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The Model of Culture for Overcoming Human Resource Resistance to Change (Isfahan Department of Education)

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to present a model of culture for overcoming human resource resistance to change in the Isfahan Department of Education. From the perspective of purpose, this research is applied, and in terms of methodology, it is descriptive–analytical. The research method was mixed and conducted in two qualitative and quantitative phases. The statistical population in the qualitative phase consisted of 20 academic experts and executive managers in the education sector, who were selected through theoretical and snowball sampling until theoretical saturation was reached at the eleventh participant. The data collection instrument in the qualitative phase was a semi-structured interview, and data analysis was carried out using the grounded theory method. The quantitative phase followed a survey strategy using a questionnaire derived from the qualitative model. After confirming its validity and reliability, the model was subjected to empirical validation. The statistical population in the quantitative phase included managers and staff members of the Isfahan Department of Education, and the statistical sample consisted of 213 participants selected using stratified random sampling. The findings of the qualitative phase were presented in the form of a six-component paradigmatic model including causal, contextual, intervening, strategic, core, and consequential categories. In the quantitative phase, the causal paths and relationships among external and internal constructs in the structural model were confirmed through confirmatory factor analysis. The results obtained from AMOS software showed that the factor loadings in the paradigmatic model were higher than 0.6, and the fit indices (GFI, AGFI, CFI, and NFI) in the proposed model exceeded 0.9. Therefore, the research data exhibited a good fit with the factorial structure of the scale. Consequently, it can be concluded that by utilizing an appropriate organizational culture to foster a positive attitude among human resources toward change, it is possible to establish new orientations within organizations.

Keywords: Organizational culture, employee resistance, education, mixed-methods approach.

Introduction

In the contemporary era, where organizations must constantly adapt to rapid social, technological, and structural transformations, the management of change has emerged as one of the most complex and sensitive challenges facing both public and private institutions. Change management, at its core, represents a strategic process aimed at aligning human behavior, organizational structures, and cultural systems with evolving environmental demands [1]. However, despite the recognition of change as a necessity for survival and progress, resistance to change—particularly among human resources—remains a persistent obstacle that undermines the success of organizational transformation efforts [2].

Resistance to change is not merely a behavioral reaction; it reflects deeper psychological, structural, and cultural dimensions within an organization [3]. According to organizational behavior theories, such resistance arises when employees

perceive a threat to their professional stability, existing routines, or values [4]. The literature identifies various causes for this phenomenon, including lack of trust in management, ambiguity about the outcomes of change, inadequate participation in decision-making, and weak communication systems [5]. Therefore, understanding the interplay between organizational culture and resistance to change has become a critical research domain in organizational studies [6].

Organizational culture, defined as the shared values, norms, and beliefs that shape employees' perceptions and behaviors, profoundly influences the extent to which change initiatives succeed or fail [7]. Culture not only determines how employees interpret change but also shapes their readiness and emotional responses to it [8]. In dynamic and learning-oriented cultures, change is perceived as an opportunity for growth, innovation, and self-improvement, whereas in rigid and hierarchical cultures, it is often viewed as a disruptive force [9]. Scholars emphasize that building a culture supportive of change requires leaders who can align individual and organizational values through vision sharing, empowerment, and transparent communication [6, 10].

A growing body of research highlights the critical role of leadership in managing resistance to change through cultural transformation. Leadership that is participatory and transformational fosters a sense of trust and psychological safety among employees, encouraging them to engage with rather than resist change [1, 10]. Transformational leaders articulate a compelling vision, promote innovation, and strengthen employees' sense of belonging and contribution, which collectively mitigate resistance [11]. As empirical evidence shows, such leadership approaches are particularly vital in educational organizations, where human relationships, professional identities, and institutional norms deeply influence behavioral change [12].

The education sector, especially public education organizations, is often characterized by complex bureaucratic structures, entrenched professional cultures, and high levels of human interdependence. In these environments, implementing change initiatives—such as curricular reform, digital transformation, or pedagogical innovation—frequently encounters substantial employee resistance [13]. Factors such as role ambiguity, inadequate resources, and emotional attachment to traditional practices exacerbate this resistance [14]. Research conducted in governmental educational institutions in Tehran found that resistance was strongly associated with employees' affective commitment and perceived fairness of change processes [15].

Moreover, contextual and mediating variables such as openness to change, readiness for change, and perceptions of organizational justice significantly influence employees' responses to change [16]. Studies in Iranian education departments demonstrated that a supportive culture emphasizing collaboration, trust, and communication enhances readiness for change and reduces psychological resistance [17]. Similarly, when employees perceive that change aligns with the organization's mission and values, they are more likely to engage constructively in transformation efforts [18]. Conversely, cultures marked by centralization, control, and lack of participation tend to reinforce cynicism, passive resistance, and organizational silence [14].

The nature of resistance itself has been explored through multiple theoretical lenses. From a psychological standpoint, it is linked to cognitive dissonance and fear of uncertainty [19]. From a sociological perspective, resistance emerges as a collective behavior rooted in group identity and organizational politics [20]. In educational settings, both dimensions coexist, leading to emotional and behavioral barriers that impede reform initiatives [21]. A phenomenological exploration of university employees revealed that resistance often manifests in covert behaviors such as withdrawal, decreased cooperation, and subtle opposition rather than explicit defiance [22].

Organizational culture also acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between change management practices and employee outcomes. For example, research indicates that cultures emphasizing adaptability and innovation facilitate smoother implementation of change initiatives [23]. In contrast, cultures dominated by power distance and formalism often stifle creativity and hinder collective learning [24]. This dynamic is particularly relevant in knowledge-intensive institutions such as universities and education departments, where cultural alignment determines not only the effectiveness of change but also the long-term sustainability of innovation [25].

Several studies have focused on developing models that link cultural dimensions with readiness and resistance to change. The study by [26] found that contextual variables such as leadership credibility, communication quality, and organizational justice indirectly influence resistance through their effects on openness and readiness for change. Similarly, [27] emphasized that management skills and an innovation-oriented culture act as sources of organizational resilience in peripheral and developing regions. In another study, [11] used adaptive dynamic systems modeling to demonstrate that cultural learning mechanisms enhance transformational change capacity. These findings suggest that effective change management requires not only structural and procedural adjustments but also deep cultural and cognitive reorientation within organizations.

In Iran's educational organizations, cultural and structural constraints pose significant barriers to change. Bureaucratic inertia, hierarchical decision-making, and limited autonomy among employees often result in emotional fatigue and reduced motivation to embrace transformation [28]. Furthermore, individual factors such as personality traits, emotional stability, and self-efficacy interact with organizational culture to shape the intensity and form of resistance [29]. The study by [30] revealed that organizational forgetting—defined as the inability to abandon outdated routines—amplifies employees' resistance to innovation. Thus, fostering a culture of learning and adaptability becomes essential to overcoming both individual and collective forms of resistance.

At the same time, empirical evidence supports the mediating role of social and emotional variables in the culture–resistance relationship. For instance, [15] demonstrated that affective commitment and trust in management reduce emotional resistance by strengthening positive attitudes toward change. [31] and [32] found that employees' readiness to accept change is directly predicted by components of organizational culture, particularly collaboration, communication, and reward systems. [20] showed that perceptions of organizational politics exacerbate resistance, while organizational forgetting moderates this relationship. Collectively, these studies underscore that the success of any transformation depends on the alignment between organizational culture, leadership practices, and human resource development strategies.

Globally, the integration of cultural and behavioral dimensions in change management has been a focal point of recent scholarship. [8] approached this issue from a configurational perspective, emphasizing that employees' reactions to planned culture change depend on how organizations combine leadership style, communication strategy, and participation mechanisms. [1] similarly stressed that mitigating resistance requires embedding change management within the cultural fabric of the organization rather than imposing it externally. Furthermore, [2] highlighted that in the context of Industry 4.0, managing human resistance is not only about technical adaptation but also about cultural readiness and psychological resilience among employees.

From a managerial perspective, it becomes evident that promoting a culture that encourages openness, trust, and shared responsibility is fundamental to overcoming human resource resistance [6]. Leaders who engage employees through transparent dialogue, collaborative problem-solving, and empowerment strategies can transform resistance into constructive

engagement [5]. Additionally, developing institutional frameworks that reward learning, adaptability, and creativity strengthens the organization's capacity for sustainable change [33].

In the specific context of Iranian education departments, such as the Isfahan Department of Education, understanding and managing cultural dynamics play a decisive role in the implementation of reforms. These organizations must balance traditional values with modern management practices, ensuring that change initiatives resonate with the professional identity of teachers and administrators. Previous research has underscored that the alignment between leadership culture and employee readiness for change significantly enhances the likelihood of successful transformation [12]. Therefore, addressing resistance requires not only technical interventions but also cultural engineering that integrates motivation, empowerment, and participatory decision-making [17].

In summary, the interplay between organizational culture and resistance to change constitutes a multidimensional challenge that encompasses psychological, behavioral, and structural dimensions. In educational organizations, where human factors dominate the operational environment, cultural readiness becomes the cornerstone of sustainable transformation. Building upon the theoretical and empirical foundations of previous studies, the present research seeks to bridge the gap between cultural orientation and human adaptability by offering a comprehensive model tailored to the education sector in Iran.

The aim of this study is to present a model of culture for overcoming human resource resistance to change in the Isfahan Department of Education.

Methodology

This study is applied in terms of purpose and descriptive–analytical in nature. The research adopted a mixed-method design and was conducted in two phases: qualitative and quantitative. The statistical population in the qualitative phase consisted of 11 academic and executive experts in education, selected through snowball sampling until theoretical saturation was achieved. The qualitative data collection instrument was a semi-structured interview derived from theoretical foundations. Data in this phase were analyzed using the grounded theory approach.

The statistical population in the quantitative phase included managers, deputies, administrative supervisors of the Isfahan Department of Education, as well as administrative experts and teachers working in the Kashan and Aran and Bidgol offices of education. Based on stratified random sampling, 213 participants were selected. In this study, data collection in the first stage was performed through library research using note-taking. In the second stage, which represented the field phase of the research, semi-structured interviews were used as the main tool for data collection in accordance with the research variables and the relationships between components. In the third stage, a researcher-made questionnaire was used to collect data related to the evaluation of the qualitative model. The questionnaire items were developed based on the categories identified in the qualitative phase.

Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire consisted of two main parts: the first section included demographic variables (gender, age, educational degree, and field of study), while the second section contained items related to the main research topic.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire and the internal consistency of the items, the instrument was randomly administered to a pilot sample of 20 executive managers in the education sector. After conducting the pilot test,

Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated using SPSS statistical software. If the alpha values for all indicators exceeded 0.70, it was inferred that the questionnaire possessed high and acceptable validity based on face validity and demonstrated strong reliability among the investigated components. The reliability of the final instrument was confirmed, with an overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.83, indicating high internal consistency, as the value approached 1. According to Table 1, since the alpha value for each variable and the total alpha were above 0.70, all variables—both individually and collectively—were considered reliable.

Table 1

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for Research Variables

Research Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Total Items	0.88
Causal Factors	0.77
Intervening Factors	0.913
Strategic Factors	0.904
Contextual Factors	0.917
Core Factors	0.77
Consequences	0.913

Findings and Results

Given that this study employed a mixed-methods design, the results of the qualitative phase are presented first, followed by the quantitative findings.

As noted earlier, data in this stage were collected through in-depth, face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The interview protocol included nine main questions and several demographic questions for expert identification. Depending on participants' responses, some items were omitted to ensure greater clarity and precision of information. Theoretical sampling continued until theoretical saturation was reached. Simultaneous with data collection, coding of the interviews was also performed.

At this stage, key concepts and themes related to the *organizational culture model for overcoming employee resistance to change in the educational system (case study: Isfahan Department of Education)* were extracted during the interviews. Initially, key ideas and open codes were derived from the textual data. Subsequently, through careful analysis and refinement (selecting more accurate terminology and eliminating overlapping concepts), a total of 168 codes were identified. These codes were organized into a checklist for further interviews; based on expert feedback, some statements were modified or removed. In the selective coding stage, similar or overlapping categories were grouped under main themes according to their conceptual relationships. From this process, abstract themes (higher-order concepts) emerged.

Table 2

Selected Paradigmatic Codes

Core Categories	Paradigmatic Codes
Causal Factors	Decrease in morale and lower levels of organizational participation; organizational deterrence from finding innovative and improved solutions; reduced productivity and job satisfaction; uncertainty and potential disruption associated with any possible change
Contextual Factors	Establishing the infrastructure for transformation in the education system; creating a psychological readiness for change among employees; leadership credibility and employee trust in organizational leadership; fostering agility and organizational responsiveness
Intervening Factors	Lack of employee participation; absence of transparent communication; insufficient managerial support (material and non-material); perceptual and cognitive barriers toward change
Strategic Factors	Empowerment and personal development programs to prepare employees for challenges (training); creating employee motivation; maintaining transparency and explicit procedural guidelines; initiating open and direct communication with employees throughout the change process
Core Factors	Strengthening a transformational organizational culture; reinforcing individual and organizational components to overcome resistance to change; involving and engaging employees during change processes
Consequences	Increased employee and organizational productivity through positive transformations; personal development and employee empowerment; enhanced resilience and agility; strengthened transformational leadership; avoidance of stagnation and promotion of organizational competitiveness

In the selective coding phase, the relationships between the central category and other categories were identified. The main and subcategories were linked to generate theoretical concepts for presenting a *model of organizational culture for overcoming employee resistance to change in the education system (case study: Isfahan Department of Education)*. This enabled the researcher to integrate concepts obtained in the open and axial coding stages and develop a cohesive model. Accordingly, within the qualitative framework, using the paradigm proposed by Strauss and Corbin (2007), the roles of the extracted categories were identified in the paradigmatic model.

Of the total respondents, 77% were men and 23% were women. Regarding age, 28% were between 30–40 years, 51% were between 41–50 years, and 21% were over 51 years old. The largest proportion of participants belonged to the 41–50 age group, and the smallest to the group aged 51 and above. In terms of education, 6% held bachelor's degrees, 33% master's degrees, and 61% doctoral degrees. The highest proportion of respondents held doctorates, and the lowest had bachelor's degrees. Regarding work experience, 12% had 6–10 years of service, 24% had 11–15 years, 22% had 16–20 years, 24% had 21–25 years, and 18% had 26–30 years. The smallest proportion had 6–10 years of service.

In this section, data collected through the questionnaire—designed based on identified indicators—were analyzed statistically to examine the quantitative dimensions of the research components. Before conducting structural equation modeling (SEM), the validity of the constructs was assessed through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Each variable and its associated indicators were evaluated using CFA. The model derived from the classified codes is depicted in Figure 1.

To assess the validity of the causal condition variables, confirmatory factor analysis was employed. The AMOS software output indicated that all factor loadings exceeded 0.6. The chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df) was 2.07, which, being less than 5, demonstrated good model fit. Additionally, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.066, which is below the acceptable threshold of 0.10. Fit indices (GFI, AGFI, CFI, and NFI) all exceeded 0.9, indicating that the data had an appropriate fit with the factor structure of the causal condition scale and that the related items were well aligned.

The AMOS output showed a χ^2/df ratio of 1.80 and an RMSEA value of 0.057, both indicating good model fit and alignment between the items and the strategic variables.

According to AMOS results, the χ^2/df ratio was 1.54, and the RMSEA was 0.047. These values indicated a satisfactory model fit, confirming coherence between the items and contextual variables.

The findings for the fit indices of intervening factors (CFI, GFI, NFI, RMR, and RMSEA) were all within acceptable ranges, confirming that the data fitted the factorial structure well and that the items corresponded appropriately to the intervening constructs.

Similarly, the fit indices (CFI, GFI, NFI, RMR, and RMSEA) for the outcome variables were all satisfactory, indicating that the data adequately matched the factorial structure and that the questions were consistent with the outcome constructs.

The fit indices for the core factors also showed acceptable levels (CFI, GFI, NFI, RMR, and RMSEA), confirming that the data fitted the factorial structure properly and that the questions were consistent with the core constructs.

Goodness-of-fit indices represent one of the most critical stages in structural equation modeling analysis. These indices determine whether the model represented by the data supports the measurement model of the study. To answer this question, several fit indices have been proposed in SEM methodology.

Table 3

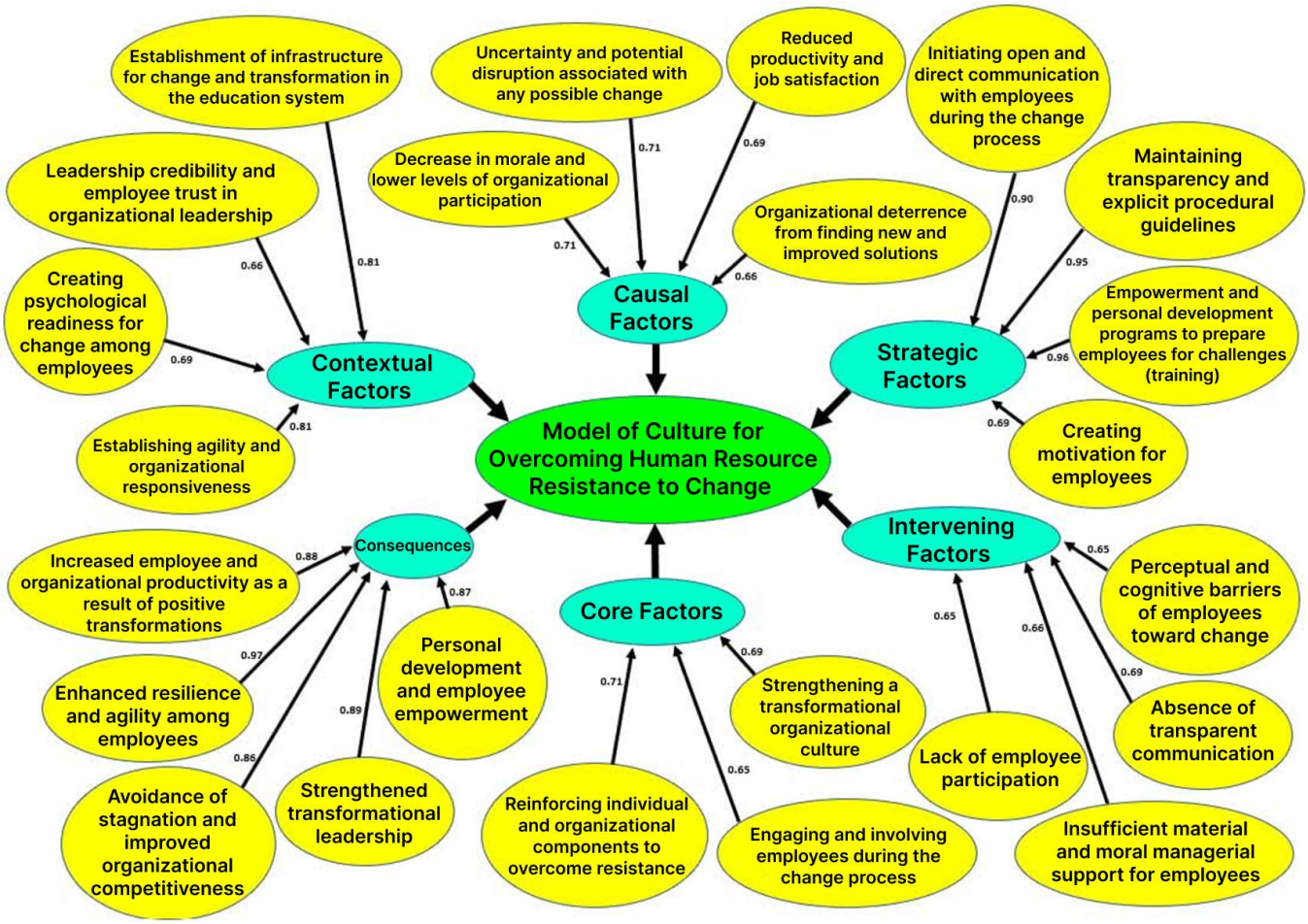
Results of Research Model Fit Indices

RMSEA	RMR	CFI	NFI	AGFI	GFI	χ^2/df
0.090	0.133	0.845	0.887	0.841	0.835	2.858

The results indicated that the proposed model had a satisfactory fit. After testing the measurement models, the final structural model—representing the relationships among the latent variables—was established.

Figure 1

Model of Organizational Culture for Overcoming Employee Resistance to Change in Iranian Administrative Organizations (Case Study: Isfahan Department of Education)



Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the present study, which aimed to develop a *model of organizational culture for overcoming human resource resistance to change* in the Isfahan Department of Education, revealed that the phenomenon of resistance to change is deeply rooted in multiple dimensions of organizational life—particularly cultural, contextual, and interpersonal aspects. The model derived from the grounded theory and validated through structural equation modeling demonstrated that six interrelated components—causal, contextual, intervening, strategic, core, and consequential factors—collectively shape the

way employees respond to organizational change. Each dimension contributes uniquely to the development of an adaptive culture that can mitigate resistance and foster positive transformation within educational organizations.

The causal factors identified in this study—including reduced morale, diminished organizational participation, lowered productivity, and uncertainty regarding potential disruptions—reflect common patterns observed in prior studies. For instance, [3] described individual readiness for change as a psychological state influenced by perceptions of uncertainty and control. Similarly, [13] found that emotional resistance to change in public universities was strongly correlated with employees' perceptions of fairness and the organization's communication practices. The present findings align with these results, suggesting that employees' psychological readiness and perceptions of transparency are crucial determinants of whether they engage with or resist change. When individuals perceive that change threatens their security, autonomy, or competence, their resistance becomes a natural defensive response rather than a sign of disloyalty.

Moreover, the contextual factors of the current study—including the establishment of change infrastructure, psychological readiness among staff, leadership credibility, and organizational agility—emphasize the structural and emotional foundations necessary for successful change management. [16] and [26] both confirmed that contextual variables such as leadership trust and communication quality significantly mediate the relationship between openness to change and resistance. These findings suggest that leaders who foster trust and psychological safety can create an enabling environment for transformation. In educational institutions, where human interactions are central, these cultural and contextual conditions are even more critical, as they determine how teachers and administrators interpret organizational directives and respond emotionally to reforms.

The study also revealed that *intervening factors* such as lack of participation, insufficient communication, and inadequate managerial support serve as barriers that amplify resistance. These results are consistent with [19], who emphasized that resistance often stems from the emotional alienation of employees who feel excluded from decision-making. Similarly, [31] demonstrated that organizational culture components—particularly participation, openness, and support—predict employees' readiness for change. The absence of these features, therefore, leads to mistrust and disengagement. The current findings confirm that in the absence of participatory mechanisms, employees tend to view change as an externally imposed process rather than a collective developmental journey.

Furthermore, the *strategic factors* identified—such as empowerment, motivation, transparency, and open communication—were found to be key drivers of overcoming resistance. These findings reinforce [10] and [6], who argue that transformational leadership and employee empowerment are essential for creating a culture that welcomes change. [1] also underscored the importance of embedding change management practices within organizational culture rather than treating them as isolated projects. The consistency of the present findings with these studies highlights that successful change strategies must be human-centered, communication-driven, and culturally grounded. In the Isfahan Department of Education, developing strategic programs for employee empowerment and motivation contributed to greater alignment between institutional goals and individual aspirations, thereby facilitating the acceptance of change.

The *core factors* of the proposed model—strengthening transformational organizational culture, reinforcing individual and collective change competencies, and promoting participatory engagement—represent the central mechanism through which change becomes institutionalized. The empirical evidence supports the idea that when organizations encourage employees to actively participate in reform processes, resistance is transformed into ownership. [8] found that employee reactions to

planned cultural change depend on how leadership integrates participation, communication, and reward systems. Similarly, [17] reported that readiness for change among education employees increases when social collaboration and trust are promoted. The findings of this study mirror these observations, confirming that a culture grounded in collaboration and mutual trust provides a psychological buffer against the stress and ambiguity of change.

The *consequences* identified—enhanced productivity, empowerment, resilience, agility, and transformational leadership—illustrate the positive organizational outcomes of cultivating a culture of adaptability. These findings correspond to [11], who demonstrated that cultural learning mechanisms strengthen transformational change capacity by creating feedback loops between individual and organizational learning. [27] similarly emphasized that management skills and a culture of innovation act as sources of resilience for organizations, particularly in peripheral or developing contexts. The educational setting of this study confirms that when human resources internalize the values of adaptability and continuous learning, they not only reduce resistance but also drive ongoing organizational improvement.

The validation of the model through confirmatory factor analysis further confirmed the structural coherence between the six components. Fit indices (GFI, AGFI, CFI, and NFI) exceeded 0.9, indicating a strong relationship between the conceptual framework and empirical data. This quantitative confirmation supports the theoretical assumptions of previous research that emphasize the integrative nature of cultural, cognitive, and behavioral factors in managing resistance [5, 18]. The statistical fit of the model suggests that the proposed paradigm—grounded in causal, contextual, and strategic interrelations—provides a reliable framework for understanding and managing resistance to change in educational organizations.

Another important implication of the results is the mediating role of culture between leadership and readiness for change. [12] demonstrated that the type of organizational culture significantly predicts teachers' readiness for reform initiatives. Likewise, [24] confirmed that culture influences social capital formation, which in turn facilitates collaboration and innovation. The current findings strengthen this argument by showing that leadership credibility and organizational trust (as contextual factors) directly influence readiness and indirectly reduce resistance. Thus, the results affirm that cultivating a participative, learning-oriented culture is an effective strategy for mitigating the negative emotions that typically accompany structural reforms.

The identification of empowerment and personal development programs as strategic elements also reflects global trends in change management. In a study of industry transformation, [2] highlighted that human resource resistance under Industry 4.0 contexts primarily stems from fear of technological obsolescence and loss of control. The author argued that empowerment through reskilling and training mitigates these fears. Similarly, in the context of Iranian public organizations, [28] observed that when employees are engaged in skill-building and professional development, their acceptance of change significantly increases. The alignment of these studies with the present results indicates that regardless of industry or context, empowerment serves as the cornerstone of successful transformation.

The results also underscore the psychological and emotional dimensions of resistance. As [22] and [20] reported, resistance often arises from cognitive biases, perceived injustice, and political undercurrents rather than explicit opposition. The current study's qualitative data support this perspective, revealing that employees' implicit fears—such as loss of influence or disruption of established routines—were major contributors to passive resistance. Addressing these fears requires not only managerial communication but also emotional intelligence in leadership practices. [32] further confirmed

that leaders who display empathy and fairness enhance employee readiness by reducing anxiety and building psychological security.

Culturally, the findings highlight the necessity of aligning organizational values with reform goals. [33] showed that managing change in the banking sector depended largely on leaders' ability to integrate cultural values with strategic objectives. Likewise, [23] found that cultural dimensions such as collectivism and flexibility promote knowledge management and adaptability. The current study reinforces these conclusions by demonstrating that an agile and trustworthy culture fosters both individual openness and collective resilience in the face of change. The culture of flexibility not only mitigates resistance but also transforms it into a driver of innovation and continuous improvement.

Overall, the integration of qualitative insights and quantitative validation in this study supports the multidimensional perspective of change management advocated by [11] and [6]. Organizational resistance is not a fixed trait but a dynamic process influenced by culture, leadership, communication, and individual psychology. The Isfahan Department of Education exemplifies how a context-sensitive, culturally informed approach can effectively transform resistance into constructive engagement. By reinforcing empowerment, communication, and participatory leadership, the organization can develop a sustainable model for human-centered transformation that extends beyond temporary reforms.

Despite the study's comprehensive methodology and rigorous validation, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the research was limited to the Isfahan Department of Education, which may constrain the generalizability of the findings to other educational or governmental contexts with different cultural and structural characteristics. Second, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to capture longitudinal changes in attitudes and behaviors following reform implementation. Third, the reliance on self-reported data in both interviews and questionnaires introduces potential response bias, as participants might have provided socially desirable answers. Additionally, the qualitative phase, while rich in contextual detail, relied on a relatively small sample of experts, which may not represent the full spectrum of perspectives within the educational system. Finally, although confirmatory factor analysis provided strong statistical support for the model, further validation using larger and more diverse samples across provinces would strengthen external validity.

Future studies should aim to expand this model to include diverse educational settings, such as private institutions and vocational schools, to examine the cultural nuances influencing resistance to change. Longitudinal research designs would provide valuable insights into how organizational culture evolves over time and how sustained interventions affect employee readiness and adaptability. Researchers are encouraged to employ mixed methods that integrate behavioral observations and organizational performance indicators to triangulate findings beyond self-reported measures. Comparative studies across provinces or even countries could illuminate the role of national culture in shaping resistance and readiness patterns. Moreover, exploring the moderating roles of emotional intelligence, digital competence, and leadership style could offer deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms that link culture with behavioral adaptation.

From a practical standpoint, the findings of this study highlight the need for educational organizations to view change management as a cultural transformation rather than a procedural adjustment. Managers should prioritize transparent communication, participatory decision-making, and consistent feedback systems to build trust and engagement among employees. Leadership development programs should emphasize emotional intelligence, ethical credibility, and vision-sharing skills to foster psychological readiness for change. Training initiatives aimed at enhancing employees' adaptability, creativity, and collaboration will further empower human resources to embrace reform. Finally, institutionalizing mechanisms

for continuous learning, recognition, and empowerment can sustain a culture of openness that transforms resistance into a source of organizational innovation and long-term development.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Written consent was obtained from all participants in the study.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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