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Identifying the Dimensions of Human Resource Empowerment with an Islamic Culture Approach: A Case Study of the General Directorate of Education of Bushehr Province

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A B S T R A C T

Purpose: This study aimed to identify the dimensions and components of human resource empowerment with an Islamic culture approach in the General Directorate of Education of Bushehr Province.

Methods and Materials: This study employed an applied qualitative research design with an exploratory approach. The participants consisted of 15 managers, senior administrators, human resource experts, educational specialists, and university faculty members selected through purposive criterion-based sampling. Data collection continued until conceptual saturation was achieved. Semi-structured in-depth interviews lasting approximately 45–70 minutes were used as the main data collection method. Interview questions focused on professional competence, participation, delegation of authority, organizational justice, Islamic work ethics, psychological empowerment, organizational support, accountability, and service orientation. Interviews were recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim. Data were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis in MAXQDA through repeated reading, initial coding, refinement of codes, formation of basic concepts, development of organizing components, and extraction of overarching dimensions. Credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability were strengthened through member checking, peer review, continuous comparison, and maintenance of an audit trail.

Findings: The thematic analysis identified six overarching dimensions, 18 organizing components, and 58 basic concepts of human resource empowerment with an Islamic culture approach. The six dimensions were Islamic ethical and value-based empowerment, competency and professional development, participative and justice-oriented management, psychological and motivational empowerment, organizational and structural support, and accountability and excellence-oriented performance. Islamic ethical and value-based empowerment and competency and professional development were the most prominent dimensions. The findings indicated that effective empowerment depends on the simultaneous presence of professional capability, Islamic ethical values, organizational justice, participation in decision-making, psychological readiness, managerial and structural support, and accountability for organizational outcomes.

Conclusion: Human resource empowerment in educational organizations should be understood as a multidimensional and culturally grounded process in which Islamic ethical principles, professional competence, participative management,

psychological empowerment, organizational support, and accountability operate in an integrated manner to improve employee effectiveness and organizational excellence.

Keywords: *Human Resource Empowerment; Islamic Culture; Islamic Work Ethics; Organizational Justice; Psychological Empowerment; Educational Management; Bushehr Province*

1. Introduction

Human resources constitute one of the most strategic assets of contemporary organizations because organizational effectiveness, adaptability, innovation, service quality, and long-term sustainability depend substantially on the knowledge, competencies, motivation, commitment, and behavioral capacities of employees. Although financial resources, technology, physical infrastructure, and formal organizational structures remain important, these resources cannot generate sustainable value without capable individuals who can use them effectively and adapt them to changing environmental conditions. Accordingly, human resource management has increasingly shifted from a traditional administrative orientation toward a strategic approach in which employees are viewed as sources of knowledge, organizational learning, innovation, and competitive capability. From this perspective, empowerment represents a central mechanism through which organizations can expand employee discretion, strengthen competence, enhance motivation, improve participation, and create conditions for more responsible and effective performance. Evidence has shown that human resource practices influence organizational commitment and employees' willingness to share knowledge, suggesting that empowerment-related practices should be understood not only as managerial techniques but also as culturally embedded organizational processes (Rubaca et al., 2024). Similarly, contemporary human resource management research increasingly emphasizes the necessity of integrating organizational values, culture, employee development, and strategic goals rather than treating human resource practices as isolated administrative interventions (Kaharudin et al., 2025).

Human resource empowerment is generally associated with enabling employees to develop their capacities, participate meaningfully in organizational decisions, exercise greater autonomy in performing their duties, and assume responsibility for outcomes. Empowerment is therefore not equivalent to merely delegating tasks or increasing workloads; rather, it entails the creation of organizational conditions in which employees perceive that they possess the competence, authority, information, support, and psychological readiness required to influence their work and organizational environment. Studies of empowering leadership have demonstrated that when leaders provide autonomy, encourage participation, and support employees' capabilities, psychological empowerment can increase and contribute to desirable organizational behaviors such as knowledge sharing (Khatoon et al., 2022). Likewise, empowering leadership has been identified as an important predictor of organizational innovation in higher education, indicating that empowerment may facilitate creativity, initiative, and institutional responsiveness when employees are given opportunities to contribute actively to organizational processes (Supriyanto et al., 2023). These findings underscore the broader organizational significance of empowerment beyond individual job performance.

The concept of empowerment is particularly important in educational organizations because the quality of educational administration depends heavily on the professional judgment, motivation, initiative, and responsiveness of administrators, teachers, experts, and support personnel. Educational organizations operate in environments characterized by changing social expectations, technological developments, policy requirements, diversity of stakeholder needs, and increasing demands for accountability and quality improvement. Consequently, highly centralized administrative arrangements may limit the capacity of employees to respond effectively to local problems and emerging educational needs. Research in Islamic educational institutions has indicated that teacher empowerment is closely related to perceived organizational support and that employees' perceptions of being supported by the organization can influence their sense of agency and professional effectiveness (Muttaqin, 2023). Similarly, quality management approaches to teacher empowerment have emphasized the importance of systematic professional development, participation, capability building, and organizational support in improving educational performance (Kholis et al., 2022). Strategic approaches to educational empowerment also suggest that empowering educational beneficiaries and organizational actors requires

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coordinated managerial processes rather than fragmented interventions (Hidayati et al., 2023).

One of the important foundations of empowerment is continuous professional development. Employees cannot effectively exercise autonomy or assume greater responsibility when they lack the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for complex organizational roles. Human resource empowerment therefore requires sustained investment in training, learning, talent development, and competency enhancement. Studies have demonstrated that training can improve organizational service performance when it is integrated with appropriate management systems and supportive work conditions (Hasbi & Hanafi, 2024). In Islamic organizations, training and empowerment programs have also been associated with improvements in job satisfaction and work performance, particularly when employees perceive the developmental process as consistent with organizational and religious values (Munifatussaidah & Prasetyo, 2023). Moreover, contemporary organizational transformation requires attention to emerging competencies, including digital capabilities, because technological environments increasingly shape employee effectiveness, access to information, and organizational decision-making. The identification of digital competency dimensions in public-sector organizations illustrates the growing importance of systematic competency frameworks for improving human resource performance in complex administrative contexts (Lotfollahi Haghighi et al., 2025).

However, empowerment cannot be reduced to technical competencies alone. Psychological and motivational conditions also determine whether employees experience themselves as genuinely empowered. Psychological empowerment encompasses perceptions of meaningfulness, competence, autonomy, and impact, all of which influence how employees interpret their organizational roles. Research has shown that spiritual leadership and psychological empowerment can significantly affect employee performance, demonstrating the importance of values, intrinsic motivation, and perceived meaning in organizational functioning (Rahmatika et al., 2022). Similarly, employee loyalty may be strengthened when servant leadership and perceived organizational support operate through empowerment mechanisms, particularly in educational environments where interpersonal trust and developmental leadership are highly salient (Fitriyana et al., 2023). These findings suggest that empowerment must include both structural and psychological dimensions: organizations may formally delegate authority, yet employees may still feel disempowered if they lack confidence, perceive insufficient support, or consider their work meaningless.

The cultural context of empowerment is equally important. Organizational practices do not operate independently of shared values, norms, beliefs, and assumptions. The effectiveness of empowerment therefore depends partly on the degree to which empowerment practices are compatible with the dominant organizational culture. Organizational learning culture, workplace empowerment, spirituality, and knowledge-sharing behavior have been shown to interact in shaping employees' work experiences and organizational outcomes (Nurcahyo, 2024). Culture can determine how employees interpret authority, participation, trust, fairness, responsibility, and interpersonal relationships. In this regard, the application of empowerment models developed primarily in Western organizational settings may not fully capture the cultural and value-based requirements of organizations operating within Islamic societies. A culturally grounded framework is therefore needed to explain how empowerment can be conceptualized and implemented in a manner consistent with Islamic ethical and social principles.

Islamic perspectives on human resource management emphasize dimensions that extend beyond conventional managerial efficiency. Within an Islamic framework, employees are not merely economic resources or instruments for achieving organizational goals; rather, they are human beings possessing dignity, moral responsibility, social obligations, and spiritual value. Islamic work ethics emphasizes responsibility, honesty, trustworthiness, justice, cooperation, commitment, and conscientious performance. Evidence suggests that Islamic work ethics can influence organizational behavior through organizational culture, indicating that the ethical orientation of employees becomes more influential when embedded in shared organizational norms and practices (Ibrahim & Idris, 2023). Comparative examinations of Islamic and conventional human resource management have similarly highlighted that Islamic approaches place greater emphasis on ethical responsibility, justice, spiritual accountability, and the integration of material and moral objectives (Kaharudin et al., 2025). Accordingly, empowerment from an Islamic perspective should not be understood as unrestricted individual autonomy but as the responsible expansion of employee capability and authority within a moral framework.

Justice is particularly central to an Islamic approach to empowerment. Fairness in opportunities, promotion,

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evaluation, access to resources, allocation of responsibilities, and managerial treatment can shape whether employees perceive empowerment initiatives as credible and legitimate. In organizations where favoritism, discrimination, opaque decision-making, or unequal access to development opportunities are present, empowerment efforts may fail because employees do not trust organizational intentions. Islamic principles of justice and consultation provide a value-based foundation for participative management and equitable organizational governance. Participatory models of human resource governance have also emphasized the importance of involving employees in organizational processes, particularly as younger generations increasingly expect meaningful participation, recognition, flexibility, and influence over workplace decisions (Iranshahi & Mansournejad, 2025). Such findings are especially relevant for public educational organizations, where intergenerational diversity and changing employee expectations can create new demands for participative human resource systems.

Another important Islamic principle relevant to empowerment is consultation. Participation in decision-making is a widely recognized dimension of contemporary empowerment, but within Islamic organizational thought it can also be linked to the normative principle of collective consultation. Participation enables organizations to use distributed knowledge, improve employee ownership of decisions, and strengthen commitment to implementation. Empowered employees who are encouraged to share knowledge may contribute more effectively to organizational learning and problem solving (Khatoon et al., 2022). Knowledge sharing is especially valuable in educational organizations because many organizational problems cannot be resolved solely through formal regulations and require the exchange of experience and professional insight among employees. Organizational learning and knowledge sharing therefore constitute essential mechanisms through which empowerment can translate into institutional improvement (Nurcahyo, 2024).

Employee commitment represents another important outcome associated with empowerment and value-based human resource practices. Organizational commitment is strengthened when employees perceive that the organization supports their development, values their contribution, treats them fairly, and provides meaningful opportunities for participation. In Islamic banking, internal corporate social responsibility has been associated with organizational commitment, illustrating the importance of employee-centered and ethically informed organizational practices in strengthening attachment to the organization (Faliza et al., 2023). Similarly, human resource management practices have been linked to service recovery performance through employee commitment in the Islamic insurance sector, suggesting that committed employees are more likely to translate supportive human resource systems into higher-quality service behavior (Mao et al., 2022). These findings are relevant to educational administration because public educational organizations also depend heavily on employees' willingness to provide responsive, responsible, and stakeholder-oriented services.

Leadership is another critical determinant of empowerment. Empowering organizational structures are unlikely to function effectively when leaders maintain highly controlling, authoritarian, or distrustful management styles. Transformational, servant, spiritual, and empowering leadership approaches each emphasize different mechanisms through which leaders can increase employee capability, motivation, commitment, and participation. Transformational leadership has been linked with improved teacher performance in Islamic educational settings, particularly when leaders articulate a compelling direction, support professional development, and motivate teachers toward shared educational objectives (Wafa, 2022). Servant leadership has likewise been associated with employee loyalty through empowerment processes (Fitriyana et al., 2023), while spiritual leadership has demonstrated links with psychological empowerment and employee performance (Rahmatika et al., 2022). Together, these findings indicate that leadership in an Islamic empowerment model should combine authority with service, support, ethical conduct, consultation, trust, and developmental responsibility.

The social dimension of empowerment is also important. Empowerment can contribute not only to individual job effectiveness but also to community development, social participation, welfare, and collective capability. Research on Islamic entrepreneurship and economic empowerment in Islamic boarding schools has shown that empowerment can help develop entrepreneurship culture and strengthen economic self-reliance within communities (Nurohman et al., 2024). Community-based empowerment initiatives have similarly demonstrated that entrepreneurial development may increase welfare and create opportunities for productive participation (Zikri, 2023). Programs integrating student and community development within Islamic educational environments further demonstrate that empowerment may extend beyond formal organizational boundaries and

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contribute to broader social capacity building (Jamalulail & Machdum, 2022). These perspectives are relevant to educational organizations because education systems have responsibilities not only to employees but also to students, families, communities, and society.

At the same time, empowerment is not automatically beneficial in every context. Its effectiveness depends on the existence of adequate support systems, competency levels, clear responsibilities, appropriate monitoring, and organizational trust. When employees receive greater responsibility without sufficient training, information, resources, or managerial support, empowerment can generate ambiguity and stress rather than improved performance. Likewise, empowerment may remain symbolic if employees are encouraged to participate but their input has no meaningful influence on decisions. Research on women's empowerment in labor-intensive organizational settings illustrates that empowerment is shaped by structural conditions and may be constrained by inequality, limited autonomy, and restricted opportunities (Mustafa & Gomes, 2022). Therefore, a comprehensive empowerment model must account for structural, psychological, cultural, ethical, and managerial dimensions simultaneously.

Within Islamic human resource development, recent scholarship has increasingly emphasized the integration of employee development with long-term organizational sustainability. An Islamic human resource development model has been proposed as a means of aligning individual capability, ethical conduct, organizational goals, and sustainable development objectives (Zarkasyi et al., 2025). This approach suggests that human resource development should not be evaluated solely by short-term productivity indicators but also by its contribution to sustainable organizational functioning, social responsibility, ethical governance, and human development. In educational organizations, such a perspective is particularly important because the outcomes of human resource policies influence not only internal administrative efficiency but also the quality of educational services provided to future generations.

Educational organizations in Iran operate within a cultural and institutional context in which Islamic values have formal and normative significance. The General Directorate of Education of Bushehr Province, as a public educational organization, is expected to achieve administrative efficiency while simultaneously observing ethical, cultural, social, and educational responsibilities. Its employees must respond to complex stakeholder demands, implement national educational policies, support schools and teachers, use emerging technologies, and contribute to improving educational quality. Such responsibilities require human resources who are professionally competent, psychologically empowered, ethically responsible, and capable of participating in organizational problem solving. Conventional empowerment models may explain some of these requirements; however, they do not necessarily provide an integrated account of Islamic values such as justice, trustworthiness, consultation, dignity, responsibility, service, and moral accountability.

Moreover, the emerging diversity of the workforce and the growing importance of participatory governance require renewed attention to human resource empowerment. Recent approaches to human resource governance emphasize employee participation and responsiveness to generational changes in expectations about autonomy, learning, recognition, and organizational involvement (Iranshahi & Mansournejad, 2025). At the same time, public organizations increasingly require competency-based approaches that enable employees to respond effectively to digital transformation and administrative complexity (Lotfollahi Haghighi et al., 2025). These developments suggest that empowerment in an educational administration should integrate professional competence, learning, technological readiness, participation, organizational justice, psychological motivation, leadership support, and Islamic ethical foundations rather than focusing on a single dimension.

The existing literature provides substantial evidence regarding empowering leadership, psychological empowerment, teacher empowerment, organizational support, Islamic work ethics, spiritual leadership, knowledge sharing, employee commitment, training, and Islamic human resource development. However, these variables have often been examined separately, within different organizational sectors, or through frameworks emphasizing specific outcomes. Research has addressed teacher empowerment (Kholis et al., 2022; Muttaqin, 2023), leadership and empowerment (Rahmatika et al., 2022; Supriyanto et al., 2023; Wafa, 2022), organizational learning and knowledge sharing (Khatoon et al., 2022; Nurcahyo, 2024), Islamic ethics and organizational culture (Ibrahim & Idris, 2023), commitment and human resource practices (Faliza et al., 2023; Mao et al., 2022; Rubaca et al., 2024), training and professional development (Hasbi & Hanafi, 2024; Munifatussaidah & Prasetyo, 2023), and broader Islamic empowerment and community development (Jamalulail &

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Machdum, 2022; Nurohman et al., 2024; Zikri, 2023). Yet there remains a need for an integrated framework that identifies the dimensions of human resource empowerment specifically through an Islamic cultural approach and within the institutional realities of a public educational organization.

Accordingly, the present study aimed to identify the dimensions and components of human resource empowerment with an Islamic culture approach in the General Directorate of Education of Bushehr Province.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study employed an applied qualitative research design with an exploratory approach to identify and conceptualize the dimensions of human resource empowerment based on Islamic culture in the General Directorate of Education of Bushehr Province. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the concept of human resource empowerment within an Islamic cultural context encompasses organizational, behavioral, managerial, ethical, and value-based dimensions that require an in-depth understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and professional interpretations of individuals who are directly involved in educational administration and human resource management. The study population consisted of managers, senior administrators, human resource experts, educational specialists, and university faculty members with relevant academic or professional expertise in human resource management, organizational behavior, educational management, Islamic management, and organizational culture. Participants were selected using purposive sampling with a criterion-based strategy to ensure that individuals with sufficient knowledge and practical experience regarding the phenomenon under investigation were included in the study. The inclusion criteria consisted of having at least a master's degree in a relevant field, a minimum of five years of managerial, administrative, academic, or professional experience related to education or human resource management, familiarity with human resource empowerment practices, and adequate knowledge of Islamic organizational and cultural principles. Individuals who were unwilling to participate in the interview process or who could not provide sufficiently detailed information regarding the research topic were excluded. A total of 15 participants were interviewed. Sampling and data collection were conducted simultaneously and continued until theoretical and conceptual saturation was achieved. Saturation was considered to have occurred when subsequent interviews produced no substantially new concepts, dimensions, or categories and the emerging findings demonstrated sufficient conceptual repetition and explanatory depth. Efforts were made to select participants with diverse professional positions and experiences in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of human resource empowerment from managerial, organizational, educational, and Islamic-cultural perspectives. Before each interview, the purpose and procedures of the study were explained to the participants, their voluntary participation was emphasized, and informed consent was obtained. Participants were also assured that their identities and organizational information would remain confidential and that the collected information would be used exclusively for research purposes.

2.2. Instruments

Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, which served as the primary data collection instrument. An interview guide was developed on the basis of the objectives and conceptual scope of the study and focused on participants' perceptions and experiences concerning the meaning, requirements, dimensions, facilitating conditions, organizational mechanisms, and outcomes of human resource empowerment within an Islamic cultural framework. The interviews began with broad and open-ended questions designed to encourage participants to freely describe their experiences and viewpoints. Participants were asked to explain how human resource empowerment should be conceptualized in an educational organization governed by Islamic values, which personal and organizational characteristics contribute to employee empowerment, how Islamic principles and ethical values can influence empowerment processes, what managerial and structural conditions facilitate empowerment, and what barriers may prevent the effective implementation of empowerment practices in the General Directorate of Education. Additional questions addressed issues such as employee participation in decision-making, delegation of authority, professional competence, organizational trust, responsibility, justice, meritocracy, consultation, ethical leadership, organizational commitment, knowledge development, motivation, accountability, dignity, and respect for human values. Probing questions such as “Could you explain this further?”, “What factors contribute to this situation?”, “Can you provide an example

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from your professional experience?", and "How does this issue relate to Islamic organizational culture?" were used whenever necessary to obtain deeper and more detailed information. The interview protocol remained sufficiently flexible to allow emerging concepts identified during earlier interviews to be explored in greater depth in subsequent interviews.

The content and wording of the interview questions were reviewed prior to the main data collection process to ensure clarity, relevance, comprehensiveness, and consistency with the research objectives. Interviews were conducted individually in an environment considered convenient and appropriate by each participant. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 70 minutes, depending on the extent of the participant's experiences and explanations. With the participants' permission, interviews were digitally recorded to ensure accurate documentation of the data. Immediately following each interview, the audio recording was transcribed verbatim, and the transcript was reviewed against the original recording to minimize transcription errors. Field notes were also prepared during and immediately after the interviews to document contextual information, significant observations, emerging interpretations, and issues requiring further exploration in subsequent interviews. To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, several strategies were employed throughout the data collection process, including prolonged engagement with the data, member checking, peer review, maintenance of detailed research notes, and continuous comparison between newly collected information and previously identified concepts. Selected interpretations and extracted concepts were returned to several participants to determine whether the researchers' interpretations adequately represented their intended meanings. Feedback from participants and expert reviewers was incorporated when necessary to improve the accuracy and credibility of the emerging conceptual framework.

2.3. Data Analysis

The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis with an inductive coding approach. Data analysis began concurrently with data collection so that concepts emerging from earlier interviews could inform subsequent interviews and allow the researchers to explore unclear or insufficiently developed categories in greater depth. Each interview transcript was read several times to obtain an overall understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives before formal coding began. The transcripts were then examined line by line, and meaningful units of text related to human resource empowerment, Islamic culture, managerial practices, employee capabilities, organizational conditions, behavioral characteristics, and value-based considerations were identified. Initial codes were assigned to these meaning units using terminology that remained as close as possible to the participants' statements. Similar or conceptually related codes were subsequently compared, refined, merged where appropriate, and organized into preliminary categories. Through constant comparison among codes, categories, participants, and interview transcripts, the researchers identified recurring patterns and conceptual relationships within the data. Categories with similar conceptual meanings were then grouped into broader subthemes, while subthemes sharing a common underlying concept were integrated into overarching themes representing the major dimensions of human resource empowerment with an Islamic culture approach.

The analytical process was iterative rather than strictly linear. The researchers repeatedly moved between the original interview transcripts, initial codes, subthemes, and main themes to ensure that the final thematic structure remained firmly grounded in the participants' accounts. Codes that appeared conceptually ambiguous or overlapped with other codes were reconsidered and either redefined, combined, or separated according to their contextual meaning. Particular attention was paid to identifying the relationship between conventional principles of human resource empowerment and values derived from Islamic organizational culture, including justice, consultation, trustworthiness, responsibility, human dignity, meritocracy, ethical conduct, mutual respect, commitment, and accountability. MAXQDA software was used to organize interview transcripts, manage coding procedures, retrieve coded segments, compare categories, and facilitate the systematic development of the thematic structure. Analytical memos were maintained throughout the coding process to document conceptual decisions and emerging relationships among categories. Credibility was strengthened through member checking and expert review of the extracted themes, while dependability was supported through systematic documentation of the research and analytical procedures. Confirmability was addressed by maintaining an audit trail containing interview transcripts, coding decisions, category development records, and analytical notes, and transferability was facilitated through detailed description of the organizational context, participant characteristics,

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sampling procedures, and analytical process. The final themes and subthemes were established after repeated review and comparison demonstrated internal coherence within each theme, conceptual distinction between themes, and sufficient support from the participants' narratives.

3. Findings and Results

A total of 15 experts participated in the qualitative phase of the study. The participants represented a range of academic, managerial, administrative, and educational backgrounds relevant to human resource management, educational administration, organizational behavior, and Islamic management. Of the 15 participants, 11 were male and 4 were female. In terms of age, 3 participants were between 35 and 40 years old, 5 were between 41 and 45 years old, 4 were between 46 and 50 years old, and 3 were older than 50 years. Regarding educational attainment, 5 participants held master's degrees and 10 held doctoral degrees. The participants' professional experience ranged from 8 to 27 years, with an average professional experience of approximately 17 years. Seven participants were managers or senior administrators working in the General Directorate of Education of Bushehr Province or its affiliated administrative units, 4 were specialists or experts in human resources and educational administration, and 4 were university faculty members with academic expertise in educational management, human resource management, organizational behavior, or Islamic management. This diversity of professional roles contributed to the collection of perspectives from both the practical and academic domains and made it possible to analyze human resource empowerment from organizational, managerial, behavioral, professional, and Islamic-cultural viewpoints.

The thematic analysis of the interview data was conducted progressively through repeated reading, initial coding, comparison of meaning units, consolidation of similar codes, formation of conceptual categories, and development of higher-order themes. In the initial stage of analysis, 684 primary codes were extracted from the interview transcripts. Following the elimination of repeated codes and the integration of conceptually similar statements, 247 preliminary conceptual codes remained. Through continuous comparison and refinement, these codes were organized into 58 basic concepts. The basic concepts were subsequently classified into 18 organizing components and, finally, into 6 overarching dimensions representing the structure of human resource empowerment with an Islamic culture approach in the General Directorate of Education of Bushehr Province. The coding process demonstrated that empowerment, from the participants' perspective, was not limited to the enhancement of employees' knowledge and occupational skills. Instead, it was perceived as a multidimensional process involving Islamic ethical foundations, competence development, participative and justice-oriented management, psychological empowerment, organizational support, and accountability-oriented performance.

Table 1

Coding Process and Development of the Final Thematic Structure

Stage of Analysis	Number Extracted	Analytical Description
Raw meaning units	1,126	Meaningful statements identified within the verbatim interview transcripts
Initial codes	684	Preliminary descriptive and interpretive codes assigned to the extracted meaning units
Refined conceptual codes	247	Codes remaining after removing repetition and integrating semantically similar codes
Basic concepts	58	More abstract concepts generated through continuous comparison among refined codes
Organizing components	18	Conceptual groupings representing coherent aspects of human resource empowerment
Main dimensions	6	Final overarching dimensions forming the human resource empowerment framework based on Islamic culture

As shown in Table 1, the analytical procedure resulted in a gradual reduction and conceptual abstraction of the raw qualitative data. The 1,126 meaning units extracted from the interviews initially generated 684 codes, indicating the considerable diversity of participants' experiences and interpretations concerning empowerment in the educational organization. After repeated comparison of the codes, redundant expressions were removed and codes with closely related meanings were integrated, resulting in 247 refined conceptual codes. These codes were then categorized into 58 basic concepts. Further analysis demonstrated that several basic concepts represented different manifestations of the

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same broader organizational phenomenon; therefore, they were integrated into 18 organizing components. At the highest analytical level, these components formed six main dimensions. The transition from individual meaning units to the six final dimensions was performed through repeated comparison with the original interview transcripts to ensure that conceptual abstraction did not result in the loss of participants' intended meanings. The final framework therefore reflected both the empirical experiences of experts and the particular Islamic-cultural characteristics that participants considered essential for sustainable human resource empowerment in an educational organization.

Table 2

Main Dimensions and Components of Human Resource Empowerment with an Islamic Culture Approach

Main Dimension	Components
Islamic Ethical and Value-Based Empowerment	Islamic work ethics; human dignity and respect; trustworthiness and moral responsibility
Competency and Professional Development	professional knowledge and skills; continuous learning and development; merit-based role assignment
Participative and Justice-Oriented Management	consultation and employee participation; organizational justice and fairness; delegation of authority and decentralization
Psychological and Motivational Empowerment	sense of competence and self-efficacy; meaningfulness and intrinsic motivation; organizational belonging and commitment
Organizational and Structural Support	supportive organizational climate; access to resources and information; performance support and recognition
Accountability and Excellence-Oriented Performance	responsibility and accountability; service orientation and public interest; continuous improvement and organizational excellence

Table 2 presents the six main dimensions and 18 components constituting the proposed framework. The first dimension, Islamic ethical and value-based empowerment, reflected the participants' belief that empowerment within the educational system must be grounded in Islamic morality rather than being conceptualized solely as the transfer of authority or enhancement of employee discretion. Participants repeatedly emphasized that empowerment without ethical responsibility could result in misuse of authority, individualistic behavior, and inconsistency between personal interests and organizational objectives. Accordingly, Islamic work ethics, respect for human dignity, trustworthiness, honesty, moral responsibility, and adherence to ethical obligations were recognized as foundational components of empowerment. The second dimension, competency and professional development, referred to developing employees' technical, administrative, educational, interpersonal, and decision-making capabilities through continuous learning and assigning responsibilities according to merit and expertise. Participants considered professional competence a prerequisite for effective delegation because authority without adequate competence was perceived as potentially counterproductive.

The third dimension, participative and justice-oriented management, comprised consultation, participation in decision-making, organizational justice, equitable treatment, delegation of authority, and reduction of unnecessary administrative centralization. Participants viewed the Islamic principle of consultation as particularly compatible with contemporary participative management and argued that employees should have meaningful opportunities to express their professional judgments regarding decisions affecting their work. At the same time, participation was considered sustainable only in an organizational environment characterized by procedural and distributive fairness. The fourth dimension, psychological and motivational empowerment, represented the internal psychological conditions through which employees experience themselves as capable, influential, motivated, and connected to the organization. The participants emphasized self-efficacy, occupational meaningfulness, intrinsic motivation, organizational belonging, confidence, and commitment as central manifestations of empowerment. The fifth dimension, organizational and structural support, highlighted the importance of the organizational environment in transforming individual potential into actual empowered performance. Supportive leadership, access to information and resources, appropriate technologies, constructive performance feedback, recognition, and facilitative administrative structures were considered essential. Finally, accountability and excellence-oriented performance reflected the expectation that empowered employees should accept greater responsibility for the consequences of their decisions and orient their performance

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toward public service, educational quality, continuous improvement, and organizational excellence.

Table 3

Basic Concepts Associated with the Six Dimensions of Human Resource Empowerment

Main Dimension	Basic Concepts Identified from Interviews
Islamic Ethical and Value-Based Empowerment	commitment to Islamic values; honesty in organizational behavior; trustworthiness; avoidance of discrimination; respect for employees; preservation of human dignity; moral self-control; sincerity in service; conscientious performance; ethical use of authority
Competency and Professional Development	specialized knowledge; managerial competence; digital competence; problem-solving ability; decision-making skills; communication skills; continuous training; knowledge sharing; organizational learning; talent identification; meritocracy; career development
Participative and Justice-Oriented Management	consultation in decision-making; listening to employees; participative problem solving; delegation of authority; decentralization; fair distribution of opportunities; transparent procedures; equitable evaluation; fairness in promotion; avoidance of favoritism
Psychological and Motivational Empowerment	occupational self-confidence; perceived competence; sense of effectiveness; meaningful work; job motivation; initiative; creativity; organizational identification; belonging; commitment; perceived autonomy
Organizational and Structural Support	managerial support; supportive climate; availability of financial and informational resources; access to technology; appropriate work facilities; constructive feedback; recognition of achievements; incentive mechanisms; clear organizational roles
Accountability and Excellence-Oriented Performance	personal accountability; acceptance of consequences; responsiveness to stakeholders; commitment to students and society; service orientation; quality improvement; performance discipline; continuous improvement; organizational excellence

As indicated in Table 3, the 58 basic concepts demonstrated that the participants conceptualized empowerment as an integrated system rather than as an isolated managerial intervention. Within the Islamic ethical and value-based dimension, concepts such as honesty, trustworthiness, avoidance of discrimination, respect for human dignity, moral self-control, and ethical use of authority frequently appeared in participants' descriptions. These concepts indicated that Islamic culture was perceived not merely as an ideological background but as a practical regulatory framework for organizational behavior. In the competency and professional development dimension, the interviews emphasized that empowerment should involve the systematic strengthening of specialized knowledge, managerial competence, digital skills, communication abilities, problem-solving capacity, and continuous professional learning. Talent identification, knowledge sharing, career development, and meritocratic appointment were also consistently considered important because participants believed that employees were more likely to exercise authority appropriately when assignments corresponded to their competencies.

The concepts classified under participative and justice-oriented management showed a strong connection between employee involvement and perceptions of organizational fairness. Participants frequently associated participation with being heard, being consulted before decisions were finalized, having access to decision-making processes related to one's professional responsibilities, and receiving sufficient authority to implement assigned duties. However, participation was repeatedly discussed alongside transparency, equal opportunities, equitable evaluation, and avoidance of favoritism, indicating that empowerment would be weakened when employees perceived organizational decisions as discriminatory or politically influenced. Psychological and motivational concepts primarily described employees' internal experience of empowerment, including self-confidence, perceived competence, meaningfulness, autonomy, initiative, and organizational belonging. The organizational and structural support dimension showed that empowerment also depended on access to necessary resources, information, technologies, constructive feedback, supportive supervision, clear responsibilities, and appropriate incentive mechanisms. Finally, the accountability and excellence-oriented dimension revealed that participants expected empowered employees to demonstrate greater responsiveness, commitment to educational beneficiaries, performance discipline, service orientation, and continuous improvement. Thus, the qualitative findings indicated that empowerment was understood as a balance between increased capability and discretion on the one hand and ethical responsibility and organizational accountability on the other.

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Table 4

Relative Emphasis of Participants on the Identified Dimensions

Main Dimension	Participants Referring to the Dimension (n = 15)	Percentage of Participants	Number of Coded References
Islamic Ethical and Value-Based Empowerment	15	100.0	126
Competency and Professional Development	15	100.0	118
Participative and Justice-Oriented Management	14	93.3	109
Psychological and Motivational Empowerment	14	93.3	96
Organizational and Structural Support	13	86.7	87
Accountability and Excellence-Oriented Performance	13	86.7	73

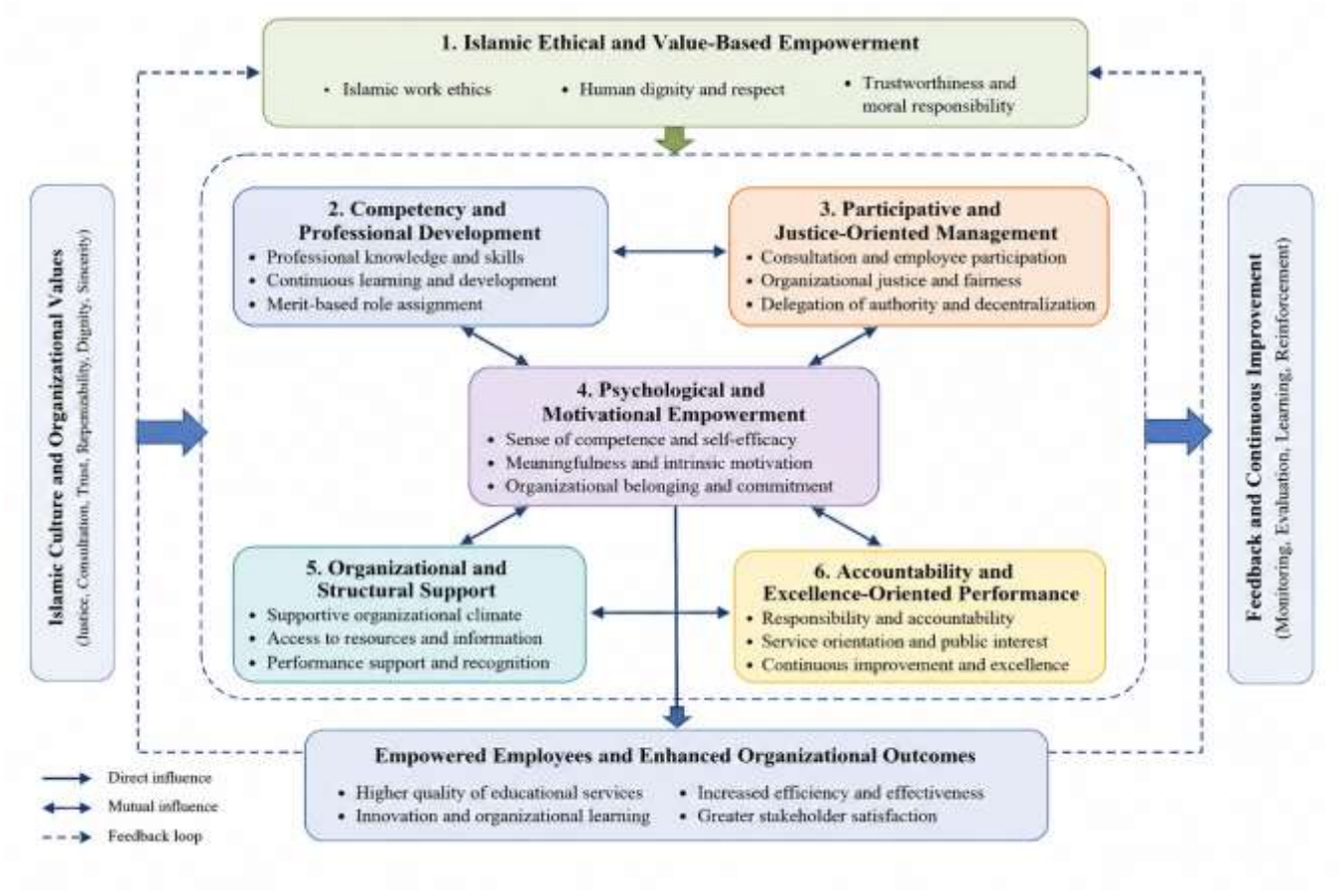
Table 4 illustrates the relative emphasis placed by participants on the six dimensions. Islamic ethical and value-based empowerment was discussed by all 15 participants and generated 126 coded references, making it the most frequently emphasized dimension in the interviews. This finding indicated that the participants regarded Islamic values as the central normative foundation of the empowerment process. Professional competence and development was also mentioned by all participants and accounted for 118 coded references. The closeness of these two dimensions suggests that the participants viewed ethical commitment and professional capability as complementary foundations: employees should be both professionally capable and morally responsible in order to exercise greater authority effectively. Participative and justice-oriented management was identified in the interviews of 14 participants and was represented by 109 coded references. Participants particularly emphasized that consultation, equitable treatment, transparent managerial procedures, and meaningful delegation should occur simultaneously. Psychological and motivational empowerment was also mentioned by 14 participants and included 96 coded references, demonstrating the importance attributed to self-efficacy, meaningfulness, intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and organizational belonging.

Organizational and structural support was discussed by 13 participants and generated 87 coded references. Participants explained that employees might possess adequate competence and motivation but still be unable to demonstrate empowered behavior when organizational procedures, technologies, managerial practices, or resource limitations restricted their performance. The accountability and excellence-oriented performance dimension was also identified by 13 participants, with 73 coded references. Although this dimension had the lowest frequency of coded references among the six main dimensions, it remained a recurrent theme across the interviews and represented the performance-oriented outcome of the empowerment process. Participants generally described accountability as the counterpart of delegation: when employees receive greater authority, access to organizational resources, and freedom to act, they should simultaneously demonstrate greater responsibility for their decisions and outcomes. Accordingly, the frequency distribution of the themes reinforced the overall interpretation that human resource empowerment in the General Directorate of Education of Bushehr Province should be viewed as a balanced combination of Islamic ethical values, professional capability, participative management, psychological readiness, organizational support, and responsibility for performance.

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Figure 1

Conceptual Model of Human Resource Empowerment with an Islamic Culture Approach in the General Directorate of Education of Bushehr Province



The conceptual model presented in Figure 1 represents the relationships among the six dimensions identified through thematic analysis. At the foundational level, Islamic ethical and value-based empowerment provides the normative orientation for the entire framework. Values such as justice, trustworthiness, dignity, responsibility, sincerity, and ethical conduct define the manner in which authority should be exercised and establish the moral boundaries of empowered organizational behavior. Competency and professional development forms the capability-related foundation of the framework by ensuring that employees possess the knowledge and skills necessary to act independently, solve problems, make appropriate decisions, and accept more complex responsibilities. These two foundational dimensions interact with participative and justice-oriented management, through which organizational authority is shared, employees are involved in relevant decisions, and managerial processes are conducted in an equitable and transparent manner.

Within this environment, psychological and motivational empowerment emerges as an important internal mechanism. When employees perceive that they are trusted, professionally competent, treated fairly, consulted in organizational affairs, and provided with meaningful authority, they are more likely to experience higher self-efficacy, autonomy, intrinsic motivation, organizational belonging, and commitment. Nevertheless, the participants' accounts indicated that these psychological conditions cannot be maintained without adequate organizational and structural support. Access to information, technologies, appropriate facilities, supportive supervisors, constructive feedback, recognition systems, and clearly defined organizational roles creates the infrastructure through which empowered employees can translate their capabilities into effective performance. The model therefore emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between individual empowerment and organizational context rather than attributing empowerment exclusively to employees' personal characteristics.

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The final dimension of accountability and excellence-oriented performance represents the expected behavioral and organizational consequences of the empowerment process. Participants consistently argued that empowerment should ultimately lead to responsible decision-making, improved quality of educational and administrative services, greater responsiveness to students, parents, colleagues, and other stakeholders, and sustained commitment to organizational improvement. From this perspective, empowerment is not synonymous with unrestricted employee autonomy. Rather, it represents the purposeful expansion of employees' capacity and discretion within a framework of Islamic ethics, organizational justice, professional competence, and accountability. The findings therefore suggest that effective human resource empowerment in the General Directorate of Education of Bushehr Province requires simultaneous attention to individual, managerial, organizational, and cultural mechanisms.

Further examination of the interview data showed that participants frequently described the six dimensions as interdependent rather than independent. For example, delegation of authority was considered ineffective when employees lacked sufficient professional competence, whereas professional competence alone was considered insufficient when managers were unwilling to trust employees or involve them in decision-making. Similarly, organizational justice was viewed as a prerequisite for psychological empowerment because perceptions of favoritism, unequal access to opportunities, or inconsistent evaluation weakened employees' motivation and organizational belonging. Islamic ethical values were also described as mechanisms for regulating both managerial behavior and employee conduct. Managers were expected to exercise fairness, consultation, respect, and trust, while employees were expected to respond to empowerment with responsibility, honesty, conscientiousness, and commitment to collective interests.

Participants also emphasized that the educational context gave empowerment a distinctive character. Unlike organizations primarily concerned with financial performance, educational institutions were described as having a social and developmental mission. Consequently, the ultimate objective of empowerment was not merely improved administrative efficiency but also enhancement of educational quality, responsiveness to teachers and students, improvement of organizational learning, and better realization of the public responsibilities of the education system. Several interview accounts reflected the view that empowered employees should be capable of identifying educational problems, proposing context-sensitive solutions, sharing professional knowledge, participating constructively in organizational decisions, and responding more rapidly to the needs of schools and educational stakeholders.

Overall, the findings resulted in a comprehensive conceptualization of human resource empowerment with an Islamic culture approach consisting of six main dimensions, 18 organizing components, and 58 basic concepts. Islamic ethical and value-based empowerment and competency and professional development constituted the two most pervasive dimensions, while participative and justice-oriented management established the managerial conditions required for empowerment. Psychological and motivational empowerment represented the internal employee-level manifestation of the process, organizational and structural support provided the enabling institutional environment, and accountability and excellence-oriented performance represented the principal behavioral and organizational outcomes. Taken together, these findings demonstrate that human resource empowerment in the General Directorate of Education of Bushehr Province should be regarded as a multidimensional and culturally grounded organizational process in which professional competence, authority, motivation, ethical conduct, organizational support, justice, and accountability operate in an integrated manner.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to identify the dimensions and components of human resource empowerment with an Islamic culture approach in the General Directorate of Education of Bushehr Province. The qualitative findings resulted in the identification of six main dimensions comprising Islamic ethical and value-based empowerment, competency and professional development, participative and justice-oriented management, psychological and motivational empowerment, organizational and structural support, and accountability and excellence-oriented performance. These dimensions were organized into 18 components and reflected a multidimensional understanding of empowerment in which professional capability, organizational authority, psychological readiness, ethical conduct, cultural values, managerial support, and responsibility for outcomes were closely interconnected. The findings further indicated that Islamic ethical and value-based empowerment and competency and professional development were the most frequently emphasized

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dimensions among the participants, suggesting that empowerment in an Islamic educational context cannot be understood solely as increased autonomy or delegation of authority. Rather, the participants conceptualized empowerment as a balanced process in which employees acquire greater knowledge, capability, discretion, and influence while simultaneously remaining committed to ethical responsibility, justice, service, accountability, and collective organizational goals.

The first and most prominent dimension identified in the study was Islamic ethical and value-based empowerment, which included Islamic work ethics, human dignity and respect, trustworthiness, and moral responsibility. This finding demonstrates that the cultural and ethical foundations of empowerment are particularly important in organizations operating within an Islamic institutional environment. From the perspective of the participants, empowerment was considered legitimate and sustainable only when employees used their authority in accordance with ethical principles and organizational responsibilities. This result is consistent with findings indicating that Islamic work ethics can shape employee behavior through organizational culture and can strengthen desirable organizational attitudes when ethical values become embedded in daily organizational practices (Ibrahim & Idris, 2023). The findings also align with comparative analyses of Islamic and conventional human resource management, which suggest that Islamic approaches place greater emphasis on justice, trustworthiness, human dignity, spiritual responsibility, and the moral consequences of managerial behavior (Kaharudin et al., 2025). Accordingly, the present results extend previous research by showing that Islamic values are not merely contextual variables surrounding empowerment but can operate as a core dimension of empowerment itself.

The prominence of this ethical dimension can also be explained by the nature of educational organizations. Employees within public education systems are responsible not only for administrative efficiency but also for serving students, teachers, families, and communities. Consequently, professional authority must be accompanied by responsibility toward the public interest. In such contexts, trustworthiness, sincerity, respect, and ethical use of authority can help ensure that empowerment does not become synonymous with unrestricted individual discretion. The findings are also compatible with recent Islamic human resource development models emphasizing the integration of employee capability with ethical conduct, sustainable organizational development, and social responsibility (Zarkasyi et al., 2025). Thus, the present study suggests that Islamic empowerment should be viewed as morally regulated empowerment in which freedom of action is combined with responsibility and value-based self-regulation.

The second dimension, competency and professional development, consisted of professional knowledge and skills, continuous learning and development, and merit-based role assignment. Participants consistently emphasized that empowerment without competence could be ineffective or even harmful because employees cannot make appropriate decisions or exercise delegated authority effectively if they lack the required knowledge and skills. This finding corresponds with studies demonstrating that training and professional development contribute to improved service quality and employee performance when supported by appropriate organizational conditions (Hasbi & Hanafi, 2024). It is also consistent with evidence showing that empowerment and training programs can improve job satisfaction and work performance in Islamic organizational settings (Munifatussaidah & Prasetyo, 2023). From this perspective, empowerment is not simply a structural intervention but also a developmental process through which employees acquire the capabilities necessary to make sound judgments and act independently.

The importance attributed to competence is particularly relevant in contemporary educational administration, where employees increasingly require digital, managerial, communicative, analytical, and problem-solving capabilities. Recent research emphasizing the systematic identification of digital competencies in Iranian public organizations further supports the necessity of competency-based approaches to human resource development (Lotfollahi Haghighi et al., 2025). The current findings indicate that merit-based role assignment should accompany competency development because empowerment is more likely to produce desirable outcomes when responsibilities are allocated according to expertise and capability. This interpretation also corresponds with the broader Islamic emphasis on merit, fairness, and appropriate placement of individuals according to their capacities. Accordingly, professional competence and meritocracy can be understood as complementary foundations of empowerment.

The third dimension was participative and justice-oriented management, which comprised consultation and employee participation, organizational justice and fairness, and delegation of authority and decentralization. The

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findings demonstrated that participants perceived participation and justice as mutually reinforcing conditions. Employees were expected to contribute to decisions, express professional opinions, and exercise authority, but such involvement was viewed as meaningful only when organizational procedures were transparent and equitable. This finding is consistent with contemporary participatory models of human resource governance, which emphasize the importance of employee involvement, especially in response to changing generational expectations regarding autonomy, voice, recognition, and participation (Iranshahi & Mansournejad, 2025). The results also align with research on empowering leadership, which has shown that increased employee participation and decision-making discretion can enhance innovation and organizational effectiveness (Supriyanto et al., 2023).

The significance of consultation within the present framework is also notable because it provides a conceptual bridge between contemporary participative management and Islamic organizational values. In an Islamic context, consultation is not merely an efficiency mechanism but also reflects respect for employees' knowledge, dignity, and social responsibility. The present findings therefore indicate that participative management may acquire additional ethical legitimacy when interpreted through an Islamic cultural framework. The connection between participation and fairness can also be explained psychologically. Employees are less likely to experience genuine empowerment when they perceive decision-making procedures as biased or opportunities as unequally distributed. In contrast, transparency and equitable treatment can strengthen trust in management and increase employees' willingness to accept responsibility.

The fourth dimension, psychological and motivational empowerment, included perceived competence and self-efficacy, meaningfulness and intrinsic motivation, and organizational belonging and commitment. This result confirms that empowerment has an important internal psychological component in addition to structural and managerial dimensions. Employees may formally receive authority yet still fail to feel empowered if they lack confidence, perceive their work as meaningless, or feel disconnected from the organization. The present findings are consistent with evidence demonstrating that psychological empowerment mediates the effects of empowering leadership on knowledge-sharing behavior (Khatoon et al., 2022). Similarly, research has shown that spiritual leadership and psychological empowerment can positively influence employee performance, emphasizing the role of meaning, intrinsic motivation, and perceived capability in organizational behavior (Rahmatika et al., 2022).

The importance of organizational belonging and commitment is also supported by previous studies. Human resource practices have been found to influence organizational commitment and employees' intention to share knowledge, indicating that supportive organizational environments can strengthen both emotional attachment and collaborative behavior (Rubaca et al., 2024). In Islamic banking, internal organizational responsibility toward employees has similarly been associated with stronger organizational commitment (Faliza et al., 2023). Furthermore, human resource management practices have been linked to improved service performance through employee commitment, suggesting that commitment can serve as a psychological pathway through which organizational support is converted into effective behavior (Mao et al., 2022). These studies support the current finding that psychological empowerment cannot be separated from employees' sense of identification with and commitment to the organization.

The fifth dimension identified in the study was organizational and structural support, including supportive organizational climate, access to resources and information, and performance support and recognition. This finding emphasizes that empowerment cannot be achieved solely by changing employees' attitudes or developing their skills. Organizational systems must also provide the resources, technologies, information, feedback, and managerial support necessary for employees to act effectively. This result is consistent with evidence demonstrating that perceived organizational support is closely related to teacher empowerment in Islamic educational settings (Muttaqin, 2023). Similarly, servant leadership and perceived organizational support have been found to contribute to employee loyalty through empowerment processes (Fitriyana et al., 2023). These findings reinforce the view that empowerment is strongly dependent on the organizational environment.

The relevance of organizational learning culture also supports this interpretation. Workplace empowerment has been linked to organizational learning culture, spirituality, and knowledge-sharing behavior, demonstrating that organizations must create environments in which employees can access knowledge, exchange experience, and continuously develop their capabilities (Nurcahyo, 2024). In the present study, participants emphasized that limited

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resources, insufficient information, unclear roles, or lack of managerial recognition could weaken empowerment even when employees possessed adequate competence and motivation. Therefore, empowerment should be institutionalized through organizational structures and processes rather than being treated as an isolated motivational program.

The sixth dimension, accountability and excellence-oriented performance, included responsibility and accountability, service orientation and public interest, and continuous improvement and organizational excellence. This finding highlights the outcome-oriented nature of the proposed model. Participants did not conceptualize empowerment as an end in itself; rather, empowerment was expected to improve responsibility, service quality, responsiveness, and continuous organizational learning. The result is consistent with research showing that empowering leadership can contribute to organizational innovation (Supriyanto et al., 2023), as well as studies indicating that human resource practices can improve service-related outcomes through employee commitment (Mao et al., 2022). Quality-oriented approaches to teacher empowerment also emphasize the importance of translating employee development into better educational performance and institutional effectiveness (Kholis et al., 2022).

The emphasis on service orientation is particularly important in the context of education. Educational organizations are public-service institutions whose success cannot be evaluated solely by internal productivity. Their performance must also be assessed according to the quality of services provided to students, teachers, families, and society. Strategic educational empowerment initiatives have shown that empowerment can contribute to broader educational and social outcomes when organizational and human capacities are systematically developed (Hidayati et al., 2023). Similarly, community-based Islamic empowerment initiatives demonstrate that capability development can extend beyond individual improvement and contribute to collective welfare and social development (Nurohman et al., 2024; Zikri, 2023). The current findings therefore support a broader interpretation of empowerment in which empowered employees contribute to organizational excellence and social value simultaneously.

The findings also revealed strong interrelationships among the six dimensions. Ethical values provided the normative foundation, competence provided the capacity to act, participative management provided the opportunity to influence organizational processes, psychological empowerment provided internal motivation, organizational support provided enabling conditions, and accountability provided direction toward desirable outcomes. This integrated pattern is consistent with Islamic human resource development approaches that seek to combine individual development, organizational sustainability, ethical governance, and broader social objectives (Zarkasyi et al., 2025). It is also compatible with research demonstrating that empowerment interacts with leadership, organizational support, learning culture, and commitment rather than operating independently (Fitriyana et al., 2023; Nurcahyo, 2024; Rubaca et al., 2024).

Another important implication of the findings concerns leadership. Although leadership was not identified as a separate overarching dimension, it was embedded across several components, particularly participation, delegation, justice, support, recognition, and motivation. This suggests that managerial behavior may function as a mechanism linking the dimensions of the model. Previous studies have shown that transformational leadership can improve teacher performance in Islamic educational institutions (Wafa, 2022), spiritual leadership can enhance psychological empowerment (Rahmatika et al., 2022), and empowering leadership can promote innovation and knowledge sharing (Khatoon et al., 2022; Supriyanto et al., 2023). These findings support the interpretation that leaders play a critical role in translating ethical principles and organizational policies into employees' actual experiences of empowerment.

The results can also be interpreted in relation to broader human and community development. Empowerment studies in Islamic settings have shown that capability development, entrepreneurship, social participation, and community engagement can contribute to welfare and collective capacity (Jamalulail & Machdum, 2022; Nurohman et al., 2024; Zikri, 2023). Although the present study focused on employees within a provincial education administration, the same principle applies at the organizational level. Empowered employees may be better positioned to support schools, solve local educational problems, disseminate knowledge, and respond to stakeholder needs. In this respect, human resource empowerment may have indirect effects on educational and community development beyond the immediate workplace.

At the same time, the findings suggest that empowerment must be implemented carefully. Previous research has shown that empowerment outcomes can vary depending on structural conditions, opportunities, and organizational

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constraints (Mustafa & Gomes, 2022). In the present study, participants similarly emphasized that delegation without competence, participation without real influence, or accountability without adequate resources could undermine rather than strengthen empowerment. Thus, the proposed framework should not be implemented by emphasizing one dimension while neglecting others. Effective empowerment requires simultaneous attention to capability, authority, fairness, values, motivation, support, and responsibility.

Overall, the findings contribute to the literature by presenting human resource empowerment as a culturally grounded and multidimensional construct within a public educational organization. The proposed model differs from narrower empowerment approaches by explicitly incorporating Islamic ethical values, organizational justice, meritocracy, consultation, professional competence, psychological empowerment, structural support, and accountability within a unified framework. The findings are therefore consistent with previous research while extending it by demonstrating how these dimensions can be integrated in the specific context of the General Directorate of Education of Bushehr Province.

The present study had several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the research was qualitative and was conducted with a relatively small purposive sample of 15 experts, which was appropriate for achieving conceptual depth and saturation but limits statistical generalization to the broader population of education employees. Second, the study was conducted specifically within the organizational and cultural context of the General Directorate of Education of Bushehr Province; therefore, some of the identified dimensions and components may reflect local administrative, cultural, or institutional characteristics that may not be fully transferable to other provinces or public organizations. Third, the findings were based primarily on participants' self-reported perceptions and professional experiences, which may have been influenced by personal interpretations, organizational position, or socially desirable responses, particularly when discussing Islamic values, ethics, and managerial practices. Finally, although multiple strategies were used to strengthen qualitative trustworthiness, interpretation and categorization inevitably involved researcher judgment during the coding and theme-development process.

Future studies are recommended to validate the identified framework through quantitative research using larger and more diverse samples of employees, managers, teachers, and administrative experts across multiple provinces. A measurement instrument based on the six dimensions and 18 components could be developed and evaluated through exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. Structural equation modeling could subsequently be used to examine the relationships among Islamic ethical empowerment, competency development, participative management, psychological empowerment, organizational support, accountability, and organizational outcomes. Comparative studies between different educational organizations, provinces, governmental agencies, or public and private institutions could clarify the extent to which the proposed dimensions are context-specific or broadly applicable. Longitudinal and intervention studies are also suggested to examine whether implementation of the proposed empowerment framework leads to sustainable changes in employee motivation, commitment, innovation, service quality, job performance, and organizational effectiveness. Future qualitative research may additionally explore the perspectives of frontline employees and teachers in order to compare their experiences with those of managers and experts.

It is recommended that the General Directorate of Education of Bushehr Province use the identified framework as a basis for designing an integrated human resource empowerment program. Managers should incorporate Islamic ethical principles such as justice, trustworthiness, respect, consultation, responsibility, and preservation of human dignity into recruitment, promotion, performance evaluation, leadership development, and employee relations. Competency-based training programs should be developed to strengthen professional, managerial, digital, communication, and problem-solving skills, while organizational positions and delegated responsibilities should be assigned according to employees' competencies and merit. Employees should be systematically involved in decisions affecting their work, unnecessary centralization should be reduced, and delegation should be accompanied by clear responsibilities and adequate resources. Organizational procedures for evaluation, promotion, rewards, and access to development opportunities should be transparent and equitable. Managers should also strengthen psychological empowerment by providing constructive feedback, recognizing employee achievements, encouraging initiative and creativity, and demonstrating confidence in employees' capabilities. Finally, empowerment initiatives should be linked to measurable outcomes such as service quality, responsiveness, innovation, stakeholder satisfaction, accountability, and continuous improvement so that

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empowerment becomes an integrated organizational system rather than a temporary human resource intervention.

Authors' Contributions

Authors equally contributed to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

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

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