancement of teachers' specialized subject knowledge	Enhancement of Specialized Competencies	
5	Q2, Q7, Q12	Strengthening research and action research skills	Enhancement of Specialized Competencies	
6	Q2	Enhancement of educational evaluation competencies	Enhancement of Specialized Competencies	
7	Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q11	Development of problem-solving skills in educational environments	Enhancement of Specialized Competencies	
8	Q4, Q11	Strengthening critical and creative thinking skills	Enhancement of Specialized Competencies	
9	Q1, Q4, Q5, Q8, Q11, Q12	Enhancement of classroom management skills	Enhancement of Specialized Competencies	
10	Q2, Q3, Q5, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q10, Q11	Strengthening emotional intelligence and communication skills	Development of General and Individual Competencies	
11	Q1, Q10, Q12	Development of teamwork and collaborative skills	Development of General and Individual Competencies	
12	Q7	Enhancement of educational leadership skills	Development of General and Individual Competencies	
13	Q1	Strengthening teachers' motivation and self-efficacy	Development of General and Individual Competencies	
14	Q1, Q2, Q5, Q6, Q10, Q11, Q12	Development of self-development and continuous learning skills	Development of General and Individual Competencies	
15	Q1, Q2, Q5, Q10, Q12	Enhancement of time and stress management skills	Development of General and Individual Competencies	
16	Q1, Q2, Q3	Strengthening professional commitment and identity	Development of General and Individual Competencies	
17	Q1, Q2, Q5, Q6, Q9, Q10	Development of adaptability and flexibility skills	Development of General and Individual Competencies	
18	Q1, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8	Enhancement of digital literacy and information technology	Development of General and Individual Competencies	
19	Q2, Q7, Q12	Designing teachers' professional advancement pathways	Empowerment and Continuous Learning System	
20	Q1	Creating professional learning networks	Empowerment and Continuous Learning System	
21	Q1, Q11	Development of mentoring and coaching programs	Empowerment and Continuous Learning System	



22	Q11, Q12	Establishing self-assessment and continuous feedback systems	Empowerment and Continuous Learning System	Talent Management and Succession Planning
23	Q2, Q7, Q12	Organizing short-term and long-term specialized training courses	Empowerment and Continuous Learning System	
24	Q1, Q2, Q3	Developing standards for continuous professional development	Empowerment and Continuous Learning System	
25	Q1, Q2, Q5, Q6, Q9, Q10	Creating study opportunities and experience exchange programs	Empowerment and Continuous Learning System	
26	Q1, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8	Developing online learning support systems	Empowerment and Continuous Learning System	
27	Q9, Q11, Q12	Strengthening university-school collaboration in teachers' professional development	Empowerment and Continuous Learning System	
28	Q4, Q5, Q6, Q9	Designing a comprehensive system for identifying teaching talents	Talent Identification and Recruitment	
29	Q3	Revising teacher recruitment and hiring processes	Talent Identification and Recruitment	
30	Q1, Q11	Developing teacher competency assessment centers	Talent Identification and Recruitment	
31	Q11, Q12	Establishing educational talent databases	Talent Identification and Recruitment	
32	Q2, Q7, Q12	Employer branding in education	Talent Identification and Recruitment	
33	Q2	Designing diverse pathways into the teaching profession	Talent Identification and Recruitment	
34	Q1, Q5	Collaboration with universities to identify top talents	Talent Identification and Recruitment	
35	Q1, Q11	Establishing mechanisms for attracting elites into the teaching profession	Talent Identification and Recruitment	
36	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q9	Developing standardized tests for assessing teaching talent	Talent Identification and Recruitment	
37	Q1, Q7, Q8	Designing special talent development programs	Talent Development and Retention	
38	Q7	Creating diverse career advancement pathways	Talent Development and Retention	
39	Q9, Q12	Developing targeted job rotation programs	Talent Development and Retention	
40	Q1, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q10, Q11, Q12	Designing motivational systems for top talents	Talent Development and Retention	
41	Q1, Q2, Q4, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q10, Q12	Creating differentiated learning and growth opportunities	Talent Development and Retention	
42	Q1, Q11	Developing special support and welfare programs	Talent Development and Retention	
43	Q11, Q12	Creating challenging and attractive work environments	Talent Development and Retention	
44	Q2, Q7, Q12	Strengthening organizational belonging and professional identity	Talent Development and Retention	
45	Q1	Creating opportunities for participation in organizational decision-making	Talent Development and Retention	
46	Q3, Q4, Q7, Q10	Designing educational management competency models	Succession Planning System	
47	Q1, Q3, Q5	Identifying key and strategic positions	Succession Planning System	
48	Q1, Q5, Q10	Establishing managerial talent pools	Succession Planning System	
49	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q10	Developing future manager preparation programs	Succession Planning System	
50	Q2, Q7, Q12	Designing competency-based promotion pathways	Succession Planning System	
51	Q1	Establishing mentoring systems for potential managers	Succession Planning System	
52	Q3, Q6, Q9	Organizing specialized educational management training courses	Succession Planning System	
53	Q1, Q2, Q7, Q12	Designing developmental projects for future managers	Succession Planning System	
54	Q1, Q2, Q5, Q6, Q9	Continuous evaluation and feedback for succession candidates	Succession Planning System	
55	Q12	Designing competency-based compensation systems	Competitive Salaries and Benefits	Compensation and Motivation System



56	Q9	Revising and improving teacher ranking systems	Competitive Salaries and Benefits
57	Q1, Q2, Q5	Aligning teachers' salaries with other specialized professions	Competitive Salaries and Benefits
58	Q3, Q4	Designing performance-based compensation systems	Competitive Salaries and Benefits
59	Q5	Aligning salaries with living costs in different regions	Competitive Salaries and Benefits
60	Q2	Developing flexible compensation packages	Competitive Salaries and Benefits
61	Q7, Q12	Creating special incentives for deprived and difficult regions	Competitive Salaries and Benefits
62	Q9	Designing reward systems based on educational achievements	Competitive Salaries and Benefits
63	Q1, Q2, Q5, Q6, Q9, Q12	Developing transparent payment and promotion policies	Competitive Salaries and Benefits
64	Q6, Q8, Q9, Q10	Developing comprehensive insurance and healthcare services	Welfare Benefits and Services
65	Q2	Improving retirement services and future security	Welfare Benefits and Services
66	Q1	Providing housing facilities and low-interest loans	Welfare Benefits and Services
67	Q2, Q5, Q8, Q11	Developing recreational and sports facilities	Welfare Benefits and Services
68	Q9, Q10	Establishing counseling and psychological support services	Welfare Benefits and Services
69	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q12	Providing educational benefits for teachers' children	Welfare Benefits and Services
70	Q1, Q3, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q9	Establishing savings and investment funds	Welfare Benefits and Services
71	Q2	Developing transportation services	Welfare Benefits and Services
72	Q2, Q7, Q12	Establishing cooperative stores and credit services	Welfare Benefits and Services
73	Q1	Designing comprehensive appreciation systems	Motivation and Appreciation
74	Q1, Q2, Q3	Organizing festivals and recognition events for distinguished teachers	Motivation and Appreciation
75	Q1, Q2, Q5, Q6, Q9, Q10	Creating opportunities for professional growth and development	Motivation and Appreciation
76	Q1, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8	Granting autonomy and participation in decision-making	Motivation and Appreciation
77	Q2, Q7, Q12	Creating positive and supportive work environments	Motivation and Appreciation
78	Q1	Developing achievement recognition programs	Motivation and Appreciation
79	Q1, Q11	Establishing suggestion systems and appreciation for innovative ideas	Motivation and Appreciation
80	Q11, Q12	Enhancing teachers' social status	Motivation and Appreciation
81	Q2, Q7, Q12	Developing work-life balance programs	Motivation and Appreciation



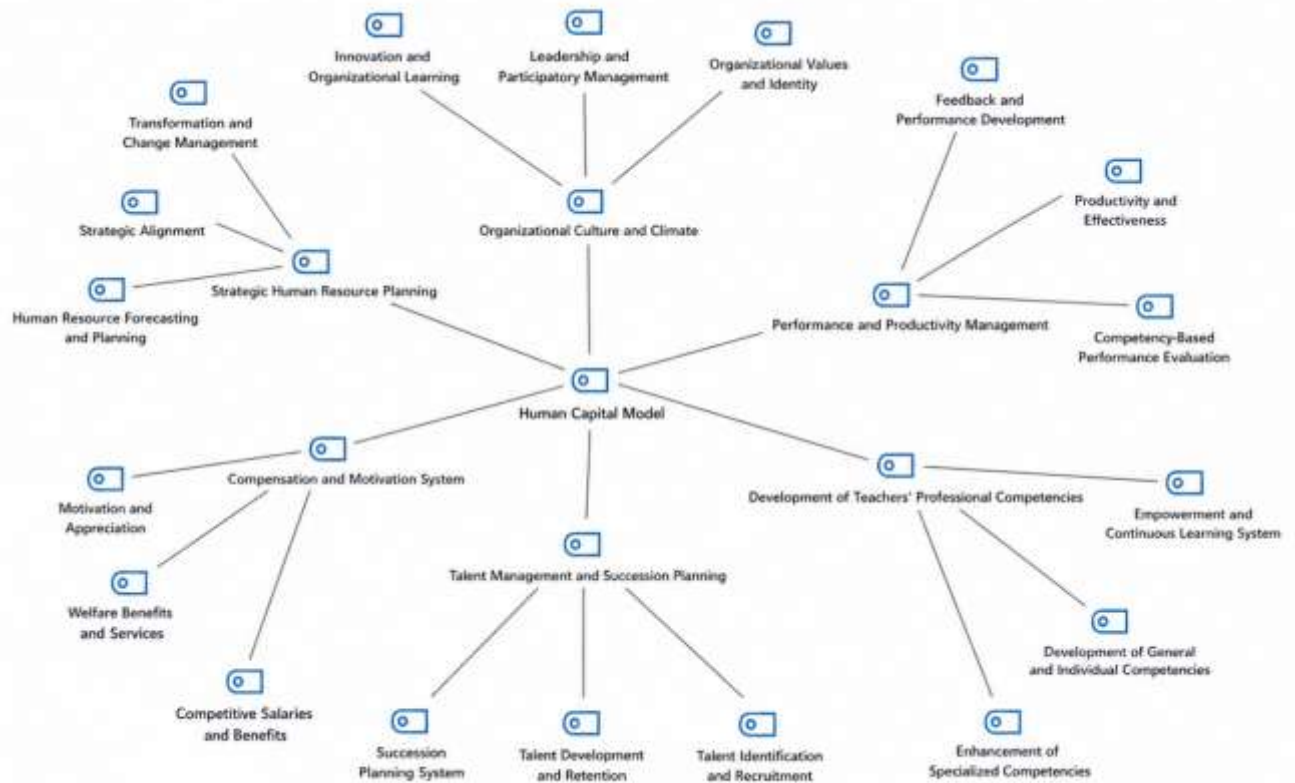


Figure 1. Final Thematic Analysis Model

Development of Teachers' Professional Competencies

This main category consists of three secondary themes: “enhancement of specialized competencies,” “development of general and individual competencies,” and “empowerment and continuous learning system.” The findings indicate that the development of teachers’ professional competencies is one of the fundamental pillars of human capital management in education. In the area of specialized competencies, revising professional standards, developing technology-based teaching skills, and strengthening research skills are of particular importance. Furthermore, the development of general competencies such as communication skills, teamwork, and self-development is considered essential for teachers. Establishing continuous learning systems, mentoring programs, and professional learning networks are among the proposed mechanisms for achieving this category.

Talent Management and Succession Planning

This main category includes three secondary themes: “talent identification and recruitment,” “talent development and retention,” and “succession planning system.” The findings demonstrate that designing a comprehensive system for identifying teaching talents, revising recruitment and employment processes, and developing competency assessment centers are among the major priorities in talent identification and recruitment. For talent development and retention, designing diverse career advancement pathways, creating differentiated learning opportunities, and developing special motivational systems are essential. In addition, a succession planning system centered on designing educational management competency models, identifying key positions, and establishing managerial talent pools can contribute to the sustainability and continuity of effective management within the educational system.

Compensation and Motivation System

This main category consists of three secondary themes: “competitive salaries and benefits,” “welfare benefits and services,” and “motivation and appreciation.” The findings reveal that designing competency-based compensation systems, revising and improving teacher ranking systems, and ensuring alignment between teachers’ salaries and other specialized professions are among the key priorities in compensation and benefits. The development of comprehensive insurance and healthcare services, provision of housing facilities, and educational support for teachers’ children are among the most significant welfare services

required. Moreover, designing comprehensive appreciation systems, organizing recognition festivals for distinguished teachers, and enhancing the social status of teachers can significantly improve motivation and job satisfaction.

Performance and Productivity Management

This main category includes three secondary themes: “competency-based performance evaluation,” “feedback and performance development,” and “productivity and effectiveness.” The findings indicate that designing standardized performance indicators, developing multidimensional assessment tools, and establishing continuous evaluation processes are necessary for assessing teachers’ performance. In addition, designing regular performance dialogue processes, establishing coaching systems, and formulating individual development plans can contribute to performance improvement. In the area of productivity, optimizing work processes, managing educational time and resources, and effectively utilizing technology in educational processes are among the important strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of the educational system.

Organizational Culture and Climate

This main category consists of three secondary themes: “values and organizational identity,” “leadership and participatory management,” and “innovation and organizational learning.” The findings show that clarifying and promoting the organization’s core values, strengthening teachers’ professional identity, and developing teachers’ ethical and professional charters are among the important priorities in organizational values and identity. Developing transformational leadership styles, establishing participatory decision-making structures, and delegating authority to employees can strengthen participatory management. Furthermore, creating supportive environments for creativity and innovation, developing knowledge management mechanisms, and establishing professional learning communities are essential for strengthening innovation and organizational learning.

Strategic Human Resource Planning

This main category includes three secondary themes: “human resource forecasting and planning,” “strategic alignment,” and “transformation and change management.” The findings indicate that analyzing demographic trends, forecasting human resource demand, and planning recruitment and staffing processes are essential for effective human resource management. Aligning human resource strategies with educational objectives, developing key performance indicators, and designing strategic monitoring systems contribute to the effectiveness of programs. In the area of transformation management, designing organizational transformation models, developing change leaders, and managing resistance to change are considered critical strategies for the successful implementation of reforms within the educational system.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the present study demonstrated that the human capital management model in education based on the Seventh Development Plan approach consists of six major dimensions, including development of teachers’ professional competencies, talent management and succession planning, compensation and motivation systems, performance and productivity management, organizational culture and climate, and strategic human resource planning. These findings indicate that human capital management in educational systems should be approached as a comprehensive, integrated, and strategic process rather than a collection of fragmented administrative functions. The identified dimensions collectively reflect the increasing complexity of educational organizations in contemporary environments characterized by technological transformation, organizational uncertainty, professional diversity, and evolving societal expectations. The findings suggest that effective educational systems are those capable of simultaneously strengthening professional competencies, organizational adaptability, institutional learning, and motivational mechanisms. This result is consistent with the arguments of (Norman et al., 2025), who emphasized that competency improvement in educational organizations requires integrated interactions among leadership, professional development, and digital innovation. Similarly, (Zhao, 2025) argued that modern educational institutions must redefine professional development frameworks in response to technological and interdisciplinary transformations, particularly within knowledge-based educational systems.

One of the most important findings of the study was the identification of the development of teachers’ professional competencies as a foundational dimension of human capital management. The findings revealed that this dimension includes enhancement of specialized competencies, development of general and individual competencies, and the establishment of continuous learning and empowerment systems. This result reflects the growing recognition that teacher effectiveness depends



not only on technical instructional knowledge but also on communication skills, emotional intelligence, adaptability, critical thinking, and lifelong learning capabilities. In modern educational systems, professional competence has become multidimensional, requiring teachers to continuously update their pedagogical, technological, and interpersonal skills. This finding aligns with the results reported by (Richter et al., 2025), who concluded that competency-centered professional development significantly improves teachers' instructional planning and professional performance. Similarly, (Alrumaih, 2025) found that continuous professional development programs positively influence teachers' pedagogical effectiveness and instructional quality. The emphasis on continuous learning systems, mentoring, and professional learning networks in the present study is also consistent with the findings of (Babayigit et al., 2025), who highlighted the role of blended professional development programs in enhancing multicultural teaching competencies. Moreover, the identified importance of reflective learning and self-development corresponds with the work of (Dunn et al., 2025), who emphasized reflective practices and emotional labor as central elements of sustainable teacher professional development.

The findings related to talent management and succession planning also revealed the strategic importance of identifying, attracting, developing, and retaining educational talent within educational organizations. The participants emphasized that educational systems require systematic talent identification mechanisms, competency-based recruitment, differentiated career pathways, and structured succession planning systems to ensure organizational continuity and effectiveness. These findings demonstrate that educational institutions increasingly recognize human capital as a strategic asset rather than merely an operational workforce. This result supports the findings of (Grigg, 2025), who argued that strategic professional development frameworks are necessary for preparing future educational leaders and organizational innovators. Likewise, (Sahlin, 2025) emphasized that professional learning among educational leaders significantly contributes to institutional resilience and strategic adaptability. The current findings further revealed that succession planning systems should include leadership competency models, managerial talent pools, and developmental preparation programs for future educational leaders. This finding aligns with the study by (Nhlumayo & Mabeleng, 2025), which demonstrated that school leaders require structured professional development systems to effectively manage educational transformation and organizational complexity. Furthermore, the emphasis on differentiated growth opportunities and supportive organizational environments for talented teachers is consistent with the findings of (Maspupah et al., 2025), who highlighted the role of andragogical and experiential learning models in strengthening professional development and talent retention among educators.

Another significant finding of the study concerned the compensation and motivation system dimension. The results demonstrated that educational professionals consider competency-based compensation, fair salary systems, welfare services, professional appreciation, and recognition programs as essential components of effective human capital management. These findings indicate that teacher motivation and organizational commitment are influenced by both financial and non-financial factors. In educational systems, where professional burnout and occupational stress are increasingly prevalent, motivational systems play a crucial role in maintaining professional engagement and institutional stability. This finding is consistent with the study by (Berradia, 2025), which found that professional development and compensation systems positively influence employee competence and job performance. Similarly, (Zanganeh, 2024) emphasized that sustainable human resource management practices improve employee professional development and organizational commitment in public institutions. The findings also showed that appreciation systems, recognition ceremonies, and enhancement of teachers' social status are important motivational mechanisms. This result corresponds with the conclusions of (Geron, 2025), who argued that educational ethics and value-oriented professional development strengthen teachers' professional identity and organizational belonging. Furthermore, the emphasis on work-life balance and psychological support systems reflects contemporary concerns regarding emotional sustainability and professional well-being within educational environments.

The findings related to performance and productivity management indicated that educational systems require multidimensional, competency-based, and developmental evaluation systems rather than traditional administrative assessment approaches. The identified themes included competency-based performance evaluation, feedback and performance development, and productivity and effectiveness enhancement. These findings suggest that performance management in educational institutions should function as a developmental process focused on continuous improvement rather than merely accountability or control. This finding aligns with the results reported by (Yousefzadeh Chousari & Amiri Mehraban,



2024), who demonstrated that effective educational leadership depends heavily on continuous evaluation, feedback, and professional performance monitoring. Similarly, (Richter et al., 2025) emphasized that competency-centered implementation approaches significantly improve teachers' professional growth and instructional effectiveness. The findings further showed that coaching systems, performance dialogues, and self-assessment mechanisms contribute to sustainable professional development. This result supports the arguments of (Norman et al., 2025), who highlighted the importance of integrating leadership, digital innovation, and professional development into competency improvement systems. Moreover, the identified importance of technology utilization and process optimization in productivity management is consistent with the findings of (Glavatskikh & Pushina, 2025), who demonstrated that digital communication systems significantly improve professional development and organizational efficiency in public organizations.

The dimension of organizational culture and climate emerged as another critical component of the proposed human capital management model. The findings revealed that organizational values and identity, participatory leadership, and organizational innovation significantly influence educational effectiveness and professional sustainability. This finding indicates that educational organizations require trust-based, participatory, and innovation-oriented cultures capable of supporting professional collaboration and organizational learning. The emphasis on transformational leadership and participatory management reflects the increasing importance of collaborative governance models in educational systems. This finding is supported by (Sahlin, 2025), who found that experienced educational leaders interpret professional learning within collaborative and reflective organizational contexts. Similarly, (Nhlumayo & Mabeleng, 2025) emphasized that educational leadership development is closely associated with organizational culture, professional support, and participatory management practices. The findings also demonstrated the importance of innovation-supportive environments, professional learning communities, and knowledge-sharing mechanisms. These results correspond with the conclusions of (Dunn et al., 2025) and (Geron, 2025), who emphasized that reflective organizational cultures and ethical professional environments strengthen institutional learning and professional engagement. Furthermore, the identified role of organizational trust, openness, and creativity reflects the increasing necessity of adaptive organizational cultures in digitally transformed educational systems.

The final dimension identified in the study was strategic human resource planning, which included workforce forecasting and planning, strategic alignment, and transformation and change management. The findings indicated that educational systems require long-term, data-driven, and strategically aligned human resource management systems capable of responding to demographic, technological, and organizational changes. This finding reflects the transition from traditional administrative human resource management toward strategic and sustainable human capital governance. The identified importance of workforce forecasting, competency gap analysis, and strategic alignment is consistent with the findings of (Zanganeh, 2024), who emphasized the role of sustainable human resource management practices in improving organizational development and adaptability. Likewise, (Norman et al., 2025) argued that strategic integration among leadership, competency development, and innovation is necessary for sustainable educational management. The findings also highlighted the importance of managing resistance to change, developing change leaders, and implementing organizational transformation models. These findings correspond with the work of (Hubbard & Schulze, 2025), who emphasized the necessity of integrated professional development systems for adapting to artificial intelligence and digital transformation in educational contexts. Additionally, the findings regarding digital learning systems and AI-based professional development align with the arguments of (Hashemi Juybari, 2025) and (Azarabadi et al., 2025), who emphasized the growing influence of artificial intelligence and digital educational platforms on professional development and organizational learning.

Overall, the findings of the present study indicate that human capital management in education should be conceptualized as a multidimensional, strategic, and development-oriented system that integrates professional competency development, organizational culture, talent management, motivational systems, performance evaluation, and strategic planning. The proposed model demonstrates that educational effectiveness depends heavily on the integration of organizational learning, leadership development, digital transformation, and sustainable professional growth. The study contributes to the existing literature by presenting a context-specific and comprehensive human capital management framework aligned with the Seventh Development Plan and the educational realities of Khuzestan Province. Furthermore, the findings provide practical and theoretical insights



for policymakers, educational leaders, and human resource managers seeking to modernize educational systems and strengthen institutional sustainability in increasingly complex educational environments.

One of the limitations of the present study was its reliance on qualitative data obtained from a limited number of experts within the educational system of Khuzestan Province, which may reduce the generalizability of the findings to other provinces or educational contexts. In addition, although the participants represented different academic and executive backgrounds, the perspectives of teachers, students, and other educational stakeholders were not directly included in the study. Another limitation was the contextual nature of the findings, as educational policies, organizational cultures, and human resource practices may vary significantly across regions and institutional structures. Furthermore, the rapid evolution of educational technologies and artificial intelligence may require continuous revision of human capital management models in future years.

Future research is recommended to examine the proposed model quantitatively using structural equation modeling and large-scale empirical data from different educational regions. Comparative studies between provinces, educational levels, or public and private educational institutions may also provide deeper insights into contextual variations in human capital management practices. In addition, future researchers may investigate the relationship between specific dimensions of the proposed model and organizational outcomes such as teacher performance, student achievement, organizational innovation, and employee retention. Further studies are also encouraged to explore the role of artificial intelligence, digital leadership, and smart educational systems in reshaping professional development and human capital management within educational organizations.

Educational policymakers and administrators are advised to design integrated human capital management systems based on competency development, continuous professional learning, and strategic workforce planning. Educational organizations should strengthen mentoring systems, professional learning communities, and digital learning infrastructures to enhance teachers' competencies and organizational adaptability. It is also recommended that educational institutions establish transparent performance evaluation systems, competency-based compensation mechanisms, and structured succession planning programs to improve organizational sustainability and employee motivation. Furthermore, creating supportive organizational cultures based on participation, innovation, ethical leadership, and professional recognition can significantly contribute to the effectiveness and resilience of educational systems in the face of ongoing technological and social transformations.

Ethical Considerations

All procedures performed in this study were under the ethical standards.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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