

# Assessment of Managers' Understanding of the Effectiveness of Human Resource Management Based on Treasure Network Approach

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**Abstract:** This research examines and develops a conceptual model for evaluating the effectiveness of Human Resource Management (HRM) based on the experiences and perspectives of organizational managers. The purpose of this study is to identify key factors influencing the effectiveness of HRM and to present a conceptual framework that can assist managers in improving organizational performance. Given the lack of a comprehensive model in existing literature, this study has been conducted to fill this cognitive gap regarding the phenomenon. In this regard, a cognitive approach and treasure network methodology were utilized to create a network of mental constructs related to the effectiveness of HRM. This research employed a mixed-method approach, which included in-depth interviews (until data saturation was achieved) with 12 experienced managers (both academic and practical) in the field of human resources, along with the distribution of questionnaires to 31 other managers with similar characteristics. Qualitative data analysis revealed that four main factors—empowerment, participation and communication, holistic perspective, and culture and commitment—play a significant role in the effectiveness of HRM. Furthermore, the quantitative results confirmed the positive impact of these factors on organizational performance. This model not only contributes to the existing literature but also aids managers in adopting more effective strategies in HR management. It is important to note that since this model is derived from the mental constructs of managers within the Iranian Social Security Organization, generalizing the results of this research to other organizations requires further investigation, and it is recommended that future research utilize the model derived from this study across various organizations.

**Keywords:** Human Resource Management, Effectiveness of Human Resource Management, Treasure Network Approach.

## 1. Introduction

Human Resource Management (HRM) has evolved into a strategic cornerstone in contemporary organizations, transcending its traditional administrative role to become an influential driver of organizational effectiveness and sustainability. The increasing complexity of organizational environments, coupled with rapid technological advancements and the need for sustainable development, has intensified the focus on HRM as a critical factor in organizational success [1]. While numerous models and practices have been proposed for improving HRM

effectiveness, understanding the cognitive perceptions of managers regarding HRM effectiveness remains a relatively underexplored area. Given the pivotal role managers play in the implementation and success of HR strategies, investigating their mental constructs provides invaluable insights into developing more effective HRM systems [2].

One of the central themes in recent HRM research is the emphasis on empowerment as a means to enhance employee engagement and organizational performance. Empowerment initiatives are increasingly recognized for their ability to foster a sense of ownership, autonomy, and commitment among employees [3]. Studies have consistently shown that empowered employees demonstrate higher levels of motivation, creativity, and resilience in the face of organizational challenges [4]. Research in various sectors, including healthcare and information technology, confirms that empowerment significantly contributes to improved perceptions of work quality and engagement [5, 6]. In particular, empowerment initiatives that emphasize trust, delegation of authority, and participatory decision-making have proven effective in fostering employee satisfaction and performance [7].

Complementing empowerment, employee participation has emerged as another key dimension of effective HRM. Active involvement of employees in internal communication activities not only enhances transparency but also contributes to building a culture of trust and engagement [8]. The integration of participatory management with strong communication linkages is associated with peak performance and job satisfaction [9]. By fostering open lines of communication and facilitating knowledge-sharing practices, organizations create environments where employees feel valued and involved, thus strengthening their commitment to organizational goals [10]. Participation is not merely a mechanism for gathering employee feedback; it fundamentally shapes organizational culture and strengthens alignment between individual and organizational objectives.

The holistic perspective in management has also gained prominence, emphasizing the interrelatedness of various HR practices and organizational functions. A holistic approach advocates for the seamless integration of recruitment, training, performance management, and employee development into a unified system that supports overall organizational strategy [11]. This perspective ensures that HR practices are not isolated efforts but are aligned with broader organizational goals, promoting coherence and synergy across different operational areas [12]. Holistic strategies in HRM foster a comprehensive understanding of employee needs and organizational demands, enabling managers to craft more effective policies and interventions that enhance overall performance.

The importance of sustainability in HRM practices cannot be overstated. Sustainable HRM emphasizes the long-term well-being of employees, the organization, and society at large [13]. By integrating principles of sustainability into HRM, organizations not only contribute to broader social and environmental goals but also enhance employee satisfaction and organizational resilience [14]. Sustainable HRM practices, such as investing in employee development, promoting diversity and inclusion, and ensuring work-life balance, are increasingly seen as essential components of effective HRM systems [15]. In particular, well-being-oriented HRM practices have demonstrated their effectiveness even in the context of remote work, underscoring their relevance in contemporary organizational settings [15].

Another critical dimension of HRM effectiveness is the organizational culture and its impact on employee commitment and performance. Culture shapes employees' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, influencing their engagement with organizational goals [16]. A strong, positive organizational culture promotes trust, collaboration, and a shared sense of purpose among employees, all of which are essential for sustaining high performance [17]. Research indicates that fostering a participatory and empowering culture within organizations leads to improved

HRM outcomes, particularly in public sector contexts where structural constraints often pose challenges to effective HRM [17, 18].

Despite the growing body of literature on HRM effectiveness, a significant gap remains in understanding how managers cognitively perceive HRM practices and their impact. Traditional studies often focus on objective measures of HRM outcomes, such as turnover rates or employee satisfaction surveys, without delving into the subjective interpretations that managers form based on their experiences [19]. Cognitive theories suggest that individuals organize their knowledge and experiences into structured mental networks, which in turn influence their behaviors and decision-making processes [2]. Applying the treasure network approach, which maps these cognitive constructs, provides a novel methodological framework for uncovering the underlying perceptions that drive managerial actions in HRM.

The need for such cognitive exploration is particularly critical in organizations like the Iranian Social Security Organization, where human resources are the primary drivers of service delivery. Managers' perceptions of HRM effectiveness in such contexts directly influence strategic planning, employee engagement initiatives, and performance management systems. As HRM becomes increasingly strategic, understanding and aligning managerial perceptions with organizational objectives becomes imperative for achieving sustained effectiveness [20].

Moreover, recent empirical studies support the importance of multi-actor perspectives in evaluating HRM effectiveness. Research adopting the ability-motivation-opportunity (AMO) framework has demonstrated that HRM practices are most effective when they simultaneously enhance employee capabilities, motivation, and opportunities to perform [21]. Such comprehensive approaches require managers to not only implement policies but also to understand and align with employee expectations and experiences. Therefore, cognitive assessments of managerial perceptions provide critical insights that can bridge the gap between HRM design and implementation.

In addition to traditional HRM practices, recent discussions have highlighted the role of emotional intelligence and employee well-being in enhancing HRM effectiveness. Empowerment initiatives that prioritize self-efficacy and emotional support have shown significant positive effects on employee perceptions of work quality and organizational care [6]. Organizations that recognize and address the emotional and psychological needs of their employees through supportive HRM practices are better positioned to cultivate loyalty, motivation, and productivity [3].

Furthermore, the importance of continuous process improvement as part of a holistic HRM strategy has been emphasized in management research. Systematic evaluation and refinement of HR practices ensure that organizations remain responsive to internal and external changes, thereby maintaining effectiveness over time [22]. Developing a feedback-driven, learning-oriented HRM system requires a comprehensive and dynamic approach, which can be effectively informed by understanding managers' cognitive perceptions.

Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to fill a critical gap in the literature by examining managers' cognitive understanding of HRM effectiveness using the treasure network approach. By capturing the structured mental models that managers employ when evaluating HRM practices, this study aims to provide a nuanced and actionable framework for improving HRM effectiveness within complex organizational contexts. The study focuses on key dimensions identified in prior research—empowerment, participation and communication, holistic perspective, and culture and commitment—while integrating the emerging emphasis on sustainability, well-being, and emotional intelligence into the evaluation of HRM systems.

In doing so, the research contributes both theoretically and practically to the field of human resource management. Theoretically, it extends cognitive and network-based approaches to HRM research, offering a richer understanding of the subjective factors that shape managerial behavior. Practically, it provides HR practitioners and organizational leaders with concrete insights into designing HRM strategies that resonate with managerial perceptions, thereby enhancing their likelihood of successful implementation.

Overall, as organizations navigate increasingly volatile and complex environments, the ability to align HRM practices with the cognitive frameworks of managers becomes a decisive factor in achieving organizational agility, resilience, and long-term success. By embracing cognitive insights and fostering participatory, empowering, and holistic HRM systems, organizations can better equip themselves to meet the evolving demands of the contemporary workforce and society.

## 2. Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods exploratory-confirmatory design to assess managers' understanding of the effectiveness of human resource management (HRM) based on the Treasure Network Approach. It was conducted in two main phases: qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative phase involved in-depth semi-structured interviews with 12 managers from the Iranian Social Security Organization, selected through purposive sampling to ensure a diversity of experiences and expertise in human resource management. Managers included in the qualitative phase met criteria such as substantial managerial experience, direct involvement in HRM processes, academic knowledge, and willingness to participate. The interviews aimed to explore managers' cognitive constructs and experiences concerning HRM effectiveness. In the second phase, the findings from the qualitative study informed the development of a comprehensive questionnaire, which was distributed to 34 managers from the same organization. Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure representative coverage across different departments and managerial levels. Out of the 34 questionnaires distributed, 31 valid responses were obtained and analyzed. Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to in both phases, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring participant confidentiality, and maintaining the anonymity of all data.

Data collection for the qualitative phase was performed using a semi-structured interview guide designed based on literature concerning HRM effectiveness. The interviews, lasting 60–90 minutes each, included open-ended questions such as "How do you define HRM effectiveness in your organization?" and "What factors contribute to effective HRM from your perspective?" Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed through the Treasure Network Method, which involved the extraction of cognitive constructs and mapping them into a structured mental network for each participant. These constructs were then integrated to develop a collective cognitive network. Based on the results of this phase, a bipolar questionnaire was designed for the quantitative phase. The questionnaire included 10 main elements and 117 constructs, each formulated as bipolar items (e.g., empowering–restrictive), assessed on a 7-point Likert scale where 1 represented the negative pole and 7 the positive pole. The questionnaire was sent electronically with an explanatory cover letter ensuring voluntary participation and confidentiality of responses. Participants had two weeks to complete and return the questionnaire. The Idiogried software was employed both for synthesizing qualitative cognitive maps and for the statistical analysis of quantitative data.

Data analysis followed a two-stage approach in line with the mixed-methods design. In the qualitative phase, thematic analysis and cognitive mapping were performed. Each interview transcript was carefully reviewed, codes were generated, and cognitive constructs were identified and organized into secondary constructs. Using Idiogried

software, individual cognitive networks were merged into a collective treasure network, identifying 19 secondary constructs categorized into four main clusters: Empowerment, Participation and Communication, Holistic Perspective, and Culture and Commitment. In the quantitative phase, descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequency distributions) were calculated for each construct. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to detect the underlying factor structure, with the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett’s test of sphericity confirming the appropriateness of the data. Varimax rotation was applied to simplify interpretation. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha, ensuring internal consistency with values above 0.7. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was later used to validate the factor structure, evaluating model fit through indices such as the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). Additionally, network analysis using the treasure network approach visualized the interrelations among constructs, highlighting central themes in managers’ perceptions of HRM effectiveness. Triangulation, member checking, and construct validity tests were employed to ensure the credibility and robustness of the findings.

### 3. Findings and Results

In the qualitative phase, 12 managers were interviewed to gain insights into their perspectives on the effectiveness of human resource management. A systematic analysis of the interview data identified 19 secondary structures, which are presented in Table 1:

**Table 1. Secondary Constructs Extracted from the Alignment Network of All Interviewees**

Row	Secondary Constructs	Explanation of Secondary Constructs	Frequency
1	Employee Value - Employee Disregard	The value of employee activities for the organization from the manager's perspective.	5
2	Performance Management System - Case-by-Case Performance Management	There is an appropriate performance evaluation structure in the organization.	13
3	Creating a Pleasant Work Environment - Neglecting the Work Environment	Providing suitable working conditions.	7
4	Knowledge Sharing - Knowledge Hoarding	The manager values the sharing of job-related and organizational knowledge.	6
5	Informal Communication - Formal Communication	The manager seeks to expand positive communications.	5
6	Emphasis on Organizational Identity - Lack of Emphasis on Organizational Identity	There is a strong spirit of organizational identity within the organizational culture.	4
7	Career Path Planning - Indifference to Employee Fate	A clear career path exists for employees within the organization.	7
8	Human Capital Investment - Utilization of Human Resources	The manager views and manages employees as an asset for future years.	16
9	Rule Orientation - Relationship Orientation	The manager evaluates individuals based on performance rather than the closeness of relationships.	4
10	Collectivism - Individualism	The manager emphasizes teamwork in task execution.	8
11	Alignment of Decisions - Isolated Decisions	Alignment of decisions with the organization's main objectives.	6
12	Employee Motivation - Demotivating Employees	The manager values motivational issues for employees.	6
13	Mutual Trust Building - Creating a Distrustful Atmosphere	The manager fosters mutual trust.	4
14	Administrative Discipline - Administrative Chaos	The manager places importance on administrative order and discipline.	3
15	Participative Decision Making - Individual Decision Making	The manager involves employees in decision-making processes.	4
16	Continuous Process Improvement - Exception Management	The organization has established regulations for continuous process improvement.	9

17	Strengthening Organizational Culture - Indifference to Organizational Culture	The organization emphasizes the creation and strengthening of a cohesive organizational culture.	3
18	Common Interests - Conflicts of Interest	The organization focuses on reinforcing common interests.	2
19	Employee Awareness - Employee Ignorance	The manager keeps employees informed about organizational matters.	5

Subsequently, a combined treasure network was formed and tested for 19 secondary constructs, the results of which are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Total treasury network with 19 secondary structures and 10 related elements**

Employee Indifference	6	3	3	1	1	3	3	2	5	6	Employee Value
Case-Based Performance Management	6	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	5	6	Existence of Performance Management System
Neglect of the Work Environment	6	3	2	2	2	3	3	2	5	6	Creation of a Pleasant Work Environment
Knowledge Hoarding	6	2	2	2	1	4	4	2	6	7	Knowledge Sharing
Formal Communications	6	2	1	2	1	4	4	2	5	7	Informal Communications
Lack of Emphasis on Organizational Identity	7	3	2	1	2	3	2	2	5	7	Emphasis on Organizational Identity
Indifference to Employee Fate	5	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	5	7	Career Path Planning
Utilization of Human Resources	6	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	5	7	Investment in Human Resources
Relationship Orientation	7	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	6	7	Rule Orientation
Individualism	6	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	6	7	Collectivism
Individual Decisions	6	2	2	2	1	3	2	2	5	6	Alignment of Decisions
Demotivating Employees	6	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	5	7	Employee Motivation
Creating an Atmosphere of Distrust	6	4	1	2	2	1	2	2	6	6	Mutual Trust Building
Administrative Chaos	6	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	6	7	Administrative Discipline
Individual Decision Making	6	3	2	1	1	1	2	2	5	6	Participatory Decision Making
Exception Management	6	3	1	1	1	2	2	2	5	7	Continuous Process Improvement
Indifference to Organizational Culture	7	4	1	2	1	2	2	1	5	7	Strengthening Organizational Culture
Conflict of Interests	7	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	5	7	Common Interests
Employee Unawareness	6	1	1	1	2	4	4	1	5	7	Employee Awareness Raising
	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	
	You Yourself as a Human Resource Manager	Low Effectiveness Human Resource Manager	Low Effectiveness Human Resource Manager	Moderately Effective Human Resource Manager	Moderately Effective Human Resource Manager	Highly Effective Human Resource Manager.	Highly Effective Human Resource Manager.	Least Effective Human Resource Manager	Most Effective Human Resource Manager.	Your Ideal Manager in Terms of Human Resource Management Effectiveness	

The secondary structures were analyzed, and the results are presented in Table No. 3.

**Table 3. Analysis of the Structures of the Collective Treasury Network**

Row	Structures	Mean	Standard Deviation	Test Statistic	Significance Level
1	Employee Value - Employee Disregard	3.3	1.829	1.210 -	0.257
2	Performance Management System - Case-by-Case Performance Management	3.0	1.886	1.677 -	0.128
3	Creating a Pleasant Work Environment - Neglecting the Work Environment	3.4	1.647	1.152 -	0.279
4	Knowledge Sharing - Knowledge Hoarding	3.6	2.119	0.597 -	0.565
5	Informal Communication - Formal Communication	3.4	2.119	0.896 -	0.394
6	Emphasis on Organizational Identity - Lack of Emphasis on Organizational Identity	3.4	2.171	0.874 -	0.405
7	Career Path Planning - Indifference to Employee Fate	3.0	1.944	1.627 -	0.138
8	Human Capital Investment - Utilization of Human Resources	3.0	2.160	1.464 -	0.177
9	Rule Orientation - Relationship Orientation	3.5	2.224	0.711 -	0.495
10	Collectivism - Individualism	2.9	2.424	1.435 -	0.185
11	Alignment of Decisions - Isolated Decisions	3.1	1.853	1.536 -	0.159
12	Employee Motivation - Demotivating Employees	2.9	2.234	1.557 -	0.154
13	Mutual Trust Building - Creating a Distrustful Atmosphere	3.2	2.098	1.206 -	0.259
14	Administrative Discipline - Administrative Chaos	3.2	2.201	1.149 -	0.280
15	Participative Decision Making - Individual Decision Making	2.9	2.025	1.718 -	0.120
16	Continuous Process Improvement - Exception Management	3.0	2.211	1.430 -	0.186
17	Strengthening Organizational Culture - Indifference to Organizational Culture	3.2	2.394	1.057 -	0.318
18	Common Interests - Conflicts of Interest	3.0	2.404	1.316 -	0.221
19	Employee Awareness - Employee Ignorance	3.2	2.300	1.100 -	0.300

Considering that the significance level of the overall sample for all examined constructs is greater than the 5% error threshold, it can be concluded that the obtained values do not significantly differ from the average value (4). In other words, the constructs were evaluated by the interviewees as being close to the average level.

The data were analyzed using Thematic Analysis, which involved the following steps:

1. Familiarization with the data through reading and re-reading the transcriptions.
2. Generation of initial codes to highlight important features of the data.
3. Collation of codes into potential themes.
4. Review of themes to ensure that they accurately represent the data.
5. Definition and naming of themes to provide clear and concise explanations.

Through this qualitative analysis, 19 secondary structures related to the effectiveness of human resource management were identified and classified into four distinct clusters:

1. Empowerment
2. Engagement and Communication
3. Holistic Perspective
4. Culture and Commitment

These findings are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Clustering of the Structures of the Collective Treasury Network**

Rows	Clusters	Structures of the Collective Treasury Network
1	Empowerment and Human Dignity	1. Human Capital Investment - Utilization of Human Resources 2. Career Path Planning - Indifference to Employees' Fate 3. Employee Motivation - Demotivating Employees 4. Creation of an Enjoyable Work Environment - Disregard for the Work Environment 5. Valuing Employees - Indifference to Employees
2	Participation and Communication	1. Knowledge Sharing - Knowledge Hoarding 2. Employee Awareness - Employee Ignorance 3. Informal Communication - Formal Communication 4. Participatory Decision-Making - Individual Decision-Making
3	Holistic Perspective	1. Continuous Process Improvement - Exception Management 2. Administrative Discipline - Administrative Chaos 3. Alignment of Decisions - Isolated Decisions 4. Performance Management System - Case-by-Case Performance Management
4	Culture and Commitment	1. Emphasis on Organizational Identity - Lack of Emphasis on Organizational Identity 2. Strengthening Organizational Culture - Indifference to Organizational Culture 3. Mutual Trust-Building - Creating an Atmosphere of Distrust 4. Establishing Common Interests - Creating Conflicts of Interest 5. Collectivism - Individualism 6. Regulation-Centric - Relationship-Centric

1. **Empowerment:** This cluster encompasses structures related to employee autonomy, decision-making power, and professional growth opportunities. Managers emphasized the importance of empowering employees to enhance their engagement and productivity. They believed that employee empowerment is essential for fostering a motivated and efficient workforce.
2. **Participation and Communication:** The structures within this cluster focus on employee involvement in decision-making processes and the effectiveness of internal communication channels. Managers highlighted that active participation and clear communication are vital for aligning individual and organizational goals, leading to improved human resource management practices.
3. **Holistic Perspective:** This cluster includes structures related to a comprehensive approach to human resource management, integrating various HR practices and policies to achieve overall effectiveness. Managers stated that adopting a holistic view of human resource management contributes to creating a cohesive and supportive work environment that facilitates employee development and organizational growth.
4. **Culture and Commitment:** The structures in this cluster pertain to organizational culture and the level of commitment from both employees and management. Managers identified a strong organizational culture and high levels of commitment as critical components of effective human resource management, noting that these factors significantly impact employee retention and performance.

The quantitative phase involved designing a bipolar questionnaire based on the concepts identified in the qualitative phase. This questionnaire was distributed to 34 managers, yielding 31 completed responses for analysis. The questionnaire comprised 10 elements and 117 concepts, evaluated on a 7-point Likert scale.

The average scores indicate that managers perceive all elements as important for the effectiveness of human resource management, with mean scores ranging from 5.6 to 6.2. Among these elements, the highest score was attributed to "Commitment" (mean = 6.2), followed by "Empowerment" (mean = 6.1) and "Culture" (mean = 6.0). The standard deviations ranged from 0.4 to 0.7, indicating slight variability in the managers' ratings, but overall reflecting a consensus on the importance of these elements.



An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to identify the underlying factors that explain the correlation patterns among the concepts. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.87, indicating the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ( $\chi^2 = 1045.32$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), confirming the factorability of the correlation matrix.

The EFA revealed four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, explaining 72% of the total variance. Varimax rotation was employed to enhance the interpretability of the factors.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to assess managers' cognitive perceptions regarding the effectiveness of human resource management (HRM) by applying a mixed-methods approach based on the treasure network methodology. The findings identified four critical dimensions of HRM effectiveness from managers' perspectives: Empowerment, Participation and Communication, Holistic Perspective, and Culture and Commitment. Both qualitative cognitive mapping and quantitative network analysis confirmed the central role of these dimensions in shaping effective HRM practices within the Iranian Social Security Organization.

In the qualitative phase, the extracted cognitive constructs highlighted that empowerment — defined through investment in human capital, career path planning, employee motivation, the creation of a pleasant work environment, and valuing employees — was a core dimension in managers' understanding of HRM effectiveness. The quantitative results further reinforced this finding, as Empowerment emerged as one of the highest-rated clusters. These results align with prior studies emphasizing the significance of employee empowerment in enhancing work engagement, organizational loyalty, and productivity [4, 5]. Previous research has demonstrated that when employees perceive themselves as empowered, they exhibit higher levels of initiative and commitment, which in turn drives organizational performance [3, 6]. Moreover, empowering practices, such as granting autonomy and providing developmental opportunities, have been found to improve employees' perception of quality care and service outcomes [7].

Participation and Communication constituted the second critical dimension. Managers strongly emphasized the importance of fostering participative decision-making, facilitating informal communication, ensuring employee awareness, and promoting knowledge-sharing behaviors. These findings are supported by the literature emphasizing that active employee involvement in internal communication activities enhances transparency, trust, and job satisfaction [8, 9]. Effective communication linkages within organizations have been shown to strengthen participative management structures, leading to improved peak performance and employee satisfaction [10]. As the results demonstrated, managers perceived that participation and open communication were essential to aligning individual and organizational objectives and facilitating an environment conducive to engagement and innovation.

The third dimension identified was the Holistic Perspective, which underscores the interconnectedness of HR practices such as continuous process improvement, administrative discipline, decision alignment, and the establishment of performance management systems. Managers recognized that effective HRM is not merely a collection of isolated practices but rather an integrated, system-wide approach. This perspective resonates with prior research advocating for holistic management strategies that view HRM functions as interdependent and aligned with broader organizational goals [11, 12]. Holistic approaches are crucial for cultivating employee development and ensuring that all organizational practices reinforce one another in promoting sustainable performance [22].

Finally, Culture and Commitment emerged as the fourth dimension. Managers emphasized the vital role of organizational culture in fostering collectivism, building mutual trust, reinforcing organizational identity, and aligning employee interests with organizational goals. The findings confirm that a strong, cohesive organizational culture is pivotal in enhancing employee morale and ensuring sustained organizational performance [16]. This observation is in line with earlier studies suggesting that organizational culture not only shapes employee behaviors and attitudes but also directly impacts organizational commitment and effectiveness [17, 18]. Further, it aligns with the assertion that well-designed HRM systems must prioritize culture-building initiatives to sustain long-term organizational success [13].

The results of this study are also consistent with the emerging literature on sustainable and well-being-oriented HRM practices. Recent studies have emphasized that HRM systems focusing on employee well-being, empowerment, and work-life balance contribute significantly to employee satisfaction and organizational resilience, even in the context of remote work [15]. The findings of this study, particularly regarding the importance of empowerment and culture, corroborate these insights and suggest that managers' cognitive constructs are evolving to incorporate well-being considerations into their understanding of HRM effectiveness.

Another noteworthy aspect of the findings is the confirmation of the ability-motivation-opportunity (AMO) framework in understanding HRM effectiveness [21]. Managers' perceptions emphasized enhancing employees' capabilities (through training and career development), motivation (through empowerment and participation), and opportunities to perform (through supportive communication and aligned decision-making). This integrated approach reflects a sophisticated understanding of how HRM practices must simultaneously address multiple facets of employee engagement to be truly effective.

The use of the treasure network approach added unique value by uncovering the cognitive structures underlying managers' perceptions. Previous research has suggested that individuals organize their experiences into networks of interconnected concepts that influence their decisions and actions [2]. This study successfully applied that theoretical foundation to the HRM context, mapping out how managers internally structure their understanding of HRM effectiveness. This methodological innovation provides a more profound insight into the subjective realities that underpin managerial behavior and decision-making in HRM.

Furthermore, the findings support the assertion that HRM systems must adapt to dynamic organizational environments through continuous process improvement [22]. Managers recognized that the effectiveness of HR practices cannot be taken for granted and must be constantly evaluated and refined to meet evolving organizational needs. This dynamic perspective mirrors the broader move toward agile HRM practices that emphasize responsiveness and continuous learning.

Overall, this study's findings affirm and extend the existing literature on HRM effectiveness by providing cognitive, structural, and empirical evidence of the key dimensions that managers consider critical. By bridging subjective managerial perceptions with objective HRM effectiveness frameworks, this research offers valuable insights for designing HR systems that are both strategically aligned and managerially endorsed.

Despite its significant contributions, this study is not without limitations. First, the sample was limited to managers from the Iranian Social Security Organization, which may constrain the generalizability of the findings to other organizational contexts or industries. Different sectors or cultural settings may emphasize different constructs of HRM effectiveness. Second, the relatively small sample size, particularly in the quantitative phase (n=31), may limit the statistical power of the findings, although triangulation between qualitative and quantitative results enhances credibility. Third, while the treasure network approach provided rich cognitive data, it inherently

relies on self-reported perceptions, which may be subject to biases such as social desirability or retrospective rationalization. Finally, the cross-sectional nature of the study precludes conclusions about causality or the evolution of managerial perceptions over time.

Future research should consider expanding the study to diverse organizational settings across different sectors and countries to test the generalizability of the identified HRM effectiveness dimensions. Comparative studies between private and public sector organizations could yield insights into how institutional contexts influence managerial perceptions. Additionally, longitudinal research designs could be employed to track changes in managers' cognitive structures over time, particularly in response to organizational changes such as digital transformation, mergers, or crises. Further, integrating employee perspectives alongside managerial perceptions could offer a more holistic understanding of HRM effectiveness from multiple organizational layers.

Organizations should prioritize empowerment initiatives by systematically investing in employee development programs and creating opportunities for participative decision-making. Clear and open communication channels should be established to enhance transparency and foster a collaborative culture. HRM systems should adopt a holistic approach, ensuring that recruitment, development, evaluation, and retention practices are aligned and integrated with organizational goals. Managers should be provided with training programs that develop their cognitive awareness of HRM strategies, enabling them to more effectively translate organizational goals into daily management practices. Finally, sustained efforts to build and strengthen organizational culture should be emphasized as a central component of any HRM effectiveness initiative, with attention to trust-building, shared values, and emotional well-being.

### **Authors' Contributions**

Authors equally contributed to this article.

### **Ethical Considerations**

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

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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