

Designing a Compensation Model Based on a Commitment-Oriented Strategy in Iranian Government Organizations

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to design and empirically validate a comprehensive compensation model based on a commitment-oriented strategy for Iranian government organizations. This applied-developmental study employed an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design grounded in pragmatism. In the qualitative phase, 16 university faculty members and experienced public-sector managers with expertise in human resource management and compensation were selected purposively and interviewed using semi-structured interviews until theoretical saturation was achieved. The interview data were analyzed through thematic analysis and thematic-network procedures to identify basic, organizing, and global themes. In the quantitative phase, the statistical population consisted of 600 deputies and managers of the Tehran Province Agricultural Jihad Organization, from whom 234 participants were selected using Cochran's formula and simple random sampling. A researcher-developed 51-item questionnaire derived from the qualitative findings was used. Content validity, construct validity, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were assessed. Data were analyzed using SPSS and SmartPLS through exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and partial least squares structural equation modeling. The qualitative phase yielded seven dimensions, 17 components, and 51 indicators. Exploratory factor analysis confirmed the proposed component structure, with explained variance ranging from 61.57% to 68.06%. In the confirmatory model, all factor loadings exceeded .50 and all t-values exceeded 1.96. The seven dimensions were significantly associated with commitment-oriented compensation: work environment ($\beta=.891$), professional development and growth ($\beta=.865$), spiritual and ethical values ($\beta=.850$), technology- and transformation-oriented compensation ($\beta=.824$), employee material benefits ($\beta=.807$), psychological compensation ($\beta=.795$), and continuous learning ($\beta=.790$). Cronbach's alpha ranged from .73 to .84, composite reliability from .71 to .90, and AVE from .52 to .54. R^2 values ranged from .62 to .79, and the overall GOF was .60, indicating strong model fit. The findings indicate that commitment-oriented compensation in Iranian government organizations is a multidimensional system that extends beyond financial rewards and integrates developmental, ethical, environmental, psychological, technological, and learning-related mechanisms; therefore, public organizations should design compensation systems as strategic and adaptive architectures for strengthening long-term employee commitment.

Keywords: Compensation; Commitment-Oriented Strategy; Government Organizations; Human Resource Management; Organizational Commitment; Mixed Methods; PLS-SEM

Introduction

Compensation is one of the most consequential human resource management mechanisms through which organizations translate their employment philosophy, strategic priorities, and expectations regarding employee



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behavior into tangible and intangible exchanges. Although compensation was traditionally interpreted mainly in terms of salary, wages, and legally prescribed benefits, contemporary human resource management increasingly treats it as a multidimensional system encompassing financial rewards, developmental opportunities, recognition, career advancement, participation, work–life support, job security, organizational trust, and other forms of material and non-material exchange. This broader interpretation is particularly relevant in public organizations, where rigid administrative regulations, standardized pay structures, budgetary constraints, and comparatively limited managerial discretion often make it difficult to rely solely on financial incentives to strengthen employee commitment. Recent evidence indicates that compensation remains closely associated with employee productivity, satisfaction, retention, and behavioral outcomes, while its effectiveness depends on the extent to which it is perceived as fair, meaningful, strategically aligned, and responsive to employees' expectations (1-3). Consequently, compensation should not be viewed merely as a distributive mechanism for remunerating labor; rather, it can function as a strategic architecture through which organizations communicate value, reinforce desired behaviors, and establish a sustainable employment relationship.

The strategic importance of compensation becomes more pronounced when it is examined in relation to organizational commitment. Commitment reflects the psychological bond between employees and their organization and affects the willingness of individuals to remain with the organization, invest discretionary effort, identify with organizational goals, and accept long-term reciprocal obligations. Compensation systems may contribute to this bond when employees perceive that the organization values their contributions and recognizes their economic, developmental, psychological, and social needs. Empirical studies have shown that satisfaction with pay may contribute to stronger organizational commitment and that employee commitment can act as an important mechanism linking compensation systems with turnover intentions (4, 5). Similarly, compensation has been found to influence performance through organizational commitment, suggesting that the motivational consequences of compensation may operate not only through short-term economic incentives but also through deeper attitudinal and relational mechanisms (6). These findings support a commitment-oriented perspective in which the central purpose of compensation is not simply to secure compliance or reward completed tasks, but to foster a durable psychological and organizational attachment capable of sustaining performance over time.

A commitment-oriented compensation strategy therefore differs conceptually from a purely transactional or control-oriented approach. Transactional compensation tends to emphasize market rates, immediate performance contingencies, and direct economic exchange, whereas a commitment-oriented strategy integrates financial rewards with practices that communicate long-term organizational support, fairness, developmental opportunity, trust, recognition, and participation. Such a strategy is particularly important when the organization seeks to retain human capital and encourage behaviors that cannot be fully specified or monitored through formal contracts. Research on employee retention has emphasized the need to design compensation systems capable of supporting continued organizational membership and reducing the likelihood that valuable employees will seek alternative employment (7). Likewise, models developed around organizational attachment have demonstrated that compensation can be designed to reinforce employees' sense of belonging and continued association with the organization rather than merely satisfying short-term economic expectations (8). These studies suggest that the design logic of compensation should move from a narrow focus on payment toward an integrated employment proposition capable of reinforcing both economic security and psychological attachment.

The issue is especially significant in governmental organizations, where employee commitment can directly influence continuity of public services, implementation of policies, institutional knowledge, administrative responsiveness, and public trust. In the Iranian public sector, organizational commitment has emerged as a major managerial concern because government organizations operate within formal bureaucratic structures while simultaneously requiring initiative, accountability, service orientation, and adaptability from their employees. A recent model developed specifically for Iranian government organizations showed that employee commitment is shaped through multiple organizational mechanisms and should be approached as a multidimensional phenomenon rather than as an isolated attitudinal outcome (9). Similarly, previous research on government employee compensation in Iran has demonstrated that compensation requirements vary across different types of governmental organizations, indicating that a uniform pay-focused approach may be insufficient for the heterogeneous conditions of the public sector (10). This contextual complexity strengthens the need for a comprehensive compensation model that can reconcile statutory requirements and institutional constraints with employees' evolving expectations and the strategic need for sustained commitment.

One of the fundamental requirements of such a model is fairness. Employees do not evaluate compensation solely according to its absolute monetary value; they also assess whether outcomes, procedures, and decision-making processes are equitable relative to their contributions, comparable employees, job demands, and organizational rules. Perceived injustice in compensation can undermine trust and organizational attachment even when the absolute level of pay is not necessarily low. Conversely, perceived fairness can reinforce acceptance of compensation decisions and contribute to more positive employee attitudes. Research examining justice in compensation systems has highlighted the importance of employees' perceptions of distributive and organizational justice and has also suggested that positive organizational states may mediate the consequences of such justice perceptions (11). The strategic design of compensation in government organizations should therefore incorporate internal equity, transparency, explainability, consistent procedures, and fair treatment as core elements rather than supplementary administrative considerations. This is particularly important in public organizations, where formal rules and comparisons between occupational groups are highly visible and may strongly shape employees' perceptions of legitimacy.

At the same time, contemporary employees increasingly evaluate employment relationships in terms that extend beyond current salary. Differences between generational cohorts, career expectations, occupational values, and individual life circumstances have diversified what employees expect from compensation. Research in the Iranian banking sector has shown that Generations X, Y, and Z differ in their expectations regarding salary, benefits, and rewards, emphasizing that compensation systems must be sufficiently flexible to respond to changing workforce preferences (12). This shift is consistent with the broader movement toward total rewards systems, in which compensation incorporates career development, learning, recognition, flexibility, meaningful work, and work-life arrangements alongside direct financial remuneration. A commitment-oriented model must therefore account for heterogeneity in employee needs while maintaining sufficient consistency to preserve organizational justice. In governmental organizations, this balance is particularly difficult because administrative standardization is often necessary, yet excessive uniformity may reduce the motivational and retention value of compensation.

Professional development constitutes another important dimension of commitment-oriented compensation. Employees may interpret opportunities for training, competency development, promotion, succession, and career progression as evidence that the organization is willing to invest in their future. Such investment increases the long-

term value of organizational membership and may create stronger reciprocal commitment than immediate financial incentives alone. Competency-based human resource management models, particularly those linked with succession planning, emphasize the integration of employee capabilities, career progression, and organizational continuity (13). Similarly, sustainable human resource performance depends on organizational arrangements that enable employees to maintain and develop relevant capabilities over time (14). From this perspective, compensation is not restricted to what employees receive in cash; it also includes opportunities that increase their employability, professional identity, mastery, and prospects for advancement. Incorporating developmental rewards into compensation strategy may therefore be especially valuable in government organizations where direct pay differentiation is constrained by statutory frameworks.

The behavioral consequences of compensation further support a broader strategic approach. Compensation has been associated not only with satisfaction and performance but also with organizational citizenship behavior and turnover-related outcomes. Evidence indicates that compensation and organizational culture may influence citizenship behavior and, through it, employees' intention to leave the organization (15). A compensation model explicitly linked to organizational citizenship behavior has likewise been proposed in the public administration literature, emphasizing the capacity of compensation systems to stimulate voluntary behaviors that exceed formal job requirements (16). Such behaviors are particularly valuable in governmental organizations because public service frequently requires cooperation, knowledge sharing, responsiveness, and discretionary effort that cannot be completely regulated through job descriptions. A commitment-oriented compensation system should therefore reward not only task performance but also collaborative, ethical, innovative, and citizenship behaviors consistent with the organization's public mission.

The psychological and symbolic meanings attached to compensation are equally important. Compensation decisions communicate whose work is valued, which behaviors are legitimate, what the organization prioritizes, and how employees are positioned within the institutional hierarchy. Accordingly, poorly designed compensation systems may generate dysfunctional behavior even when they are technically compliant with regulations. Research concerning financial managers, for example, has shown that compensation relationships may interact with organizational identity in shaping behavior associated with earnings manipulation, illustrating that reward systems can produce complex behavioral responses depending on employees' identification with the organization (17). This finding underlines the importance of designing compensation mechanisms that are aligned with ethical norms and organizational identity. In a commitment-oriented framework, recognition, moral legitimacy, trust, autonomy, and identification with organizational objectives should complement material incentives so that employees are encouraged to pursue organizational goals without creating excessive instrumentalism or unintended behavioral distortions.

Strategic alignment is therefore a critical principle in compensation design. Strategic compensation requires consistency between reward practices, organizational goals, workforce characteristics, performance requirements, and the broader human resource architecture. Iranian research has already demonstrated the value of designing strategic compensation models tailored to organizational context rather than applying generic pay practices irrespective of strategic needs (18). At the international level, compensation governance has also become increasingly connected with broader institutional and strategic concerns. Human resource professionals participate in complex remuneration decisions shaped by institutional, social, and cognitive factors, indicating that compensation is governed through multiple organizational logics rather than through purely economic calculations

(19). Likewise, contemporary executive compensation research increasingly incorporates sustainability and environmental, social, and governance considerations, demonstrating that compensation can be deliberately linked to broader organizational values and strategic outcomes (20). CSR-linked compensation arrangements similarly illustrate the expanding tendency to connect remuneration with non-financial organizational objectives and governance expectations (21). Although these studies focus primarily on executive or corporate settings, they reinforce the broader principle that compensation systems increasingly function as strategic governance mechanisms rather than as isolated payroll arrangements.

Changes in technology also create new possibilities for commitment-oriented compensation. Digital human resource systems can increase the transparency, traceability, personalization, and analytical sophistication of compensation decisions. Digital platforms can facilitate real-time performance information, employee access to compensation data, analytical dashboards, individualized benefits, and systematic evaluation of the relationship between compensation and employee outcomes. In government organizations, where perceptions of opacity and procedural rigidity may weaken confidence in administrative systems, digitalization can help make compensation processes more transparent and evidence-based. Furthermore, technological transformation requires organizations to recognize digital competencies, innovative contributions, and participation in transformation projects as increasingly valuable forms of performance. Thus, a contemporary compensation model should incorporate not only traditional financial and welfare benefits but also mechanisms for rewarding innovation, digital literacy, knowledge contribution, and adaptive behavior.

At the same time, the conceptual meaning of "compensation" has broadened considerably across contemporary research fields, highlighting its general logic as a response to imbalance, loss, unmet need, or reciprocal obligation. For example, research on merger and acquisition compensation commitments demonstrates how formal compensation commitments can influence risk perceptions and subsequent organizational outcomes in financial markets (22). Research on workers' compensation legislation similarly shows that compensation arrangements operate within institutional and legal structures that can shape wider economic behavior, including entrepreneurial activity (23). In behavioral and psychological research, the notion of compensation has also been used to describe mechanisms through which individuals seek to offset unmet emotional or social needs; recent studies on problematic internet use and social compensation illustrate how compensatory processes may shape behavior when individuals experience deficits in other domains (24, 25). These studies address contexts that differ substantially from employee remuneration, yet collectively they underscore the broader principle that compensation is fundamentally relational and responsive: it reflects attempts to restore perceived balance, meet unmet needs, and influence future behavior. Within human resource management, this reinforces the need to understand compensation as a multidimensional response to employees' economic, social, developmental, and psychological expectations.

An effective commitment-oriented system must also be continuously evaluated rather than treated as a fixed administrative structure. Employee expectations, labor-market conditions, public regulations, fiscal constraints, organizational technologies, and strategic priorities evolve over time. A compensation system that once generated commitment may gradually lose motivational value if it fails to adapt to these changes. Therefore, feedback mechanisms, employee surveys, benchmarking, assessment of compensation effectiveness, and evidence-based policy revision should be incorporated into the compensation architecture. This learning orientation is particularly relevant for public organizations, where compensation reforms often involve multiple stakeholders and may produce

unintended consequences if they are not systematically monitored. Recent studies linking compensation to productivity, satisfaction, and retention reinforce the importance of evaluating actual behavioral outcomes rather than assuming that particular reward practices are effective merely because they are formally implemented (1, 2, 5).

Despite the growing literature, an important gap remains. Existing studies have often examined isolated dimensions of compensation, including pay satisfaction, organizational justice, retention, citizenship behavior, competence development, or specific financial rewards, whereas the requirements of Iranian government organizations call for a more integrated model. Previous Iranian studies have provided valuable compensation models for specific organizations, organizational attachment, strategic compensation, and different types of governmental organizations (7, 8, 10, 18), but the literature remains fragmented with respect to a comprehensive model explicitly organized around a commitment-oriented strategy. In addition, rapid changes in employee expectations, digitalization, generational diversity, ethical governance, competency requirements, and organizational learning create the need to reconsider compensation as an integrated system incorporating financial, developmental, spiritual and ethical, work-environment, psychological, technological, and learning dimensions. The importance of such integration is further supported by evidence connecting compensation with commitment, turnover intention, organizational citizenship, job satisfaction, and performance across different settings (3, 4, 6, 15). Accordingly, the development of a context-sensitive model can contribute both theoretically, by extending the conceptual boundaries of strategic compensation, and practically, by providing public-sector managers with a structured framework for aligning employee rewards with long-term organizational commitment.

Therefore, the aim of this study was to design and empirically validate a comprehensive compensation model based on a commitment-oriented strategy for Iranian government organizations.

Methods and Materials

Study Design and Participants

This study employed an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design to develop and validate a comprehensive compensation model based on a commitment-oriented strategy in Iranian government organizations. The overall philosophical foundation of the study was pragmatism, because the research was primarily problem-oriented and sought to integrate qualitative and quantitative evidence in order to produce a practically applicable model for improving compensation systems in the public sector. Within this overarching paradigm, the qualitative phase was primarily interpretive and constructivist in orientation and followed inductive reasoning, whereas the quantitative phase adopted a more positivist orientation and followed deductive reasoning for empirical validation of the model developed in the first phase. In terms of purpose, the study was applied and developmental, as it sought both to extend the conceptual understanding of commitment-oriented compensation and to provide an operational framework applicable to Iranian government organizations. The research had a cross-sectional time horizon because the data for each phase were collected within a defined period rather than longitudinally. The exploratory sequential design consisted of an initial qualitative phase involving literature review and thematic analysis, followed by a quantitative survey in which the dimensions, components, and indicators identified qualitatively were subjected to empirical assessment and model validation.

Participants in the qualitative phase consisted of university faculty members and experienced executives with expertise in public administration, human resource management, and compensation management. Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure that informants possessed adequate theoretical knowledge and practical experience related to the research problem. Eligibility criteria included being an executive manager with at least 15 years of professional experience, or being a university faculty member in public administration or human resource management holding the academic rank of assistant professor or higher, together with relevant scholarly publications, books, university teaching experience, or professional expertise in public-sector and human resource management. Data collection continued until theoretical saturation was achieved. Saturation was reached at the sixteenth interview, when the interviews produced recurrent concepts and themes and no substantively new information emerged. Accordingly, the final qualitative sample comprised 16 participants, including both academics and executive managers. Their professional experience ranged approximately from 18 to 31 years, and most held doctoral degrees, while several executive participants held master's degrees. This combination of academic and managerial experts was intended to provide both conceptual and practice-based perspectives on the design of a commitment-oriented compensation system.

The quantitative phase was conducted to test and validate the model generated during the qualitative phase. The target population consisted of deputies and managers employed in the Tehran Province Agricultural Jihad Organization during the study period corresponding to 2024–2026. The total population was estimated at 600 individuals. The required sample size was calculated using Cochran's finite-population formula with a 95% confidence level, a margin of error of .05, and maximum population variability, with $p=.50$ and $q=.50$. Based on these parameters, the minimum required sample size was 234 respondents, which was also consistent with the corresponding recommendation of the Krejcie and Morgan sample-size table. Participants were selected through simple random sampling so that every eligible member of the population had an equal probability of inclusion. Each member of the population was assigned a unique three-digit identification code ranging from 001 to 600, and random numbers were subsequently used to identify the 234 individuals included in the final sample. This probabilistic procedure was adopted to reduce selection bias and enhance the representativeness of the quantitative sample.

Data Collection Tools

Qualitative data were collected through a combination of documentary review and semi-structured expert interviews. The documentary component involved reviewing relevant domestic and international journal articles, conference proceedings, academic books, and other scholarly sources concerning compensation management, strategic human resource management, employee commitment, and public-sector compensation systems. The empirical qualitative data were collected through individual semi-structured interviews designed to elicit participants' interpretations, experiences, and recommendations regarding commitment-oriented compensation in Iranian government organizations. Before each interview, the purpose, objectives, research questions, and general research process were explained to the participant, and the participant was informed that the information obtained would be used exclusively for research purposes. The interview guide consisted of broad, open-ended questions concerning the meaning of compensation from a commitment-oriented strategic perspective, the actions required to establish such a compensation system in government organizations, its principal dimensions and components, and the most important observable indicators through which the proposed model could be operationalized. Because

the interviews were semi-structured, additional probing questions were posed whenever clarification, elaboration, or deeper exploration of a particular response was required. Interviews generally lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and continued until theoretical saturation was reached. With participants' permission, the interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim. Participants were provided with an opportunity to clarify or supplement their statements at the end of the interview, and the resulting transcripts were subsequently reviewed to identify ambiguities and ensure consistency with participants' intended meanings. Member checking was also conducted by asking participants to review their interview transcripts or the researcher's interpretation of their statements before the final coding process.

The trustworthiness of the qualitative phase was evaluated using the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was enhanced through repeated review of the interview questions, prolonged engagement with the research topic, repeated examination of the transcripts and codes, collection of data until saturation, and continuous verification of the researcher's interpretations with participants. Transferability was supported by purposive selection of information-rich participants and detailed examination of perspectives obtained from both academic and executive experts. Dependability was strengthened through adherence to a systematic qualitative procedure and examination of the participants' current and previous professional experiences relevant to the research topic. Confirmability was addressed by reviewing interview transcripts and interpretations with other knowledgeable individuals and by obtaining expert confirmation of the summarized conceptual model. Three experts were specifically consulted to review and refine the formulated model. Coding stability was additionally examined through a test–retest procedure in which three interviews were independently recoded by the researcher after a ten-day interval. The overall test–retest reliability coefficient was .86, exceeding the minimum acceptable value of .70. Inter-coding agreement was also evaluated using Cohen's kappa, which yielded a coefficient of .74, indicating substantial agreement and supporting the reliability of the qualitative coding process.

For the quantitative phase, data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire derived directly from the findings of the qualitative phase. The instrument was designed to operationalize the dimensions, components, and indicators identified through thematic analysis and consisted of 51 substantive items. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1, representing a very low level, to 5, representing a very high level. The questionnaire covered seven broad dimensions and 17 components. The employee material benefits dimension comprised basic salary and benefits, performance-based and motivational rewards, and welfare and service benefits. The professional development and growth dimension comprised training and skill development, career advancement, and competency development. The spiritual and ethical values dimension incorporated spirituality at work and organizational culture and ethics. The work environment dimension covered administrative justice and job security, participation and communication, and work–life balance. The psychological dimension addressed appreciation and recognition as well as autonomy and organizational trust. The technology- and transformation-oriented dimension included digitalization of compensation and innovation in human resource management. Finally, the continuous learning dimension incorporated evaluation of compensation effectiveness and continuous learning and improvement. Each component was represented by three questionnaire items, yielding the 51-item instrument used for quantitative model validation.

The face and content validity of the questionnaire were assessed before full-scale data collection. Fifteen experts evaluated the relevance and necessity of the questionnaire items, and the content validity ratio was calculated for each item. The obtained CVR coefficients for the retained items exceeded the critical value of .49 applicable to a

15-member expert panel, supporting the adequacy of the questionnaire's content validity. The wording, clarity, comprehensibility, and correspondence of the items with the qualitative findings were also examined through expert review and preliminary administration of the questionnaire. A pilot study involving 30 respondents from the target population was subsequently undertaken to identify potential ambiguities and assess internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the individual components ranged from .764 to .874, and all coefficients exceeded the conventional threshold of .70. Specifically, satisfactory reliability was obtained for basic salary and benefits, performance-based and motivational rewards, welfare benefits, training and skill development, career advancement, competency development, workplace spirituality, organizational culture and ethics, administrative justice and job security, participation and communication, work–life balance, appreciation and recognition, autonomy and organizational trust, compensation digitalization, human resource innovation, evaluation of compensation effectiveness, and continuous learning and improvement. Construct validity was subsequently examined in the main quantitative analysis through confirmatory measurement assessment, including examination of factor loadings and convergent validity.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify and organize recurring patterns of meaning within the interview material and to transform expert perspectives into an integrated compensation model. The analysis followed an iterative and recursive process incorporating the principles of thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke together with the thematic-network logic proposed by Attride-Stirling. Initially, the interview transcripts were read repeatedly to achieve immersion in the data and obtain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives. Meaningful segments were then identified and assigned initial codes representing relevant ideas, experiences, recommendations, and characteristics of commitment-oriented compensation. After the entire dataset had been coded, conceptually related codes were compared, grouped, refined, and organized into preliminary themes. The emerging themes were repeatedly reviewed against both the coded excerpts and the complete dataset to determine their internal coherence and conceptual distinctiveness. Through this iterative process, basic themes representing the most specific concepts were clustered into organizing themes, which in turn were integrated into broader global themes reflecting the principal dimensions of the proposed compensation model. The themes were subsequently defined and named, and their conceptual relationships were examined in order to construct the final framework. The analysis therefore proceeded from familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing and refining themes, defining and naming themes, and finally developing an analytical narrative and conceptual model. The resulting qualitative structure provided the basis for developing the quantitative questionnaire and specifying the model examined in the second phase.

Quantitative data analysis consisted of preliminary statistical examination, assessment of the measurement properties of the researcher-developed instrument, and structural validation of the proposed model. Data were initially screened for completeness and suitability for multivariate analysis. Distributional characteristics were examined, and the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was employed as a supplementary assessment of normality. Prior to factor analysis, the adequacy of the correlation structure and sample for factorial procedures was assessed using the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity. Reliability was examined primarily through Cronbach's alpha coefficients, while construct validity was assessed through confirmatory factor analysis by examining factor loadings and indicators of convergent validity. The measurement model was evaluated

to determine whether the observed questionnaire items adequately represented the latent components and broader dimensions extracted in the qualitative phase.

Structural equation modeling was subsequently employed to test and validate the final compensation model. The structural analysis examined the relationships among the latent dimensions and assessed the empirical compatibility of the theoretically formulated model with the quantitative data. SmartPLS was used for confirmatory assessment and structural model estimation. The analysis incorporated evaluation of the measurement model before interpretation of structural relationships so that the reliability and validity of the constructs were established prior to examining the proposed model. Factor loadings, internal consistency, convergent validity, and relevant structural coefficients were therefore considered in the model-validation process. This sequential integration of qualitative thematic analysis and quantitative structural modeling enabled the dimensions, components, and indicators initially generated from expert knowledge to be systematically evaluated using data obtained from government-sector managers and deputies, thereby providing both conceptual grounding and empirical validation for the proposed commitment-oriented compensation model.

Findings and Results

The qualitative analysis began with repeated examination of the interview transcripts and the identification of initial codes. After the initial coding stage, related codes were compared, grouped, and organized into potential themes. Basic themes representing the most specific concepts in the interview data were progressively integrated into organizing themes and, subsequently, into global themes representing the principal dimensions of the proposed compensation model. The iterative comparison of codes and themes resulted in a hierarchical structure comprising seven global themes, 17 organizing themes, and 51 basic themes. As presented in Table 1, the seven dimensions were employee material benefits, professional development and growth, spiritual and ethical values, work environment, psychological compensation, technology- and transformation-oriented compensation, and continuous learning. These dimensions collectively represented the qualitative foundation of the commitment-oriented compensation model for Iranian government organizations.

Table 1. Qualitative Structure of the Commitment-Oriented Compensation Model

Global Theme/Dimension	Organizing Theme/Component	No.	Basic Theme/Indicator
Employee Material Benefits	Basic Salary and Benefits	1	Alignment of salaries with the Civil Service Management Law
		2	Internal equity among comparable jobs
		3	Regular salary increases based on performance and inflation
	Performance-Based and Motivational Rewards	4	Pay based on individual performance and competence
		5	Rewards for innovation and productivity
		6	Group rewards for achievement of organizational objectives
	Welfare and Service Benefits	7	Provision of insurance and supplementary healthcare services
		8	Financial and welfare facilities, including loans, housing, and marriage assistance
		9	Retirement and long-term savings programs
Professional Development and Growth	Training and Skill Development	10	Provision of job-relevant training programs
		11	Support for continuing education and formal learning
		12	Training in soft skills and leadership
	Career Advancement	13	Transparency of career advancement pathways

		14	Existence of a succession-planning system
		15	Competency-based promotion in technical and managerial positions
	Competency Development	16	Regular competency assessment
		17	On-the-job learning
		18	Issuance of occupational competency certificates
Spiritual and Ethical Values	Workplace Spirituality	19	Alignment of individual goals with national and organizational missions
		20	Recognition of ethical and committed behaviors
		21	Creation of an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust
	Organizational Culture and Ethics	22	Training in ethical workplace behavior
		23	Establishment of ethical accountability mechanisms
		24	Transparency and fairness in decision-making
Work Environment	Administrative Justice and Job Security	25	Employment stability and transparent administrative regulations
		26	Organizational support for employees during crises
		27	Fair handling of violations and complaints
	Participation and Communication	28	Employee participation in work-related decisions
		29	Open communication channels with managers
		30	Suggestion systems and dialogue meetings
	Work–Life Balance	31	Flexibility in working hours and work location
		32	Family support through leave and benefits
		33	Organizational cultural and recreational programs
Psychological Compensation	Appreciation and Recognition	34	Formal recognition system for superior performance
		35	Immediate and informal recognition by managers
		36	Assignment of honorary responsibilities to outstanding employees
	Autonomy and Organizational Trust	37	Genuine delegation of authority
		38	Participation in key decision-making
		39	Recognition of employees as professional experts
Technology- and Transformation-Oriented Compensation	Digitalization of Compensation	40	Use of intelligent systems for payment and evaluation
		41	Data transparency in salaries and benefits
		42	Analytical reporting and management dashboards
	Human Resource Innovation	43	Encouragement of technology-oriented ideas
		44	Participation in digital transformation projects
		45	Digital literacy and innovative-thinking training
Continuous Learning	Evaluation of Compensation Effectiveness	46	Assessment of the effects of compensation on commitment and performance
		47	Calculation of human capital return on investment
		48	Comparison with national and organizational benchmarks
	Continuous Learning and Improvement	49	Regular employee feedback regarding the compensation system
		50	Modification of compensation policies based on feedback data
		51	Double-loop learning in compensation decision-making

The seven global themes demonstrated that commitment-oriented compensation extended considerably beyond direct monetary payments. Although employee material benefits constituted a fundamental dimension, the qualitative findings also emphasized developmental opportunities, ethical and spiritual values, employment conditions, psychological recognition and empowerment, technological transformation, and systematic evaluation and learning. Accordingly, the qualitative phase conceptualized compensation as an integrated system through which financial, developmental, relational, psychological, technological, and learning mechanisms jointly contribute to sustained employee commitment.

Before examining the factorial structure of the questionnaire, the distributional characteristics of the seven dimensions were evaluated using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. As shown in Table 2, the significance level for all seven dimensions was below .05, indicating statistically significant departures from normality. The overall suitability of the dataset for factor analysis was subsequently examined using the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity. The overall KMO value was .877, exceeding the recommended threshold of .70, while Bartlett's test was statistically significant, $\chi^2=9724.885$, $df=1275$, $p<.001$. These results indicated adequate common variance among the questionnaire items and supported the appropriateness of proceeding with factor analysis.

Table 2. Distributional Assessment and Overall Sampling Adequacy

Analysis	Variable/Index	Value	Decision
Kolmogorov–Smirnov	Employee Material Benefits	$p<.001$	Non-normal
Kolmogorov–Smirnov	Professional Development and Growth	$p<.001$	Non-normal
Kolmogorov–Smirnov	Spiritual and Ethical Values	$p<.001$	Non-normal
Kolmogorov–Smirnov	Work Environment	$p<.001$	Non-normal
Kolmogorov–Smirnov	Psychological Compensation	$p<.001$	Non-normal
Kolmogorov–Smirnov	Technology- and Transformation-Oriented Compensation	$p<.001$	Non-normal
Kolmogorov–Smirnov	Continuous Learning	$p<.001$	Non-normal
KMO	Overall sampling adequacy	.877	Adequate
Bartlett's test	χ^2	9724.885	Significant
Bartlett's test	df	1275	—
Bartlett's test	p	<.001	Factor analysis supported

Exploratory factor analysis was then conducted separately for the seven dimensions. The results consistently supported the qualitative structure extracted from the interviews. For employee material benefits, the KMO coefficient was .770 and Bartlett's test was significant, $\chi^2=768.955$, $df=36$, $p<.001$. Three factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1 were retained. The first factor had an eigenvalue of 2.74 and accounted for 30.41% of the variance, the second had an eigenvalue of 1.87 and accounted for 20.83%, and the third had an eigenvalue of 1.43 and accounted for 15.93%. Together, these factors explained 67.18% of the variance. Items 1–3 loaded on basic salary and benefits with loadings of .664, .667, and .798; items 4–6 loaded on performance-based and motivational rewards with loadings of .854, .836, and .772; and items 7–9 loaded on welfare and service benefits with loadings of .751, .925, and .921.

For professional development and growth, the KMO coefficient was .766 and Bartlett's test was significant, $\chi^2=980.265$, $df=36$, $p<.001$. Three factors were retained, with eigenvalues of 3.30, 1.38, and 1.16. The factors accounted for 36.72%, 15.32%, and 12.86% of the variance, respectively, producing a cumulative explained variance of 64.91%. Items 10–12 loaded on training and skill development at .601, .937, and .796; items 13–15 loaded on career advancement at .705, .941, and .557; and items 16–18 loaded on competency development at .739, .808, and .798.

The spiritual and ethical values dimension yielded a KMO value of .772 and a significant Bartlett statistic, $\chi^2=477.583$, $df=15$, $p<.001$. Two factors were retained. The first factor had an eigenvalue of 2.31 and explained 38.51% of the variance, whereas the second had an eigenvalue of 1.75 and explained 29.17%, resulting in a cumulative explained variance of 67.68%. Items 19–21 represented workplace spirituality, with loadings of .881, .846, and .743, whereas items 22–24 represented organizational culture and ethics, with loadings of .825, .822, and .781.

For the work environment dimension, the KMO coefficient was .763 and Bartlett's test was significant, $\chi^2=638.762$, $df=36$, $p<.001$. Three factors were extracted. Their eigenvalues were 3.31, 1.46, and 1.09, and together they accounted for 61.87% of the total variance. The respective proportions of explained variance after extraction were 37.02%, 12.73%, and 12.12%. Items 25–27 formed the administrative justice and job security factor, with loadings of .658, .812, and .743; items 28–30 represented participation and communication, with loadings of .760, .680, and .639; and items 31–33 represented work–life balance, with loadings of .842, .713, and .842.

The psychological compensation dimension produced a KMO coefficient of .770 and a significant Bartlett statistic, $\chi^2=384.084$, $df=15$, $p<.001$. Two factors were retained, explaining 40.06% and 21.83% of the variance, respectively, and 61.90% cumulatively. Items 34–36 loaded on appreciation and recognition at .686, .796, and .842, while items 37–39 loaded on autonomy and organizational trust at .834, .829, and .515.

The technology- and transformation-oriented dimension produced a KMO coefficient of .737 and a significant Bartlett statistic, $\chi^2=575.032$, $df=15$, $p<.001$. Two factors with eigenvalues of 2.41 and 1.68 were identified, accounting for 40.10% and 27.96% of the variance, respectively, and 68.06% cumulatively. Items 40–42 represented digitalization of compensation, with loadings of .667, .826, and .844, whereas items 43–45 represented human resource innovation, with loadings of .646, .944, and .933.

Finally, continuous learning demonstrated a KMO coefficient of .713 and a significant Bartlett statistic, $\chi^2=372.293$, $df=15$, $p<.001$. Two factors with eigenvalues of 2.51 and 1.19 were retained. They accounted for 41.76% and 19.81% of the variance, respectively, yielding cumulative explained variance of 61.57%. Items 46–48 loaded on evaluation of compensation effectiveness at .751, .830, and .855, whereas items 49–51 loaded on continuous learning and improvement at .712, .833, and .585. The principal exploratory factor analysis results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of Exploratory Factor Analysis

Dimension	KMO	Bartlett χ^2	df	Extracted Factors	Eigenvalues	Variance Explained (%)
Employee Material Benefits	.770	768.955	36	3	2.74, 1.87, 1.43	67.18
Professional Development and Growth	.766	980.265	36	3	3.30, 1.38, 1.16	64.91
Spiritual and Ethical Values	.772	477.583	15	2	2.31, 1.75	67.68
Work Environment	.763	638.762	36	3	3.31, 1.46, 1.09	61.87
Psychological Compensation	.770	384.084	15	2	2.31, 1.75	61.90
Technology- and Transformation-Oriented Compensation	.737	575.032	15	2	2.41, 1.68	68.06
Continuous Learning	.713	372.293	15	2	2.51, 1.19	61.57

The rotated factor matrices therefore reproduced the 17-component structure initially obtained from the qualitative phase. All 51 items displayed loadings exceeding .50 on their intended factors. The lowest loading was .515 for item 39, while several items demonstrated particularly strong factor saturation, including item 14 (.941),

item 44 (.944), item 11 (.937), item 45 (.933), item 8 (.925), and item 9 (.921). The complete allocation of questionnaire items to the empirically extracted components is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Rotated Factor Loadings and Empirically Confirmed Components

Dimension	Component	Items	Factor Loadings
Employee Material Benefits	Basic Salary and Benefits	1, 2, 3	.664, .667, .798
	Performance-Based and Motivational Rewards	4, 5, 6	.854, .836, .772
	Welfare and Service Benefits	7, 8, 9	.751, .925, .921
Professional Development and Growth	Training and Skill Development	10, 11, 12	.601, .937, .796
	Career Advancement	13, 14, 15	.705, .941, .557
	Competency Development	16, 17, 18	.739, .808, .798
Spiritual and Ethical Values	Workplace Spirituality	19, 20, 21	.881, .846, .743
	Organizational Culture and Ethics	22, 23, 24	.825, .822, .781
Work Environment	Administrative Justice and Job Security	25, 26, 27	.658, .812, .743
	Participation and Communication	28, 29, 30	.760, .680, .639
	Work–Life Balance	31, 32, 33	.842, .713, .842
Psychological Compensation	Appreciation and Recognition	34, 35, 36	.686, .796, .842
	Autonomy and Organizational Trust	37, 38, 39	.834, .829, .515
Technology- and Transformation-Oriented Compensation	Digitalization of Compensation	40, 41, 42	.667, .826, .844
	Human Resource Innovation	43, 44, 45	.646, .944, .933
Continuous Learning	Evaluation of Compensation Effectiveness	46, 47, 48	.751, .830, .855
	Continuous Learning and Improvement	49, 50, 51	.712, .833, .585

After the exploratory factor structure had been established, the measurement model was evaluated through partial least squares structural equation modeling. Examination of the standardized estimation model and the corresponding significance coefficients showed that all observed indicators had standardized factor loadings greater

than .50 and all associated significance statistics exceeded 1.96. Consequently, none of the 51 indicators was removed from the measurement model.

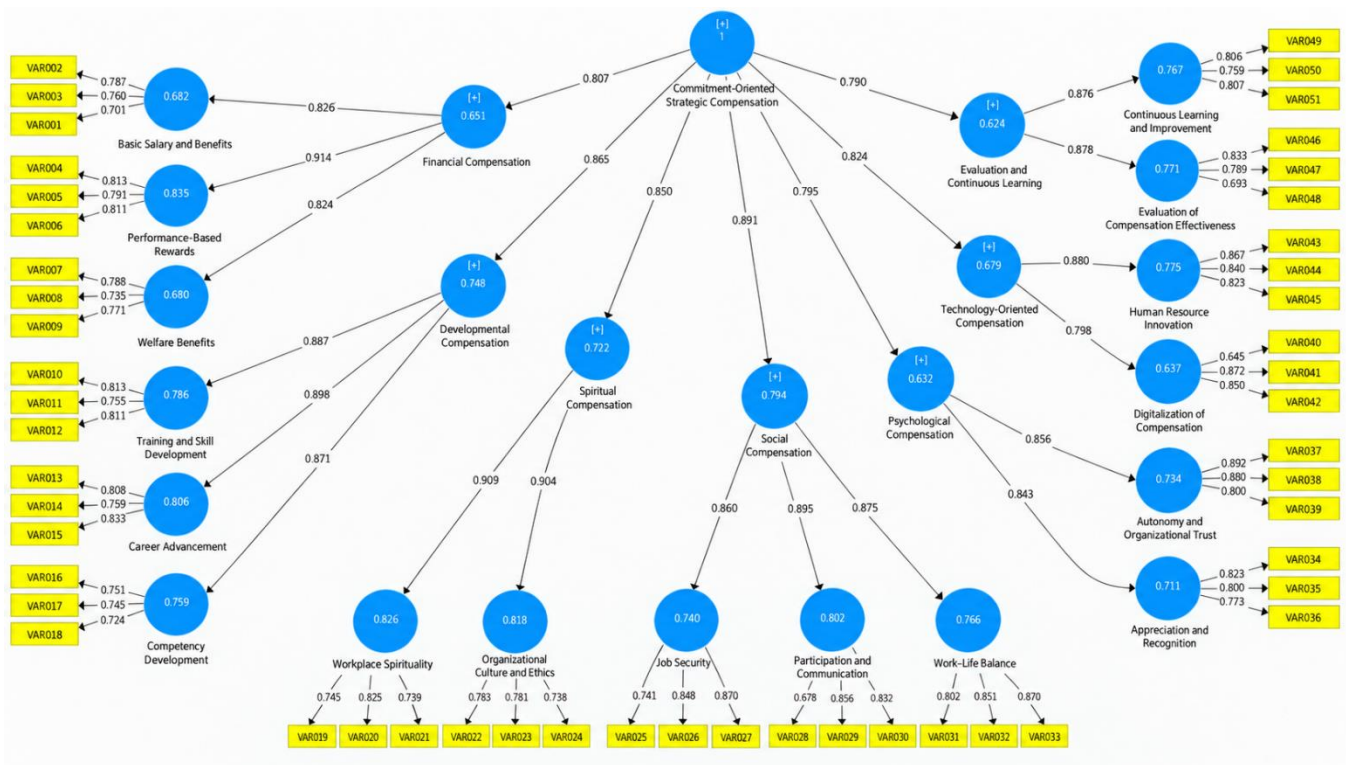


Figure 1. Standardized Estimation Coefficients of the Commitment-Oriented Compensation Model

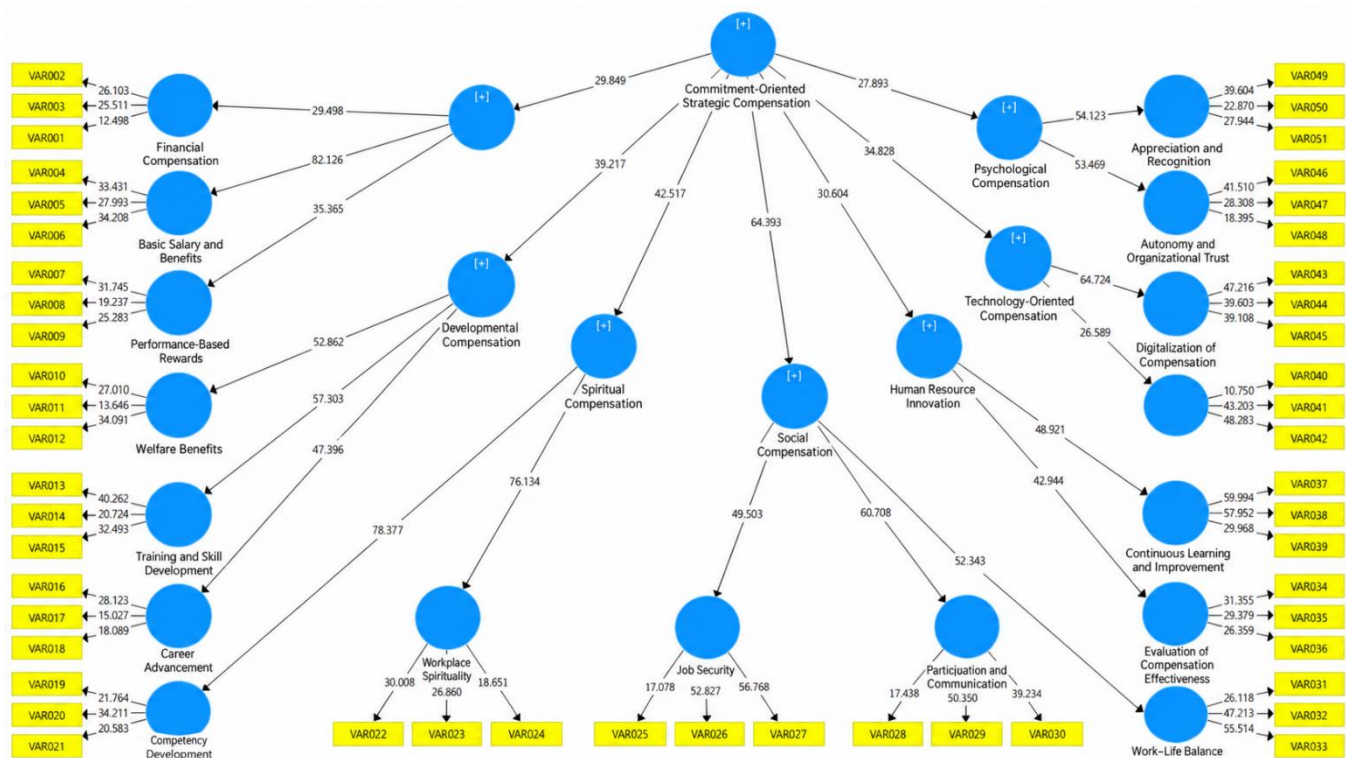


Figure 2. Significance Coefficients of the Measurement Model for Commitment-Oriented Compensation

At the higher-order level, all seven dimensions demonstrated strong and statistically significant relationships with the overarching commitment-oriented compensation construct. Work environment showed the strongest

standardized coefficient, $\beta=.891$, $t=64.393$, followed by professional development and growth, $\beta=.865$, $t=39.217$, spiritual and ethical values, $\beta=.850$, $t=42.517$, technology- and transformation-oriented compensation, $\beta=.824$, $t=34.828$, employee material benefits, $\beta=.807$, $t=29.849$, psychological compensation, $\beta=.795$, $t=30.604$, and continuous learning, $\beta=.790$, $t=27.893$. Thus, all seven qualitative dimensions were empirically confirmed in the quantitative phase. The standardized coefficients and significance statistics are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Confirmatory Assessment of the Higher-Order Compensation Dimensions

Dimension	Standardized Coefficient (β)	t	Result
Employee Material Benefits	.807	29.849	Confirmed
Professional Development and Growth	.865	39.217	Confirmed
Spiritual and Ethical Values	.850	42.517	Confirmed
Work Environment	.891	64.393	Confirmed
Psychological Compensation	.795	30.604	Confirmed
Technology- and Transformation-Oriented Compensation	.824	34.828	Confirmed
Continuous Learning	.790	27.893	Confirmed

The reliability and convergent validity of the measurement model were subsequently examined. Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from .73 to .84, and all exceeded the minimum acceptable level of .70. Composite reliability coefficients ranged from .71 to .90 and likewise exceeded .70, supporting satisfactory internal consistency. The average variance extracted values ranged from .52 to .54, exceeding the recommended threshold of .50 for all seven constructs. Communality coefficients were identical to the reported AVE values and were also greater than .50. Moreover, composite reliability exceeded AVE for every construct. These findings supported adequate internal consistency and convergent validity. The coefficients of determination ranged from .62 to .79, indicating substantial explanatory power for the endogenous dimensions. Work environment demonstrated the highest R^2 value (.79), followed by professional development and growth (.75), spiritual and ethical values (.72), technology- and transformation-oriented compensation (.68), employee material benefits (.65), psychological compensation (.63), and continuous learning (.62). The mean R^2 across the seven dimensions was approximately .69.

Table 6. Reliability, Convergent Validity, and Explained Variance of the Measurement Model

Dimension	AVE	Composite Reliability	R^2	Cronbach's α	Communality
Employee Material Benefits	.53	.84	.65	.75	.53
Professional Development and Growth	.52	.90	.75	.81	.52
Spiritual and Ethical Values	.54	.81	.72	.78	.54
Work Environment	.52	.87	.79	.76	.52
Psychological Compensation	.54	.81	.63	.73	.54
Technology- and Transformation-Oriented Compensation	.53	.73	.68	.81	.53
Continuous Learning	.52	.71	.62	.84	.52

Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. As presented in Table 7, the square root of the AVE for each construct, shown on the diagonal, was greater than its correlations with the other constructs. The diagonal coefficients ranged from .72 to .73, whereas the interconstruct correlations ranged from .323 to .661. The highest observed interconstruct correlation was between work environment and psychological compensation, $r=.661$, which remained below the square roots of the AVE for both constructs. Therefore, the seven dimensions demonstrated adequate empirical distinctiveness and discriminant validity.

Table 7. Discriminant Validity Based on the Fornell–Larcker Criterion

Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Employee Material Benefits	.73						
Professional Development and Growth	.521	.72					
Spiritual and Ethical Values	.424	.637	.73				
Work Environment	.392	.354	.612	.73			
Psychological Compensation	.376	.373	.504	.661	.73		
Technology- and Transformation-Oriented Compensation	.353	.537	.491	.362	.414	.73	
Continuous Learning	.381	.502	.512	.323	.386	.341	.72

The overall fit of the structural model was finally assessed using the global goodness-of-fit index. The average communality across the seven constructs was .53 and the average R^2 was .69. Applying these values to the GOF calculation produced a value of .60. Because this coefficient was substantially above the conventional criterion of .35 for strong model fit, the overall model demonstrated a very satisfactory level of global fit. Taken together, the measurement and structural results supported the reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, explanatory power, and overall adequacy of the proposed model. The qualitative and quantitative findings therefore converged on a seven-dimensional, 17-component, and 51-indicator structure for commitment-oriented compensation in Iranian government organizations.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study was conducted to design and empirically validate a comprehensive compensation model based on a commitment-oriented strategy for Iranian government organizations. The findings showed that the proposed model comprised seven major dimensions: employee material benefits, professional development and growth, spiritual and ethical values, work environment, psychological compensation, technology- and transformation-oriented compensation, and continuous learning. These dimensions were represented by 17 components and 51 indicators. The qualitative findings therefore suggest that compensation in government organizations should not be conceptualized merely as salary and direct benefits; rather, it should be understood as an integrated system in which financial rewards, developmental opportunities, ethical and relational considerations, psychological recognition, technological mechanisms, workplace conditions, and continuous evaluation jointly shape employees' perceptions of the employment relationship. This multidimensional interpretation is consistent with contemporary compensation literature, which increasingly emphasizes the strategic, behavioral, and relational consequences of compensation rather than limiting it to direct monetary exchange (4, 5, 9).

The first dimension identified in the model was employee material benefits, including basic salary and benefits, performance-based and motivational rewards, and welfare and service benefits. The confirmatory results showed that this dimension was strongly associated with the higher-order commitment-oriented compensation construct, with a standardized coefficient of .807 and a highly significant t-value. This result indicates that material compensation remains an essential foundation of employee commitment, even within a broader total-reward framework. Employees are unlikely to develop durable commitment if they perceive their salaries as inequitable, insufficient, inconsistent with inflation or job demands, or disconnected from performance. Previous studies similarly indicate that compensation satisfaction is associated with stronger organizational commitment and lower turnover intentions (4, 5). The present finding also agrees with studies demonstrating positive relationships between compensation and productivity, job satisfaction, and citizenship-related outcomes (1, 3, 15). In the context of Iranian government organizations, this result is especially important because compensation is often regulated through

formal salary structures, and employees may closely compare their rewards with statutory standards, comparable occupations, and other public-sector groups.

The second dimension, professional development and growth, produced a standardized coefficient of .865, making it one of the strongest dimensions in the model. Its components included training and skill development, career advancement, and competency development. This finding suggests that employees interpret access to learning and career progression as an important form of compensation because such opportunities increase future employability, professional identity, status, and long-term organizational value. The result is consistent with competency-based human resource management models that emphasize the integration of training, succession planning, and career development with organizational sustainability (13). It also supports evidence that sustainable human resource performance depends on the organization's ability to develop and retain employee capabilities (14). From a commitment-oriented perspective, developmental rewards can function as signals that the organization is willing to invest in employees over the long term, thereby strengthening reciprocal attachment. This interpretation also aligns with research on compensation systems designed specifically for employee retention and organizational attachment (7, 8).

The third dimension, spiritual and ethical values, was also strongly confirmed, with a standardized coefficient of .850. This dimension included workplace spirituality as well as organizational culture and ethics. The result highlights that employees' commitment may be influenced by whether they perceive their work as meaningful, aligned with organizational and national missions, and embedded within an ethical environment characterized by respect, transparency, and accountability. This is particularly salient in government organizations, where public service values and ethical obligations form an important part of organizational legitimacy. The finding is compatible with the broader literature suggesting that commitment is strengthened when employees identify with organizational values and perceive their employment relationship as meaningful rather than purely transactional (9). It is also consistent with evidence showing that organizational identity can shape the behavioral consequences of compensation arrangements (17). Accordingly, compensation systems that recognize ethical behavior and public-service commitment may reinforce employees' identification with the organization more effectively than systems centered exclusively on financial outcomes.

Among all dimensions, work environment had the strongest standardized coefficient, $\beta = .891$, with the highest t-value. This dimension incorporated administrative justice and job security, participation and communication, and work-life balance. The magnitude of this coefficient suggests that employees' experience of the employment environment may be even more important than the direct monetary value of compensation in shaping commitment-oriented perceptions. A fair and secure workplace can transform compensation from a contractual payment mechanism into a broader system of organizational support. The importance of administrative justice is consistent with research demonstrating that perceptions of justice in compensation are associated with employees' attitudes and broader positive organizational outcomes (11). Similarly, the importance of participation, communication, and work-life arrangements reflects the changing expectations of contemporary employees, particularly across different generational groups (12). Employees may therefore assess compensation not only according to what they receive financially, but also according to whether the organization provides stability, voice, flexibility, and fair treatment. These factors are especially relevant to government organizations, where formal bureaucratic procedures can either strengthen perceptions of procedural justice or, when poorly implemented, produce rigidity and disengagement.

The psychological compensation dimension was confirmed with a standardized coefficient of .795 and comprised appreciation and recognition together with autonomy and organizational trust. Although its coefficient was slightly lower than those of work environment or professional development, it remained strong and statistically significant. This finding indicates that recognition and empowerment function as meaningful non-financial rewards. Employees who are trusted, publicly recognized, given real decision authority, and treated as sources of expertise may perceive the organization as valuing their contribution, thereby increasing psychological attachment. This conclusion is consistent with studies showing that compensation affects employee behavior partly through organizational commitment and citizenship-related mechanisms (6, 16). It also supports the broader argument that compensation should not be limited to direct economic inducements because employees respond to symbolic, relational, and identity-based signals embedded in reward systems. Recognition and autonomy may therefore be particularly useful in public organizations where financial differentiation is constrained by legal and administrative rules.

The technology- and transformation-oriented dimension also received strong empirical support, with a standardized coefficient of .824. It comprised digitalization of compensation and innovation in human resource management. This finding reflects the growing role of digital systems in increasing transparency, accuracy, traceability, and analytical capacity in compensation management. Digitalized compensation platforms can reduce ambiguity, provide employees with clearer access to pay-related information, and allow managers to evaluate compensation effectiveness more systematically. At the same time, rewarding participation in digital transformation and encouraging technological ideas may align employee behavior with broader organizational modernization efforts. The result is compatible with the wider development of strategically linked compensation systems, in which rewards increasingly reflect organizational priorities beyond traditional financial performance (20, 21). Although these studies focus mainly on executive compensation and governance, they support the underlying principle that reward systems can be deliberately connected to transformation, sustainability, and strategic objectives.

The continuous learning dimension was confirmed with a standardized coefficient of .790 and included evaluation of compensation effectiveness and continuous learning and improvement. This result indicates that commitment-oriented compensation should be treated as an adaptive system rather than a fixed administrative arrangement. Employee expectations, economic conditions, workforce composition, technology, and organizational priorities continually change; consequently, compensation policies require periodic assessment and revision. The inclusion of employee feedback, human-capital return indicators, benchmarking, and double-loop learning suggests that effective compensation governance depends on organizational capacity to evaluate not only whether policies are implemented, but also whether the assumptions underlying those policies remain appropriate. This finding is particularly relevant in light of studies showing that compensation effects vary according to context, workforce characteristics, and organizational conditions (12, 19). It also corresponds with the strategic compensation perspective advanced in Iranian organizational research, which emphasizes the need for compensation systems to fit organizational strategy rather than remain administratively static (18).

The exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses further supported the validity of the proposed structure. All 51 indicators demonstrated acceptable factor loadings, and none required elimination from the model. The exploratory factor analyses reproduced the theoretically expected 17-component configuration, while the overall KMO coefficient of .877 and significant Bartlett test confirmed the suitability of the dataset for factor analysis. The seven dimensions explained substantial proportions of their respective variances, ranging from approximately 61.57% to 68.06%. These results indicate that the components extracted from the qualitative phase were not merely

conceptually plausible but were also empirically distinguishable within the quantitative data. The convergence between the qualitative thematic structure and the quantitative factor solution strengthens confidence in the internal coherence of the model.

The measurement model also demonstrated acceptable reliability and validity. Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from .73 to .84, composite reliability coefficients ranged from .71 to .90, and all AVE values exceeded .50. The Fornell–Larcker criterion indicated acceptable discriminant validity, as the square root of AVE for each construct was greater than its correlations with other constructs. Moreover, the R^2 values ranged from .62 to .79, with an average of approximately .69, indicating substantial explanatory power. The global GOF value of .60 further indicated strong overall model fit. Together, these findings suggest that the seven-dimensional structure is not only theoretically meaningful but statistically robust. This result supports previous calls for more integrated compensation models in government and organizational settings rather than fragmented analyses of individual pay practices (8, 10, 18).

The model also contributes to the commitment literature by integrating economic and non-economic forms of exchange. Previous research has demonstrated that compensation can influence commitment, turnover intention, citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, and performance (4-6, 15). The present study extends these findings by showing that a commitment-oriented compensation architecture in the Iranian public sector should combine material security with career development, ethical meaning, workplace justice, recognition, trust, digital transformation, and institutional learning. In this respect, the proposed model moves beyond a conventional pay-and-benefits framework and offers a more comprehensive understanding of compensation as a strategic employment relationship. This broader conceptualization is also compatible with contemporary developments in compensation governance, where reward systems increasingly reflect institutional expectations, sustainability concerns, and strategic objectives (19-21).

The findings may also be interpreted through the broader compensatory logic evident in recent research outside conventional human resource management. Compensation mechanisms often function to restore balance, respond to unmet needs, or influence future behavior. For example, compensation commitments in financial transactions can shape risk-related outcomes (22), and workers' compensation laws can have broader behavioral and economic consequences beyond their immediate protective purpose (23). Similarly, research on psychological and social compensation shows that compensatory processes can emerge when individuals seek alternatives for unmet emotional or relational needs (24, 25). Although these contexts differ markedly from employee compensation, they support the conceptual interpretation that compensation is fundamentally relational. In organizational settings, employees continuously compare what they contribute with what they receive economically, developmentally, socially, and psychologically. A commitment-oriented compensation system therefore seeks to maintain this perceived balance through multiple complementary forms of organizational support.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the quantitative phase was conducted among deputies and managers in the Tehran Province Agricultural Jihad Organization, and therefore the empirical validation reflects the institutional, occupational, and administrative characteristics of a specific governmental setting. Generalization to all Iranian government organizations should consequently be made with caution. Second, the study employed a cross-sectional design, which does not permit conclusions about how compensation perceptions and organizational commitment evolve over time. Third, the quantitative data were obtained through self-report questionnaires and may therefore be affected by common-method variance, social

desirability, and respondents' temporary perceptions. Fourth, although the qualitative sample included both academic experts and experienced executives and data collection continued until saturation, other stakeholders such as ordinary employees, labor-law specialists, budget experts, and compensation-system administrators could have provided additional perspectives. Finally, the proposed model was validated primarily through perceptual and structural criteria rather than through objective longitudinal outcomes such as turnover, absenteeism, productivity, or service quality.

Future studies should validate the proposed model in a broader range of Iranian government organizations, including ministries, municipalities, public universities, state-owned enterprises, regulatory agencies, and public-service institutions, to determine whether the structure remains stable across administrative environments. Multi-group analyses could examine whether the importance of the seven dimensions differs according to gender, age, generation, managerial level, occupational category, employment status, or organizational type. Longitudinal research would also be valuable for investigating whether improvements in specific compensation dimensions produce sustained changes in commitment, retention, performance, citizenship behavior, and organizational trust. Future research could compare commitment-oriented compensation with alternative strategic approaches such as performance-oriented, market-oriented, or high-involvement compensation systems. Researchers may also incorporate objective indicators, digital HR analytics, and administrative records to reduce reliance on self-report data. Further qualitative studies could investigate employees' interpretations of fairness, recognition, digital transparency, and non-financial rewards, while comparative studies across countries could determine which elements of the model are culturally specific and which are generalizable across public-sector systems.

Government organizations should treat compensation as an integrated strategic system rather than as a payroll function. Managers should combine competitive and equitable financial rewards with transparent career pathways, systematic training, competency development, recognition mechanisms, meaningful delegation of authority, and opportunities for employee participation. Because work environment emerged as the strongest dimension, particular attention should be given to administrative justice, job security, open communication, complaint-handling mechanisms, and work–life support. Compensation procedures should be digitalized to increase transparency, improve access to information, and enable analytical monitoring of pay decisions. Organizations should also establish formal mechanisms for measuring the effects of compensation on commitment, performance, retention, and employee perceptions, and they should revise policies using regular feedback and benchmarking. Finally, managers should ensure that commitment-oriented compensation remains aligned with public-service values by recognizing ethical conduct, innovative behavior, knowledge sharing, and contribution to organizational mission alongside conventional task 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

All ethical principles were adhered in conducting and writing this article.

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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