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Designing a Compensation Model Based on a Commitment-Oriented Strategy in Iranian Government Organizations (A Qualitative Approach)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to design a comprehensive compensation model based on a commitment-oriented strategy for government organizations in Iran. The commitment-oriented strategy emphasizes the establishment of a long-term and reciprocal relationship between employees and the organization, in which compensation is considered not merely as financial remuneration but as a mechanism for fostering employee commitment, motivation, and professional development. In terms of research strategy, this study was categorized as an exploratory mixed-methods investigation. In the qualitative phase, data were collected through a systematic literature review and semi-structured interviews with 16 university scholars and executive experts. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis based on the six-phase framework proposed by Braun and Clarke. The qualitative data analysis resulted in the identification of 51 basic themes, which were subsequently organized into 17 organizing themes and ultimately classified into 7 overarching themes (main dimensions). The frequency analysis of themes indicated that indicators such as “alignment of salaries with the Civil Service Management Law,” “creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust,” “suggestion systems and dialogue sessions,” and “delegation of honorary responsibilities” achieved complete consensus among all experts (16 out of 16 participants). The final model reflects a holistic perspective on compensation within Iran’s public sector. According to this model, a commitment-oriented compensation system encompasses a coordinated combination of tangible and intangible rewards—including development opportunities, meaningful work, security, trust, technology, and continuous feedback—to promote organizational commitment, intrinsic motivation, and sustainable productivity.

Keywords: Commitment-Oriented Strategy, Thematic Analysis, Compensation, Government Organizations, Human Resource Management.

Introduction

Human resources are widely recognized as the most valuable strategic asset of contemporary organizations, and the effectiveness of organizational performance largely depends on the capacity of organizations to attract, retain, motivate, and develop competent employees. In this context, compensation systems constitute one of the most influential human resource management mechanisms because they directly affect employee attitudes, motivation, commitment, productivity, and retention. Traditionally, compensation systems were primarily viewed as mechanisms for remunerating labor through salaries, wages, and financial incentives. However, the increasing complexity of organizational environments, the emergence of knowledge-based work, and the changing expectations of employees have expanded the concept of compensation beyond monetary rewards. Modern organizations increasingly recognize compensation as a multidimensional construct

encompassing both tangible and intangible rewards that contribute to employee well-being, organizational attachment, and long-term performance [1, 2].

The evolution of compensation management reflects a broader shift in human resource management from administrative and control-oriented approaches toward strategic and commitment-oriented perspectives. In strategic human resource management, compensation is no longer regarded as an isolated administrative function but rather as an integral component of organizational strategy that contributes to the achievement of long-term objectives. Strategic compensation systems seek to align employee interests with organizational goals while fostering desired attitudes and behaviors among employees. Consequently, organizations increasingly design compensation systems that not only reward performance but also encourage commitment, innovation, collaboration, learning, and organizational citizenship behaviors. Such systems are particularly important in environments characterized by uncertainty, technological change, and growing demands for organizational effectiveness [3-7].

Among contemporary human resource strategies, the commitment-oriented strategy has attracted significant attention from both scholars and practitioners. This strategy emphasizes the establishment of long-term, reciprocal, and trust-based relationships between employees and organizations. Unlike control-oriented approaches that rely heavily on supervision and compliance mechanisms, commitment-oriented strategies focus on creating organizational environments in which employees willingly contribute their capabilities, knowledge, and creativity toward organizational goals. Within this framework, employees are viewed as strategic partners whose commitment and engagement are critical sources of sustainable competitive advantage. Therefore, compensation systems designed under a commitment-oriented philosophy should go beyond financial incentives and incorporate developmental, relational, ethical, and psychological dimensions that strengthen employees' attachment to the organization [8-10].

Research has consistently demonstrated that compensation systems exert substantial influence on employee attitudes and behaviors. Compensation satisfaction has been associated with higher organizational commitment, lower turnover intentions, improved performance, and stronger organizational citizenship behaviors. Luna-Arocas et al. reported that pay satisfaction plays a significant mediating role between talent management practices and organizational commitment, highlighting the strategic importance of compensation in fostering employee attachment to organizations [9]. Similarly, studies have shown that employee welfare programs and compensation practices positively affect organizational performance through enhanced employee motivation, satisfaction, and engagement [11]. These findings indicate that compensation systems can function as powerful instruments for creating mutually beneficial relationships between employees and organizations.

In addition to financial outcomes, contemporary compensation systems increasingly address psychological and social dimensions of work. Employees expect organizations to provide meaningful work experiences, opportunities for growth, fair treatment, recognition, and supportive organizational cultures. Research suggests that organizational justice perceptions significantly influence employees' evaluations of compensation systems and shape their attitudes toward the organization. When compensation systems are perceived as fair, transparent, and equitable, employees are more likely to develop positive organizational attitudes and exhibit discretionary behaviors that contribute to organizational effectiveness. Conversely, perceptions of inequity and unfairness may undermine trust, reduce commitment, and increase turnover intentions [12, 13]. Therefore, fairness and justice represent essential foundations of commitment-oriented compensation systems.

The importance of organizational justice is particularly pronounced in public-sector organizations, where employees often evaluate compensation practices not only in terms of economic adequacy but also regarding procedural fairness, transparency, and consistency with administrative regulations. Public organizations operate within institutional environments characterized by legal requirements, bureaucratic structures, public accountability, and social expectations. Consequently, compensation systems in government organizations must balance economic considerations with principles of administrative justice, ethical governance, and public service values. Recent studies have emphasized that administrative justice and transparent organizational procedures play crucial roles in strengthening employee trust and organizational commitment within government institutions [14, 15].

Government organizations face unique challenges in designing effective compensation systems. Compared with private-sector organizations, public institutions often encounter budgetary constraints, rigid compensation structures, extensive regulatory requirements, and limited flexibility in reward allocation. These constraints can reduce the attractiveness of public-sector employment and create difficulties in retaining talented employees. Moreover, changing workforce expectations and increasing competition for skilled human resources have intensified the need for innovative compensation approaches within government organizations. Traditional salary-based systems may no longer be sufficient to attract and retain highly competent employees who increasingly value opportunities for professional development, participation, recognition, autonomy, and meaningful work experiences [16-18].

The Iranian public sector is not exempt from these challenges. Government organizations in Iran have undergone substantial transformations in recent decades due to administrative reforms, technological developments, changing workforce demographics, and increasing public expectations regarding service quality and organizational effectiveness. These developments have highlighted the necessity of revisiting traditional compensation systems and designing more comprehensive approaches capable of addressing contemporary organizational realities. Existing compensation structures in many government organizations remain predominantly focused on financial and legal dimensions, often overlooking developmental, psychological, ethical, and relational aspects that contribute to employee commitment and long-term organizational success [1, 2, 16].

Several Iranian studies have attempted to develop compensation models tailored to specific organizational contexts. Teymouri et al. proposed a competency-based compensation system emphasizing the linkage between employee competencies and reward allocation [17]. Similarly, Kargariyan et al. developed a strategic compensation model for employees of the Yazd Regional Electric Company, demonstrating the importance of aligning compensation systems with organizational strategies and employee capabilities [19]. Alidoust Ghahfarokhi et al. analyzed compensation systems designed to retain employees in the Zanjan Province Department of Sports and Youth and highlighted the significance of both financial and non-financial rewards in employee retention [20]. Likewise, Mohammad Baqeri et al. developed a compensation model based on organizational attachment, emphasizing the role of compensation in strengthening employees' emotional connection to the organization [10].

Although these studies have contributed significantly to the understanding of compensation management in Iran, most have focused on specific sectors, organizations, or dimensions of compensation. Moreover, existing models often emphasize either financial rewards, competency-based mechanisms, or retention strategies without fully integrating the broader principles of commitment-oriented human resource management. Consequently, there remains a need for a comprehensive

framework that conceptualizes compensation as a multidimensional system encompassing financial, developmental, ethical, social, cognitive, technological, and evaluative dimensions capable of fostering sustainable employee commitment in government organizations [16, 17, 19].

Recent developments in public administration further reinforce the importance of commitment-oriented compensation systems. Government organizations increasingly operate in environments characterized by digital transformation, strategic planning requirements, entrepreneurial leadership expectations, organizational politics, and crisis management challenges. Studies have shown that strategic thinking and planning significantly contribute to organizational resilience and effective crisis management in both governmental and non-governmental settings [21]. Similarly, entrepreneurial leadership has emerged as a critical capability for enhancing innovation and adaptability within government organizations [22]. The success of these initiatives depends heavily on employees' willingness to engage, innovate, and contribute beyond formal job requirements, which in turn is influenced by the design of compensation and reward systems.

Furthermore, contemporary public organizations increasingly face challenges related to organizational politics, interpersonal conflicts, and employee perceptions of fairness. Research has demonstrated that political behaviors and perceived organizational politics can significantly affect intra-organizational relationships and employee attitudes [23, 24]. Under such conditions, compensation systems that promote transparency, fairness, participation, and trust become particularly important in maintaining positive organizational climates and strengthening employee commitment.

Ethical considerations also play an increasingly central role in modern public-sector management. Recent evidence suggests that ethical organizational cultures contribute substantially to organizational integrity, trust, accountability, and employee engagement. Public managers are increasingly expected to foster ethical environments that support responsible behavior and reinforce public service values. Compensation systems can contribute to this objective by recognizing ethical conduct, encouraging responsible decision-making, and reinforcing organizational values through both formal and informal reward mechanisms [25]. Therefore, ethical and value-based compensation should be regarded as a fundamental component of commitment-oriented human resource strategies.

In addition, employee welfare has emerged as a strategic concern for organizations seeking to improve organizational performance and employee well-being. Modern compensation systems increasingly incorporate welfare benefits, work-life balance initiatives, developmental opportunities, and health-related programs. These practices not only improve employees' quality of life but also enhance organizational commitment and performance outcomes [11]. Similarly, studies examining organizational citizenship behavior have demonstrated that supportive work environments, meaningful job characteristics, and employee-centered human resource practices encourage employees to voluntarily contribute to organizational effectiveness beyond their formal job responsibilities [26].

Despite the growing recognition of commitment-oriented human resource management, the literature still lacks a comprehensive compensation model specifically designed for government organizations in Iran that integrates financial rewards, professional development, organizational culture, administrative justice, trust, technological transformation, continuous learning, and employee participation within a unified conceptual framework. Addressing this gap is particularly important because government organizations play a central role in national development, public service delivery, and institutional effectiveness. Designing an integrated compensation model that reflects the realities and strategic needs of the

Iranian public sector can contribute significantly to strengthening employee commitment, enhancing organizational performance, and improving the effectiveness of public administration.

Therefore, the aim of the present study is to design a comprehensive compensation model based on a commitment-oriented strategy for Iranian government organizations.

Methodology

This study is classified as an exploratory mixed-methods research design. Initially, through a literature review and thematic analysis of qualitative data, the researcher developed a comprehensive compensation model based on a commitment-oriented strategy for Iranian government organizations.

The statistical population in the qualitative phase of the study (thematic analysis) consisted of university faculty members and experts familiar with compensation management. Semi-structured interviews with experts continued until theoretical saturation was achieved, which occurred after the sixteenth interview. The criteria for selecting experts included: executive managers with at least 15 years of professional experience; faculty members in Public Administration or Human Resource Management holding the academic rank of Assistant Professor or higher; and individuals possessing scholarly contributions (e.g., books, articles, etc.) or university teaching experience in the fields of public administration and human resource management. Sampling in the qualitative phase was conducted using purposive sampling and continued until data adequacy and theoretical saturation were achieved.

For data collection, a systematic literature review and semi-structured interviews were employed. During the interviews, experts were asked to explain, respectively: What does compensation based on a commitment-oriented strategy mean in Iranian government organizations? What measures are necessary to establish such a system? What are its dimensions? What are its components? And what are the most important indicators of this model (with examples)? Depending on the expertise and experience of each participant, additional probing questions were asked to clarify specific aspects of the subject. The interviews lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes on average. Data analysis was conducted using the six-phase thematic analysis approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Phase 1: Familiarization with the Data

In thematic analysis, researchers must immerse themselves in the data to gain a deep understanding of its breadth and content. This immersion typically involves repeatedly reading the data and engaging with it actively by searching for meanings and patterns.

Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes

The second phase begins once the researcher has become familiar with the data. This phase involves generating initial codes from the data. Codes represent interesting features of the data identified by the analyst. Coded data differ from units of analysis (themes). Coding may be conducted manually or with the aid of software applications.

Phase 3: Searching for Themes

This phase begins after the entire dataset has been coded and involves grouping different codes into potential themes and organizing all coded data extracts within identified themes. At this stage, the researcher begins analyzing the codes and considers how different codes may combine to form overarching themes.

Phase 4: Reviewing and Developing Themes

The fourth phase begins when an initial set of themes has been generated. This phase includes reviewing and refining themes. The first stage involves reviewing coded extracts, while the second stage assesses the validity of themes in relation to the entire dataset. During this phase, the researchers identified the organizing themes.

Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes

The fifth phase begins when a satisfactory thematic structure has been established. The researcher defines and refines each theme and subsequently analyzes the data contained within them. Through this process, the essence of each theme and the specific aspect of the data it captures become clearly articulated.

Phase 6: Producing the Report

In practice, writing in thematic analysis begins from the first stage (generating initial codes) and continues throughout the research process. This approach allows data analysis and report writing to occur simultaneously, enabling continuous movement between data interpretation and reporting. However, the final report is prepared only after robust and well-developed themes have been established. This stage includes the presentation of written reports and final analyses. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis reports should not merely describe the data but should provide an analytical narrative that addresses the research question.

Findings and Results

Following the transcription and coding of semi-structured interviews conducted with 16 university faculty members and executive experts familiar with compensation management, a total of 51 basic themes (indicators) were identified. Based on semantic similarities and conceptual overlap, these basic themes were categorized into 17 organizing themes (components), which ultimately formed 7 overarching themes (main dimensions) of the compensation model based on a commitment-oriented strategy in Iranian government organizations.

After an initial review of the interview transcripts, the researcher coded textual data derived from key interview statements and organized them into words and phrases. In the first step, all codes, both repetitive and unique, were extracted. In the second step, duplicate codes were removed and the remaining codes were consolidated. Each identified code was mentioned by a number of interview participants.

A detailed examination of the frequency of expert references to each of the 51 basic themes revealed varying levels of consensus among participants, allowing a clear pattern of priority emphasis to emerge. Four basic themes achieved unanimous agreement among all 16 experts (100%): “alignment of salaries with the Civil Service Management Law,” “creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust,” “suggestion systems and dialogue sessions,” and “delegation of honorary responsibilities to outstanding employees.” This complete consensus indicates that experts strongly emphasized four fundamental pillars: compliance with formal regulations and administrative justice, trust and respect as the foundation of workplace relationships, participation and dialogue as mechanisms of interaction, and symbolic non-financial recognition through the delegation of valuable responsibilities.

The next level consisted of themes with very high frequencies (14–15 mentions), indicating strong consensus among experts. These included “financial and welfare facilities (loans, housing, marriage support)” with 15 mentions, “succession planning systems” with 15 mentions, “issuance of occupational competency certificates” with 15 mentions, and “rewards for innovation and productivity” with 14 mentions. Additionally, “regular salary increases based on performance and inflation”

received 13 mentions. These findings suggest that, after ensuring basic financial and welfare needs, experts place considerable emphasis on long-term career development mechanisms, formal recognition of competencies, and incentives for innovation and productivity.

At the third level, themes with moderate to relatively high frequencies (10–12 mentions) were identified. These included “performance- and competency-based pay” (12 mentions), “regular competency assessment” (12 mentions), “learning while working” (12 mentions), “group rewards for achieving organizational goals” (11 mentions), “training in ethics-oriented workplace behavior” (11 mentions), “fair handling of violations and complaints” (11 mentions), “alignment of individual goals with national and organizational missions” (10 mentions), and “establishing ethical accountability mechanisms” (10 mentions). These findings indicate that experts also value teamwork, ethics, and accountability, although these factors are considered less critical than financial, welfare, and trust-based components.

Conversely, some basic themes exhibited relatively lower frequencies (5–7 mentions), reflecting weaker consensus or the relatively recent emergence of these concepts in the compensation literature within the context of Iranian government organizations. Examples include “soft skills and leadership training” (5 mentions), “formal recognition systems for superior performance” (5 mentions), “participation in key decision-making processes” (5 mentions), “assessment of the impact of compensation on commitment and performance” (5 mentions), “double-loop learning in compensation decision-making” (5 mentions), and “transparency and fairness in decisions” (7 mentions). These results suggest that although experts acknowledged the importance of soft skills, formal recognition, strategic participation, and effectiveness assessment systems, they did not view them as immediate priorities within a commitment-oriented compensation system and considered them more suitable for later stages of implementation.

Overall, the frequency pattern of the basic themes demonstrates that experts prioritized, respectively: (1) financial, welfare, and legal compliance components; (2) trust-based, participatory, and non-financial recognition components; (3) career development and competency-based components; and finally (4) soft skills, formal recognition, and effectiveness evaluation components. This pattern reflects a pragmatic and gradual approach toward implementing commitment-oriented compensation in Iran’s public sector, emphasizing the fulfillment of foundational needs before advancing to higher-level developmental elements.

Following the identification of themes, the next stage involved searching for broader thematic structures. This process included grouping various codes into potential themes and organizing all coded data into clearly defined themes. The researcher analyzed how different codes could be combined to generate broader themes. Based on the basic themes extracted from the text, organizing and overarching themes were developed (Table 1).

Table 1

Basic, Organizing, and Overarching Themes of the Commitment-Oriented Compensation Model

Overarching Themes (Dimensions)	Organizing Themes (Components)	No.	Basic Themes (Indicators)
Financial Compensation and Basic Benefits	Basic Salary and Benefits	1	Salary alignment with the Civil Service Management Law
		2	Internal equity among similar positions
		3	Regular salary increases based on performance and inflation
	Performance-Based and Motivational Rewards	4	Performance- and competency-based pay
		5	Rewards for innovation and productivity
		6	Group rewards for achieving organizational goals
	Welfare and Service Benefits	7	Supplemental insurance and healthcare services
		8	Financial and welfare facilities (loans, housing, marriage support)
		9	Retirement and long-term savings programs

Developmental Compensation and Professional Growth	Training and Skill Development	10	Job-related training programs
		11	Support for continuing education and formal learning
		12	Soft skills and leadership training
		13	Transparency in promotion pathways
		14	Succession planning systems
	Career Advancement Pathways	15	Competency-based promotion (technical/managerial)
		16	Regular competency assessments
		17	Learning while working
		18	Issuance of occupational competency certificates
		19	Alignment of individual goals with national and organizational missions
Spiritual and Value-Based Compensation	Meaningfulness at Work	20	Recognition of ethical and committed behaviors
		21	Creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust
		22	Training in ethics-oriented workplace behavior
		23	Establishing ethical accountability mechanisms
		24	Transparency and fairness in decisions
	Organizational Culture and Ethics	25	Employment stability and transparent administrative regulations
		26	Organizational support during crises
		27	Fair handling of violations and complaints
		28	Employee participation in work-related decisions
		29	Open communication channels with managers
Environmental and Social Compensation	Job Security and Administrative Justice	30	Suggestion systems and dialogue sessions
		31	Flexibility in working hours and location
		32	Family support through leave policies and benefits
		33	Organizational cultural and recreational programs
		34	Formal recognition systems for superior performance
	Participation and Communication	35	Informal and prompt recognition by managers
		36	Delegation of honorary responsibilities to outstanding employees
		37	Genuine delegation of authority
		38	Participation in key decision-making processes
		39	Recognition of employees as subject-matter experts
Cognitive and Trust-Based Compensation	Appreciation and Recognition	40	Use of intelligent systems for payment and evaluation
		41	Data transparency in compensation and benefits
		42	Analytical reporting and managerial dashboards
		43	Encouragement of technological ideas
		44	Participation in digital transformation projects
	Empowerment and Organizational Trust	45	Training in digital literacy and innovative thinking
		46	Measuring the impact of compensation on commitment and performance
		47	Calculating return on human capital investment
		48	Benchmarking against national and organizational indicators
		49	Regular employee feedback on the compensation system
Technological and Transformation-Oriented Compensation	Digitalization of Compensation Systems	50	Revising compensation policies based on feedback data
		51	Double-loop learning in compensation decision-making
	Innovation in Human Resource Management		
Continuous Evaluation and Learning in Compensation	Compensation Effectiveness Evaluation		
	Continuous Learning and Improvement		

After the basic themes were grouped into coherent categories and formed the organizing and overarching themes, a thematic network was developed. Table 2 presents the types of themes and their frequencies.

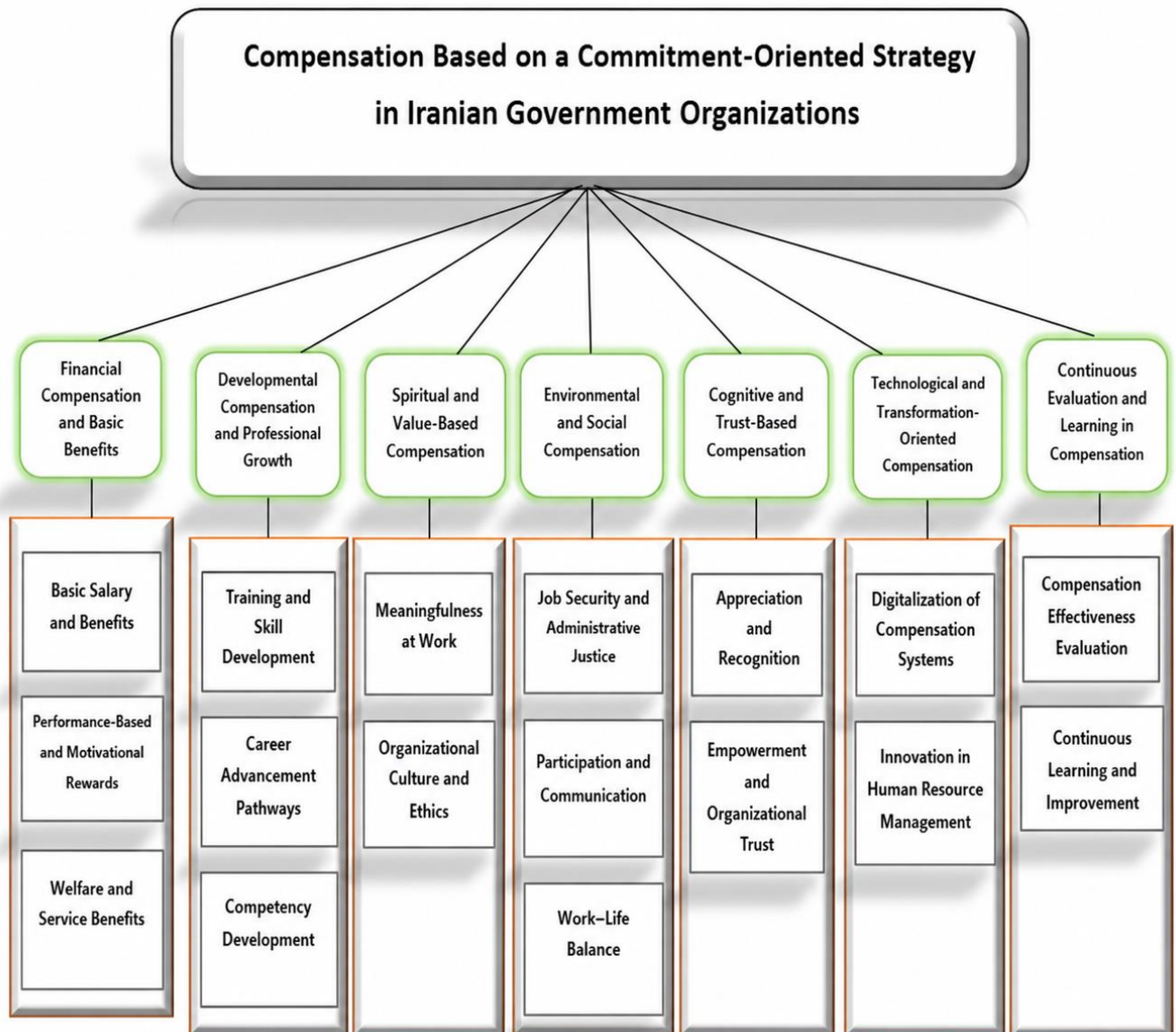
Table 2

Types of Themes and Their Frequencies

No.	Theme Type	Frequency
1	Basic Themes (Descriptive)	51 Themes
2	Organizing Themes (Relational)	17 Themes
3	Overarching Themes (Interpretive)	7 Themes

Figure 1

Thematic Network of the Compensation Model Based on a Commitment-Oriented Strategy in Iranian Government Organizations



Thematic networks constitute an appropriate method in thematic analysis and were developed by Attride-Stirling (2001). The thematic network approach functions both as an organizing principle and as a visual representation technique. It systematically organizes basic themes (codes and key textual points), organizing themes (derived from the synthesis and abstraction of basic themes), and overarching themes (higher-order themes encompassing the dominant principles governing the text as a whole). These themes are then illustrated as network maps, displaying the prominent themes at each of the three levels and the relationships among them.

Unlike conventional thematic templates, thematic networks are presented graphically in a web-like format to eliminate perceptions of hierarchy among themes, promote thematic fluidity, and emphasize interdependence and interconnectedness. Nevertheless, it should be noted that these networks are analytical tools rather than the analysis itself. Once constructed, a thematic network can serve as a visual instrument for interpreting the text, making both the findings and the original data more transparent and comprehensible for researchers and readers alike (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to design a comprehensive compensation model based on a commitment-oriented strategy for Iranian government organizations. The findings revealed that the proposed model consists of seven overarching dimensions, including financial compensation and basic benefits, developmental compensation and professional growth, spiritual and value-based compensation, environmental and social compensation, cognitive and trust-based compensation, technological and transformation-oriented compensation, and continuous evaluation and learning in compensation. Furthermore, the results demonstrated that experts placed the greatest emphasis on indicators such as alignment of salaries with the Civil Service Management Law, creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust, suggestion systems and dialogue sessions, and delegation of honorary responsibilities to outstanding employees. These findings suggest that experts perceive commitment-oriented compensation not merely as a financial mechanism but as a multidimensional strategic system that simultaneously addresses employees' economic, developmental, psychological, ethical, social, and professional needs.

One of the most important findings of the study was the high priority assigned to financial compensation and basic benefits. Experts strongly emphasized salary alignment with legal regulations, internal equity, performance-based salary increases, welfare facilities, and long-term financial security. This finding reflects the reality that financial compensation remains the foundation of the employment relationship in public organizations. Employees are unlikely to develop sustainable commitment toward an organization unless their basic economic needs are adequately addressed. This finding is consistent with previous studies that identified compensation as a critical determinant of employee satisfaction, motivation, and retention. Ampong reported that welfare benefits and compensation significantly influence organizational performance by improving employee motivation and commitment [11]. Similarly, Hosseini and Hosseini argued that compensation systems remain one of the most influential tools for attracting and retaining talented employees within organizations [18]. The findings are also aligned with the compensation model proposed by Ahadzadeh et al., which emphasized the central role of financial justice and legal compliance in government compensation systems [16].

Another important finding concerns the significance of developmental compensation and professional growth. Experts highlighted training and development opportunities, transparent career advancement pathways, succession planning, competency-based promotion, and occupational competency certification as essential components of commitment-oriented compensation. This finding indicates that employees increasingly view growth opportunities as a form of compensation. In contemporary organizations, employees do not solely seek monetary rewards but also expect opportunities for continuous learning, career advancement, and professional recognition. This finding supports the arguments of strategic human resource management scholars who emphasize the importance of integrating compensation systems with talent development initiatives. Luna-Arocas et al. found that employee satisfaction with rewards contributes significantly to organizational commitment when accompanied by opportunities for growth and talent development [9]. Likewise, Teymouri et al. demonstrated that competency-based compensation systems enhance employee motivation and reinforce perceptions of fairness and professional development [17]. The findings are also consistent with Kargariyan et al.'s strategic compensation model, which emphasized the importance of linking compensation mechanisms to organizational development and employee capabilities [19].

The emergence of spiritual and value-based compensation as one of the major dimensions of the model represents a particularly noteworthy finding. Experts emphasized meaningfulness at work, alignment between individual and

organizational missions, recognition of ethical behavior, and the development of mutual respect and trust. These findings suggest that compensation in public organizations extends beyond material considerations and encompasses employees' moral and psychological needs. Government organizations often perform missions associated with public service, social responsibility, and national development. Therefore, employees may derive commitment from perceiving their work as meaningful and socially valuable. This finding aligns with research emphasizing the importance of ethical cultures and organizational values in shaping employee attitudes and behaviors. Perlman et al. demonstrated that ethical organizational cultures significantly contribute to employee engagement, trust, and organizational integrity [25]. Similarly, Ghaffarian et al. found that organizational commitment in Iranian government organizations is strongly influenced by trust, respect, and alignment with organizational values [8]. The emphasis on ethical recognition and organizational values also corresponds with the literature on organizational attachment and commitment-oriented human resource management [10].

The findings also revealed the importance of environmental and social compensation, particularly job security, administrative justice, participation, communication, and work–life balance. Experts consistently emphasized employment stability, transparent administrative regulations, organizational support during crises, employee participation, and open communication channels. These results indicate that government employees value organizational environments characterized by fairness, security, and participation. Such findings are understandable given the bureaucratic nature of public organizations, where procedural fairness and administrative transparency significantly influence employee perceptions. The findings are consistent with studies highlighting the role of organizational justice in shaping employee attitudes toward compensation systems. Pour Sabat demonstrated that perceptions of fairness in compensation systems significantly influence employee satisfaction and organizational attitudes [12]. Similarly, Moradi emphasized that administrative justice constitutes a fundamental principle of effective governance and employee trust in government organizations [14]. The results are also compatible with findings regarding the strategic alignment of human resource practices and organizational effectiveness [6, 7].

A particularly significant aspect of the proposed model is the identification of cognitive and trust-based compensation. Experts highlighted formal and informal recognition, delegation of honorary responsibilities, empowerment, participation in key decisions, and organizational trust as essential elements of a commitment-oriented compensation system. Interestingly, two of the most highly agreed-upon indicators among experts were creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust and assigning honorary responsibilities to high-performing employees. These findings suggest that employees highly value symbolic and psychological rewards that communicate appreciation and recognition. Such rewards may be particularly influential in public organizations where financial compensation flexibility is often limited. The findings support the conclusions of Alidoust Ghahfarokhi et al., who reported that non-financial rewards significantly contribute to employee retention and organizational commitment [20]. Furthermore, Ardiansyah et al. demonstrated that compensation systems combined with supportive organizational cultures positively affect organizational citizenship behaviors and reduce turnover intentions [13]. The strong emphasis on trust and recognition also supports the findings of Ghaffarian et al. regarding the antecedents of employee commitment in public organizations [8].

Another important contribution of this study is the incorporation of technological and transformation-oriented compensation. Experts identified digitalization of compensation systems, data transparency, analytical reporting, encouragement of technological ideas, participation in digital transformation projects, and digital literacy development as

important dimensions of future compensation systems. This finding reflects the growing importance of digital transformation in public administration and human resource management. Contemporary government organizations increasingly rely on digital technologies to enhance transparency, accountability, and operational effectiveness. Therefore, compensation systems must evolve accordingly and support employees' adaptation to technological change. These findings are consistent with recent studies emphasizing the importance of strategic adaptation and innovation in public organizations. Saeed et al. highlighted the role of strategic thinking and planning in improving organizational resilience and performance [21]. Likewise, Saghaeian Nejad Isfahani emphasized entrepreneurial leadership and innovation capabilities as critical success factors in government organizations [22]. By incorporating technological dimensions, the proposed model responds to contemporary organizational realities and future workforce expectations.

The final overarching dimension identified in this study was continuous evaluation and learning in compensation. Experts emphasized measuring compensation effectiveness, assessing return on human capital investment, benchmarking organizational indicators, collecting employee feedback, revising policies based on evidence, and adopting double-loop learning mechanisms. This finding suggests that compensation systems should not be viewed as static structures but as dynamic systems requiring ongoing assessment and improvement. Such a perspective aligns with contemporary approaches to strategic human resource management, which emphasize evidence-based decision-making and organizational learning. Continuous evaluation enables organizations to adapt compensation systems to changing employee needs and environmental conditions. The importance of strategic alignment and organizational learning has been emphasized by numerous scholars in human resource management and organizational strategy [3-5]. The emphasis on continuous improvement also reflects the growing recognition that sustainable commitment cannot be maintained without ongoing organizational responsiveness and adaptation.

An important theoretical implication of this study is its expansion of the conceptual boundaries of compensation management. Traditional compensation frameworks have often focused primarily on financial rewards and performance incentives. In contrast, the present model conceptualizes compensation as a multidimensional system integrating economic, developmental, ethical, social, psychological, technological, and learning-related elements. Such an approach is consistent with contemporary theories of strategic human resource management, which emphasize the integration of human resource practices with organizational goals and employee expectations [1, 2]. Moreover, the model demonstrates that commitment-oriented compensation in public organizations requires a balance between material rewards and intangible organizational experiences.

The findings also highlight the importance of strategic alignment in compensation system design. Previous studies have emphasized that human resource strategies should be aligned with broader organizational strategies to maximize effectiveness [6, 7]. The present model extends this perspective by suggesting that compensation systems should simultaneously align with organizational missions, public-sector values, employee expectations, and environmental changes. Such alignment may be particularly important in government organizations where strategic objectives often encompass social, economic, and national development goals.

Finally, the findings suggest that commitment-oriented compensation may serve as an effective response to several contemporary challenges facing government organizations, including declining employee engagement, increasing workforce expectations, organizational politics, and technological transformation. Studies examining political behaviors and

interpersonal relationships in public organizations indicate that trust, fairness, participation, and ethical cultures are essential for maintaining positive organizational climates [23, 24]. The proposed model incorporates these elements and therefore provides a comprehensive framework capable of enhancing employee commitment and organizational effectiveness within the Iranian public sector.

One limitation of the present study is that the findings were derived primarily from qualitative data collected through interviews with a limited number of experts. Although theoretical saturation was achieved, the perspectives represented may not fully capture the diversity of experiences across all government organizations in Iran. Additionally, the study focused on expert opinions rather than direct employee perceptions, which may result in differences between the proposed model and employees' actual expectations and experiences. Furthermore, the qualitative nature of the study limits the generalizability of the findings to broader organizational contexts.

Future studies should quantitatively validate the proposed model using large-scale surveys across different types of government organizations. Researchers may also examine the causal relationships among the identified dimensions and their effects on outcomes such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, employee engagement, innovation, and performance. Comparative studies between public and private organizations could further enhance understanding of the contextual applicability of commitment-oriented compensation systems. In addition, longitudinal studies are recommended to assess how compensation practices influence employee attitudes and behaviors over time.

Managers and policymakers in government organizations should adopt a comprehensive perspective toward compensation that extends beyond financial rewards. Efforts should focus on integrating career development opportunities, recognition mechanisms, ethical organizational practices, employee participation, technological innovation, and continuous feedback systems into compensation frameworks. Public organizations should also strengthen transparency, administrative justice, and trust-building initiatives while ensuring alignment between compensation practices and organizational objectives. Establishing mechanisms for regular assessment and revision of compensation policies can further enhance employee commitment, organizational effectiveness, and the long-term sustainability of public-sector performance.

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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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