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An Effective Decision-Making Model in Social Security Branches (Case Study: Kerman Branches)

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted with the aim of designing an effective decision-making model for the branches of the Social Security Organization in Kerman Province, intending to provide a localized framework for improving decision-making processes, enhancing organizational accountability, and increasing stakeholder satisfaction under the region's complex conditions. A sequential mixed-methods approach (qualitative and quantitative) was employed. In the qualitative phase, thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with 12 experts (branch and headquarters managers and specialists with a minimum of 10 years of experience) was carried out to identify the dimensions and components of effective decision-making. In the quantitative phase, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was applied to a sample of 384 branch employees selected through multistage cluster sampling, using a questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. Thematic analysis of the interviews revealed that decision-making in the Kerman branches is often unsystematic, based on individual experience, and confronted with challenges such as lack of accurate data, insufficient transparency, and weak documentation practices. Key themes included the need for precise problem definition, strengthening of informational infrastructure, enhancement of employee participation, and continuous monitoring of decision outcomes. The exploratory factor analysis extracted eight key dimensions: strategic and policy-making, operational and executive, information and technology, data-driven analysis, organizational participation, organizational culture, evaluation and learning, and adaptability and innovation. These dimensions were validated using indicators such as financial sustainability rate with a factor loading of 0.82, clarity of SMART decision-making goals with a factor loading of 0.80, data accuracy rate with a factor loading of 0.80, and employee participation percentage with a factor loading of 0.79, altogether explaining 89.79% of the total variance.

Keywords: Effective decision-making, Social Security Organization, Kerman branches, exploratory factor analysis, thematic analysis, public administration, transparency, data-driven management, organizational participation, adaptability.

Introduction

Effective decision-making in public organizations, especially those with complex mandates such as the Social Security Organization, is critical for sustaining institutional performance, promoting public trust, and achieving social justice goals. In Iran, the Social Security Organization serves as a foundational pillar for economic protection and welfare provision, navigating a complex interplay of regulatory mandates, fiscal pressures, and stakeholder expectations [1]. Within this context, designing an effective decision-making model is not only a managerial concern but also a public governance imperative that requires an understanding of administrative structures, policy-making dynamics, and organizational behavior. The increasing demand for responsive, transparent, and evidence-informed decisions underscores the relevance of new governance paradigms that challenge traditional top-down models [2] and emphasize participatory, adaptive, and data-driven approaches [3, 4].

Public sector organizations, particularly in developing countries, face numerous governance challenges that limit the efficiency and effectiveness of policy implementation and service delivery [5]. In Iran, historical analyses point to structural rigidity, fragmented decision-making hierarchies, and a lack of integrative policy frameworks in the Social Security sector [6]. As such, any effort to model effective decision-making in this institutional context must incorporate both the functional dimensions of public administration and the cultural specificities of the Iranian bureaucratic environment [7]. Decision-making in this setting is not merely a technical process but a socio-political activity shaped by organizational norms, leadership capacity, and external pressures [8]. The strategic role of the Social Security Organization in Iran's national welfare policy also demands robust governance tools to evaluate the consequences of decisions across domains such as healthcare access, income redistribution, and employment protection [9].

The academic literature has increasingly emphasized the need for adaptive and collaborative decision-making structures in the public sector to manage "wicked problems" that resist linear solutions and demand multisectoral coordination [4]. Collaborative governance, as outlined by [3], proposes that decisions in complex environments should be co-produced through iterative, deliberative, and inclusive processes involving multiple stakeholders. These principles are particularly relevant to the Social Security Organization, which operates at the intersection of government regulation, employer compliance, and citizen entitlement. In practice, however, the organization's decision-making culture has often leaned toward centralized, top-down procedures with limited local flexibility [10]. This gap between theoretical ideals and institutional reality necessitates empirical models grounded in context-specific research, such as the grounded theory approach employed in recent studies on Iranian public institutions [11, 12].

One of the critical challenges in institutionalizing effective decision-making in Iran's social insurance system is the misalignment between policy formulation and organizational implementation capacities [13]. Drawing from policy design literature, [13] argues that policy effectiveness depends on how well the design space—defined by political, administrative, and technical constraints—matches the organization's capacity to respond. In the case of the Social Security Organization, this mismatch often manifests in fragmented information systems, unclear accountability lines, and reactive crisis management patterns [14]. Addressing this requires integrating data-driven decision-making tools with organizational learning mechanisms, a shift increasingly supported by both international best practices and domestic research [15, 16].

The evolution of public sector management approaches further complicates the landscape of decision-making. The transition from traditional bureaucratic models to New Public Management (NPM) has introduced market-based performance metrics, decentralization, and client-oriented service delivery into public organizations [17]. While NPM reforms have promoted accountability and efficiency in some contexts, they have also produced tensions with collaborative and participatory governance ideals [18]. In Iran's Social Security Organization, these tensions are evident in the dual expectations placed on managers: to meet quantitative performance targets while also fostering inclusive decision-making and institutional learning. This dual role necessitates a hybrid model that blends hierarchical accountability with network-based governance [19].

At the operational level, studies such as [20] and [21] have highlighted the significance of behavioral and psychological factors in shaping managerial decision-making under uncertainty. In the context of the Social Security Organization, the complexity of decision environments is exacerbated by resource constraints, political interference, and unclear performance indicators. Therefore, it becomes essential to develop a decision-making model that accounts not only for structural and

procedural dimensions but also for cultural, cognitive, and motivational elements [7, 20]. For instance, individual-level attributes such as risk aversion, ethical orientation, and participatory competence can significantly influence collective outcomes in organizational decision processes [1].

Furthermore, from a governance perspective, the integration of decision-making indicators related to transparency, adaptability, and innovation resonates with the evolving expectations of good governance frameworks. International indices such as the Worldwide Governance Indicators emphasize dimensions like accountability, rule of law, and government effectiveness as central to public trust and service quality [22]. Embedding these elements within decision-making systems enhances organizational legitimacy and strategic agility, both of which are vital in navigating socio-economic disruptions. The proposed model thus aligns not only with internal organizational needs but also with broader governance reform agendas aimed at improving public sector performance in Iran and similar contexts [9, 21].

In conclusion, developing a comprehensive and contextualized model of effective decision-making for the Iranian Social Security Organization responds to both theoretical gaps in public administration scholarship and practical challenges in welfare governance. Drawing on a rich body of interdisciplinary literature—from systems theory and behavioral science to policy analysis and organizational design—the study provides a multidimensional framework that can support institutional learning, performance improvement, and strategic transformation.

Methods and Materials

To investigate the model of effective decision-making in the branches of the Social Security Organization, this study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods to achieve a deep and comprehensive understanding of the subject. The mixed-methods approach was designed sequentially, meaning the qualitative phase was conducted first to identify the dimensions and components of the decision-making model, followed by the quantitative phase to validate and structure these dimensions through exploratory factor analysis. This approach enabled the integration of in-depth expert perspectives (via qualitative analysis) with broader employee data (via quantitative analysis) to present a scientifically grounded and practical framework for effective decision-making in the Social Security Organization.

In the qualitative phase, the statistical population included senior managers, planning experts, and IT specialists from the organization's branches and central headquarters, all with at least 10 years of relevant experience in decision-making and insurance operations. The sample size in this phase consisted of 12 experts, selected based on the principle of theoretical saturation—such that after 12 interviews, no new significant data were added to the analysis. Purposive sampling was used, with selection criteria including at least 10 years of experience in the organization, direct involvement in decision-making processes, and the ability to provide analytical insights into organizational challenges. Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews, guided by an interview protocol comprising open-ended questions related to problem identification, decision quality, and improvement strategies. Each interview lasted between 45 to 60 minutes and was conducted either in person or virtually (with adherence to ethical protocols), and was recorded. To ensure data validity, the interview guide was reviewed and approved by three university professors in the field of management, and summary findings were returned to participants for confirmation of interpretation accuracy. Additionally, diversity in selecting experts from various organizational levels (branches) contributed to data comprehensiveness. For reliability, the data coding process was

conducted using thematic analysis with NVivo software. Initial coding was performed by the researcher and then reviewed by two independent coders. The inter-coder agreement coefficient (Kappa) was calculated as 0.82, indicating high analytical reliability. Data were analyzed based on Braun and Clarke's six-phase approach, which includes familiarization with data, initial coding, theme searching, theme reviewing, defining final themes (e.g., transparency, participation, and innovation), and report writing.

In the quantitative phase, the statistical population consisted of all staff in the Social Security Organization's branches across the country who were directly or indirectly involved in decision-making processes. The sample size in this phase, determined using Cochran's formula at a 95% confidence level, was 384 individuals. Considering the geographical distribution of branches, multistage cluster sampling was used. The data collection tool was a questionnaire developed based on the themes extracted from the qualitative phase. This questionnaire included items regarding the dimensions of the decision-making model (such as transparency, data quality, and participation) and employed a five-point Likert scale (from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree"). To ensure validity, face and content validity were reviewed by five experts (five interview participants), and necessary revisions were applied. Construct validity was confirmed through exploratory factor analysis. For reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated at 0.87, indicating satisfactory reliability of the instrument. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 26. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted using the principal component extraction method and Varimax rotation to extract the factor structure of the decision-making model. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.83, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis.

Table 1.

Questionnaire Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)

Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	Description
Strategic and Policy-Making	0.85	Adequate reliability for this factor's indicators
Operational and Executive	0.88	High reliability for this factor's indicators
Information and Technology	0.86	Adequate reliability for this factor's indicators
Data-Driven Analysis	0.87	Adequate reliability for this factor's indicators
Organizational Participation	0.84	Adequate reliability for this factor's indicators
Organizational Culture	0.83	Adequate reliability for this factor's indicators
Evaluation and Learning	0.89	High reliability for this factor's indicators
Adaptability and Innovation	0.86	Adequate reliability for this factor's indicators
Entire Questionnaire	0.87	Overall satisfactory reliability of the instrument

Findings and Results

The findings of the study are presented in two stages—qualitative and quantitative—each of which complements the other in offering a comprehensive understanding of the components and indicators of effective decision-making in Social Security Organization branches in Kerman. The qualitative phase, conducted through semi-structured interviews with experts, aimed to identify the core dimensions, components, and indicators of effective decision-making by analyzing the real-life experiences and managerial insights of long-serving staff. Thematic content analysis revealed eight main factors underlying effective decision-making, each comprised of multiple components and accompanied by measurable indicators. These factors reflect both strategic and operational considerations and address cultural, technological, and learning aspects, forming a holistic framework suitable for implementation in social insurance organizations under complex regional conditions.

Table 2.

Summary of Qualitative Results

Main Factor	Components	Proposed Indicators
Strategic and Policy-Making	- Formulation of macro policies	- Financial sustainability ratio (revenue to expense)
	- Financial risk management	- Insurance coverage rate in target population
	- Compliance with laws	- Number of legal violations or registered complaints
		- Alignment of branch policies with upstream documents (checklist-based)
Operational and Executive	- Human resource management	- Average response time to requests
	- Process optimization	- Service delivery error rate
	- Decision selection, execution, review	- Employee satisfaction index (annual survey)
		- Clarity of decision execution plan (structural checklist score)
		- Number of performance review mechanisms
		- Percentage of decisions leading to measurable desirable outcomes
Information and Technology	- Data quality and accessibility	- Existence of a comprehensive, updated database
	- Supportive technology	- Data accuracy and reliability rate (internal audit-based)
	- Information collection and analysis	- Use of DSS systems in decision-making
	- Environmental factor analysis	- Average data access time
		- Percentage of sufficiently collected decision-relevant information
		- Number of analyzed internal/external environmental factors
Data-Driven Analysis	- Data collection	- Percentage of decisions with well-defined problems
	- Predictive analysis	- Clarity of decision goals (SMART framework)
	- Performance evaluation	- Accuracy of financial or demographic forecasts (deviation rate)
	- Problem identification and definition	- Data usage rate in decisions
		- Number of monitored active KPIs
		- Number of identified root causes (cause-effect analysis)
Organizational Participation	- Delegation of authority	- Percentage of decisions made at branch level
	- Participatory decision-making	- Percentage of employees involved in decision-making
	- Teamwork and feedback	- Number of active problem-solving teams
		- Level of expert feedback received and implemented
Organizational Culture	- Transparency	- Clarity of decision-making process from staff perspective (internal survey)
	- Accountability	- Individual accountability rate (number of accepted responsibilities for wrong decisions)
	- Error tolerance	- Percentage of innovative decisions allowing trial and error
	- Motivation	- Employee motivation index (percentage eligible for performance rewards)
Evaluation and Learning	- Outcome monitoring	- Percentage of systematic decision outcome monitoring
	- Decision correction	- Rate of correction for ineffective decisions
	- Organizational learning	- Use of previous experience (decision documentation)
	- Documentation	- Percentage of formally recorded decision-making knowledge
		- Rate of feedback use in corrections
Adaptability and Innovation	- Technology and change management	- Percentage of digitized processes
	- Service innovation	- Average response time to environmental changes
	- Solution generation and evaluation	- Number of new or updated services
		- Number of proposed decision options
		- Percentage of operationalized options after feasibility study
		- Number of comparative analyses
		- Clarity of option prioritization criteria
		- Innovation acceptance index (internal survey-based)

The qualitative findings presented in Table 2 highlight a multidimensional conceptual structure for effective decision-making in Kerman's Social Security branches. The eight main dimensions—strategic and policy-making, operational and executive, information and technology, data-driven analysis, organizational participation, organizational culture, evaluation and learning, and adaptability and innovation—were derived through systematic thematic coding. Each dimension is associated with specific components and is operationalized through clear and measurable indicators, which can be employed for future evaluation, performance monitoring, and policy adjustment. These results underline the necessity for an integrated approach that combines strategic alignment, robust data infrastructure, participatory governance, and adaptive capacity to promote effective decision-making in public service organizations.

Table 3.

Sampling Adequacy

Measure	Value	Description
KMO Measure	0.83	Above 0.60, indicating adequate sample size for exploratory factor analysis
Bartlett's Test	p < 0.001	Test is significant, indicating data are suitable for factor analysis

The findings presented in Table 3 demonstrate that the dataset met the necessary statistical requirements for conducting exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.83, which is well above the minimum threshold of 0.60, confirming the sufficiency of the sample size for reliable factor extraction. Furthermore, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant (p < 0.001), indicating that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix and the variables are sufficiently correlated to warrant factor analysis. Together, these results validate the appropriateness of proceeding with the EFA procedure in this study.

Table 4.

Eigenvalues and Explained Variance

Factor	Eigenvalue	Variance (%)	Cumulative Variance (%)
Strategic and Policy-Making	8.45	20.12%	20.12%
Operational and Executive	6.78	16.14%	36.26%
Information and Technology	5.92	14.10%	50.36%
Data-Driven Analysis	4.67	11.12%	61.48%
Organizational Participation	3.89	9.26%	70.74%
Organizational Culture	3.12	7.43%	78.17%
Evaluation and Learning	2.65	6.31%	84.48%
Adaptability and Innovation	2.23	5.31%	89.79%

Table 4 presents the results of the exploratory factor analysis, including eigenvalues, the percentage of variance explained by each factor, and the cumulative variance explained. The analysis extracted eight factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.00, in accordance with Kaiser's criterion. The first factor—Strategic and Policy-Making—explains 20.12% of the total variance, followed by Operational and Executive at 16.14%, and Information and Technology at 14.10%. Collectively, these three dimensions account for over 50% of the total explained variance. When all eight factors are considered, the cumulative variance explained reaches 89.79%, which reflects a high level of explanatory power and suggests that the identified factors comprehensively represent the underlying structure of effective decision-making in the studied branches. This confirms the robustness of the factor structure and the multidimensional nature of decision-making effectiveness in the context of public sector social insurance administration.

Table 5.

Rotated Factor Loadings Matrix

Indicator	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8
Financial sustainability ratio	0.82							
Insurance coverage percentage	0.79							
Number of legal violations or complaints	0.76							
Alignment with upstream policies	0.81							
Avg. response time to requests		0.84						
Service error rate		0.80						
Employee satisfaction index		0.77						
Clarity of decision execution plan		0.79						
Performance review mechanisms							0.75	
% of decisions with desirable outcomes							0.78	
Existence of comprehensive updated database			0.83					

Data accuracy and reliability rate	0.80						
Use of DSS systems	0.77						
Avg. access time to required data	0.79						
% of sufficiently collected decision-related data	0.75						
Number of analyzed environmental factors	0.74						
% of decisions with well-defined problems		0.82					
Clarity of decision goals (SMART)		0.80					
Accuracy of financial or demographic forecasts		0.78					
Rate of data usage in decision-making		0.76					
Number of monitored active KPIs		0.75					
Number of identified root causes (cause-effect)		0.77					
% of decisions made at branch level			0.81				
% of employees participating in decision-making			0.79				
Number of active problem-solving teams			0.76				
Degree of expert feedback implementation			0.78				
Clarity of decision-making process (staff view)				0.80			
Rate of individual accountability				0.78			
% of innovative decisions with trial-and-error					0.77		
Employee motivation index					0.75		
% of systematic monitoring of decision outcomes						0.80	
Rate of ineffective decision revisions						0.79	
Use of past experiences						0.76	
% of formally recorded decision-making knowledge						0.74	
Rate of feedback application in revisions						0.77	
% of digitized processes							0.81
Avg. response time to environmental changes							0.79
Number of new or updated services							0.78
Number of proposed decision options							0.76
% of operationalized options post-feasibility							0.75
Number of comparative analyses							0.74
Clarity of option prioritization criteria							0.77
Innovation acceptance index (staff survey)							0.76

Table 5 presents the rotated factor loading matrix, which shows how each indicator aligns with the eight extracted factors following Varimax rotation. Factor loadings above 0.70 are considered strong, indicating that each item reliably measures its respective underlying construct. The results confirm that all indicators load clearly and consistently on their intended factors with no significant cross-loadings, supporting the construct validity of the model. For example, financial sustainability indicators such as "financial sustainability ratio" (0.82) and "policy alignment" (0.81) load significantly on Factor 1 (Strategic and Policy-Making). Likewise, indicators related to operational processes—such as "response time" (0.84) and "error rate" (0.80)—align strongly with Factor 2 (Operational and Executive). Factors related to data infrastructure, organizational participation, and innovation also demonstrate high loadings, such as "comprehensive updated database" (0.83), "branch-level decision participation" (0.81), and "digitized processes" (0.81), aligning with their respective factors.

This clear factor structure confirms the multidimensional nature of effective decision-making and validates the theoretical model proposed. Each factor exhibits internal coherence and empirical distinctiveness, making the model robust for practical implementation in performance evaluation, organizational planning, and strategic improvement initiatives in the Social Security Organization.

Figure 1.

Final Model of the Study
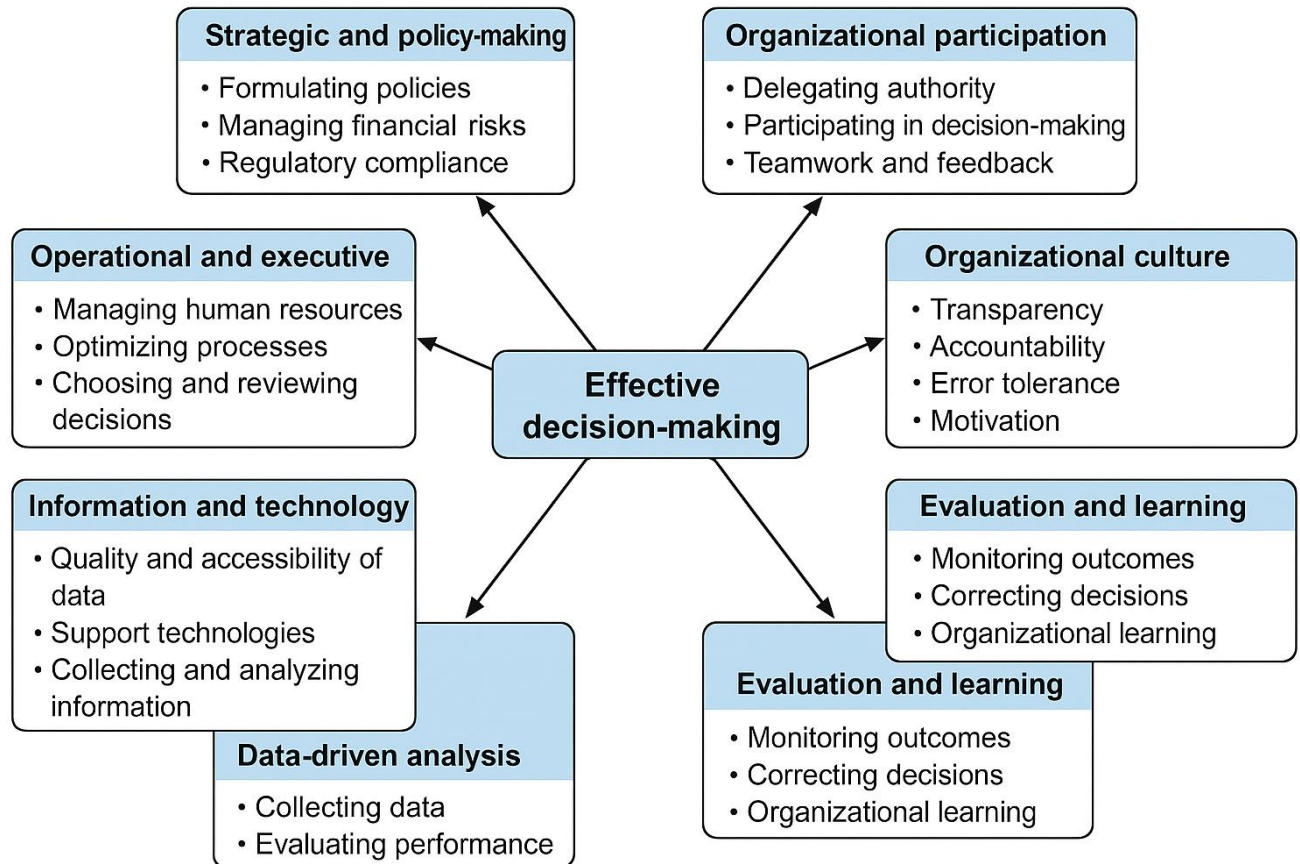
Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to design and validate a localized model of effective decision-making for the branches of the Iranian Social Security Organization in Kerman, using a sequential mixed-methods approach. The qualitative analysis identified eight core dimensions—strategic and policy-making, operational and executive, information and technology, data-driven analysis, organizational participation, organizational culture, evaluation and learning, and adaptability and innovation—each supported by a set of empirically derived indicators. These dimensions were then validated through exploratory factor analysis (EFA), which confirmed the internal consistency and structural validity of the proposed model. The cumulative explained variance of 89.79% and high factor loadings for each indicator demonstrated the robustness of the model. These findings suggest that effective decision-making in the Social Security Organization requires an integrated and systemic approach that encompasses strategic alignment, operational efficiency, participatory structures, technological infrastructure, and adaptive capacities.

The prominence of strategic and policy-making as the first extracted factor aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the centrality of macro-level coherence and regulatory alignment in public sector decision-making [13]. Indicators such as financial sustainability ratio and policy alignment with upstream documents reflect the importance of embedding decisions within broader governance frameworks. This is particularly crucial in highly regulated and politically visible organizations such as Iran's Social Security Organization, where policy inconsistency or reactive measures may lead to public dissatisfaction and

systemic inefficiencies [23]. The findings reinforce the notion that effective public decisions must be not only contextually grounded but also strategically positioned to respond to fiscal and institutional constraints [9].

The second extracted factor, operational and executive, underscores the importance of process efficiency and human resource management. Indicators such as response time, service delivery error rate, and staff satisfaction highlight the functional side of decision-making. These results are consistent with theories of administrative performance in New Public Management (NPM), which advocate for outcome-based evaluation and customer-centric service delivery [17]. However, unlike the overly technocratic application of NPM, the current model integrates process clarity and accountability within a participatory governance structure, reflecting a more balanced and context-sensitive approach [4]. This resonates with the insights of [20] on the need to balance task performance with motivational and relational elements in decision environments.

The third factor, information and technology, focuses on data accessibility, data accuracy, and the utilization of decision support systems (DSS). This reflects a growing global trend toward evidence-based decision-making in public administration, especially in high-stakes environments where data integrity is paramount [15]. The alignment of this factor with findings from international studies on public sector digitization confirms the need for robust information infrastructures and real-time analytics in supporting informed choices [19]. However, the current study also highlights localized issues, such as delays in data access and inconsistent internal audits, suggesting the need for strategic investment in technological capacity building within Iranian public institutions [1].

Data-driven analysis, the fourth factor, reflects analytical maturity and organizational learning capacities. Indicators such as root cause identification, SMART goal clarity, and active monitoring of KPIs point to the role of structured analytical frameworks in improving decision quality. This is supported by research that links organizational learning to sustained decision effectiveness [12]. Additionally, the emphasis on predictive analysis and performance evaluation aligns with integrative policy models that seek to bridge the gap between ex-ante planning and ex-post evaluation [18]. The embeddedness of analytical reasoning in the decision-making process illustrates a departure from intuition-based or ad hoc practices, a recurring concern in earlier studies of the Iranian Social Security system [6].

The fifth factor, organizational participation, highlights the procedural justice and decentralization aspects of decision-making. High loadings for indicators such as team involvement and expert feedback reflect the value of participatory practices, which are essential for collaborative governance as advocated by [3]. These practices not only enhance decision legitimacy but also improve implementation fidelity by ensuring that decisions are informed by operational realities and frontline insights. The findings align with [11], who demonstrated that stakeholder engagement strengthens institutional resilience in crisis settings. Yet, the relatively low decentralization in Iran's bureaucratic structure remains a barrier to the full realization of these principles [16].

The sixth factor, organizational culture, represents soft components such as transparency, motivation, accountability, and error tolerance. These are often overlooked in rigid bureaucratic systems but are increasingly recognized as critical enablers of innovation and employee engagement [7]. The positive factor loadings associated with these indicators support [20]'s argument that an organization's cultural climate significantly influences decision quality, especially in environments marked by uncertainty and complexity. In the Iranian context, where hierarchical control and risk aversion are prevalent, fostering a culture of openness and learning is a strategic necessity rather than an optional reform [1].

The seventh factor, evaluation and learning, emphasizes feedback mechanisms, documentation of past decisions, and post-decision monitoring. These findings corroborate international standards of good governance that stress the cyclical nature of policy learning and adaptive management [22]. Despite being underdeveloped in many Iranian public agencies, these practices are essential for transforming reactive decision-making cultures into proactive, evidence-informed systems [9]. This factor also validates the contribution of grounded theory research such as [14], which underscored the mediating role of learning and feedback in enhancing organizational commitment and intrapreneurship.

Finally, adaptability and innovation, the eighth factor, underscores the strategic importance of agility in responding to environmental changes. Indicators such as process digitalization, service innovation, and response time to external shocks resonate with modern public administration theories that prioritize responsiveness and continuous improvement [8]. In dynamic social systems, decision-making models that lack adaptive capacity are prone to stagnation and policy failure [2]. As such, embedding adaptability within institutional processes, as supported by the current study's findings, aligns with emerging global trends in public sector reform [5].

Despite the strengths of its mixed-methods design and contextual depth, this study has several limitations. First, the generalizability of the findings is constrained by its geographical focus on the Kerman branches of the Social Security Organization. While the sampling approach aimed for internal diversity, it may not fully capture regional or organizational variations across other provinces. Second, although exploratory factor analysis offers valuable insights into the structure of decision-making components, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was not employed, limiting the ability to statistically validate the model's dimensionality. Third, while qualitative interviews captured rich expert perspectives, these insights may be subject to personal biases, especially given the participants' senior roles and long tenures.

Future studies should extend this model through confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling across a larger and more diverse sample of Social Security branches. Comparative studies between provinces or between public and quasi-public welfare institutions could illuminate differences in decision-making culture and capability. Additionally, longitudinal research could examine how changes in organizational culture or technological adoption influence decision-making effectiveness over time. Integrating machine learning tools to predict decision outcomes or to simulate decision pathways could also enhance the analytical depth of future investigations.

Practically, the model developed in this study provides a valuable diagnostic tool for managers and policy-makers in the Social Security Organization. It offers a structured framework for assessing decision quality, identifying areas of weakness, and tracking progress in real time. Training programs should be developed to enhance skills in data analysis, participatory planning, and strategic thinking. Organizational reforms should focus on improving transparency, delegating authority, and embedding adaptive feedback mechanisms. Finally, investments in digital infrastructure and cultural transformation are essential to support evidence-based, inclusive, and responsive decision-making across all levels of the organization.

Acknowledgments

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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