

## Presenting a Model of Factors Affecting the Barriers to Organizational Vitality in Public Organizations (Case Study: Public Organizations of Mazandaran Province)

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### Article history:

Received date: 2021/09/02

Review date: 2021/09/15

Accepted date: 2021/10/02

### Keywords:

Vitality, Organizational Vitality, Barriers to Vitality, Public Organizations

### Abstract

**Purpose:** The aim of the present study was to present a model of factors affecting organizational vitality in public organizations (case study: public organizations of Mazandaran province).

**Methodology:** This was an applied and quantitative study. The study population included employees of public organizations in Mazandaran province in 2019, 246 of whom were selected based on Cochran's formula and using cluster sampling method. The data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire on barriers to organizational vitality and were analyzed using exploratory factor analysis and structural equation modeling in SPSS and Amos software.

**Findings:** The results showed that the barriers to organizational vitality included nine factors, 49 components and 120 concepts. The management factor includes five components, the individual factor includes six components, the organizational factor includes six components, the economic factor includes seven components, the political factor includes five components, the physical environment factor includes five components, the religious-value factor includes six components, the technological factor includes four components, socio-cultural factor includes five components. Besides, the factor loading of all 49 components was higher than 0.40 and the reliability of all nine factors was higher than 0.70. Also, all nine factors had a positive significant effect on barriers to organizational vitality so that the individual and political factors had the greatest and the lowest effect, respectively ( $P < 0.001$ ).

**Conclusion:** The results of the present research have practical implications for experts and organizational planners, and can help them design and implement programs to reduce barriers to organizational vitality.

**Please cite this article as:** Hadipoor H, Mohammadkhani K, Mohammad Davoodi AH. (2022), Presenting a Model of Factors Affecting the Barriers to Organizational Vitality in Public Organizations (Case Study: Public Organizations of Mazandaran Province), *Iranian Journal of Educational Sociology*. 4(4): 156- 170.

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## 1. Introduction

Considering the current organizational challenges, creating a happy and energetic organization is one of the strategic needs for long-term success. Because organizations are faced with very intense competition, limitless marketing, and the increasing speed of progress, and economic, political, social, and technological factors have changed the current competitive conditions in the modern era, which in turn make it difficult for organizations to adapt to these conditions. Therefore, an organization needs a framework to change the situation in order to succeed, and such conditions make employees become the essential element of an organization's success, therefore, hiring knowledgeable and skilled employees who have a positive attitude, take on the various responsibilities of the organization and quickly adapt to changes, and be happy while working with other employees, is inevitable (Zakery, Esmaili & Rahimian, 2020). Healthy organizations are organizations that care about the physical and mental health of employees as much as they care about work and productivity, thereby guaranteeing the health of the organization to a large extent. A healthy organization can prepare itself to face the competitive world by improving its productivity, capability and efficiency. For this purpose, it is necessary to pay attention to appropriate conditions to ensure vitality of the employees (Pabarja, Ahang & Heydarbeigi, 2016). Vitality as one of the most important psychological needs of human beings has always occupied the human mind considering its effect on people's lives, and from the point of view of sociology, it includes economic, political, cultural and educational dimensions that have a mutual effect on each other (Salas-Vallina, Alegre & Guerrero, 2018). Vitality consists of at least three emotional, social and cognitive dimensions. The emotional dimension causes the creation of positive emotional states with others, the social dimension refers to the need for the presence of others to create positive emotional states, and the cognitive dimension refers to the ability to think that interprets everyday events optimistically (Tosten, Avci & Sahin, 2018).

Vitality is one of the most important and effective components in human life, and activity, creativity, innovation, invention and healthy life cannot be created in its absence. This structure consists of three main components including positive emotion, life satisfaction and absence of negative emotions. Vitality depends on the presence of positive emotions such as pleasure, peace of mind, self-confidence, interest, surprise, satisfaction, being cheerful and excited, life satisfaction and the absence of negative feelings or emotions such as stress, anxiety and depression (Manar, De Juana- Espinosa, Martinez-Buevas, Abarca & Tirado, 2020). Vitality is a kind of mental experience based on which people evaluate themselves as happy or sad and form and continue their lives accordingly. Happy people have higher self-esteem, a better sense of control and management, and more optimism (Nielsen, Nielsen, Ogbonnaya, Kansala, Saari & Isaksson, 2017). Vitality is an emotional state that indicates individual satisfaction in various dimensions, especially internal dimensions, and organizational vitality refers to a set of fun activities that provide entertainment and laughter to employees, and organizational vitality is the result of joyful activities and the trust of managers and colleagues. For this purpose, creating an environment full of affection, friendly relationship, successful experiences and a suitable work environment and physical environment can be important and effective in the development of emotions, especially vitality (Manouchehri et al., 2021). Organizational vitality is when a person makes maximum use of his abilities and talents to achieve his work goals. In other words, organizational vitality is defined as perceived positive emotions and emotions in the workplace in such a way that employees can increase their capabilities and abilities in their workplace and progress in achieving their goals in life (Omar, Ramdani, Mohd & Hussein, 2018). Organizational vitality has a complex and multidimensional structure and consists of various dimensions such as emotional well-being, competence, ideal, independence, performance, cohesion and satisfaction, and it is valuable to investigate it for three reasons. First, vitality is valuable in itself, second, vitality is related to higher performance and better organizational functioning, and third, it is an important element in a good life and society (Williams, Kern & Waters, 2017). Organizational vitality is related with intense involvement in the activity and full attention to the activity, and it induces a sense of a pleasure in people; that is even if it imposes costs on a person, he will still seek to do it (Bayraktar & Girgin, 2020). Organizational vitality is a valuable tool for improving the

personality and job performance of employees, and happy people have less burnout, less emotional exhaustion, and less absenteeism, and are less likely to leave their jobs. Vitality also creates a positive attitude towards life, positive self-concept, more willingness to help others, having high life indicators, balanced social relations, a favorable and satisfactory attitude towards oneself and others, and ultimately better job performance and appropriate decision-making for well-being of the person himself and society (Stankeviciute, Staniskien & Ramanauskaite, 2021). Organizational vitality or vitality at work refers to positive attitudes, positive experience, or positive emotional experience in the workplace and can help employees achieve professional success, improve job satisfaction, and encourage them to work harder, while simultaneously reducing employee turnover rates and increasing profitability (Benuyenah & Pandya, 2020).

There have been studies on organizational vitality, but there has been no published research regarding factors affecting organizational vitality. In this section, the results of the most important related researches are reported.

Masouminezhad, Farrokhseresht, Alavi & Taghipourian Gilani (2021) concluded in a research that the drivers of organizational vitality included job, management and leadership, well-being, contextual, physiological, personality, belief, skill, communication and organizational citizenship behaviors.

Dhamija et al. (2021) in a research concluded that spirituality and religion, positive thinking, learning, honesty, participation and work interest played an effective role in employee vitality.

Shojaei, Bagheri, Nikbakht & Mohseni Beykzadeh (2020) investigated the factors affecting organizational vitality, and found 11 factors, namely trust, optimism, job satisfaction, job and economic security, specific and common work goals, organizational commitment, organizational learning, sense of justice, honesty, work interest and the meaningfulness of work.

Adabi, Hajiha & Khorshidi (2020) investigated the organizational vitality of faculty members that included 19 categories in the form of a paradigm model including causal conditions (social relations, work environment, work equipment, incentive system and ethical behavior of the work environment), the central phenomenon ( job attitude), background characteristics (family, work, welfare, teaching and research, organizational and economic culture), intervening environmental conditions (individual characteristics of faculty members and students), strategies for establishing the organizational vitality model (contextualization of creating organizational happiness) and outcomes (reputation) and credibility, efficiency and job burnout).

Jovari, Mohammadi Moghaddam, Ghahremani Ghajar & Hasan Moradi (2020) came to the conclusion in a research that barriers to organizational vitality in the university environment include the inefficiency of rules and regulations, structural inadequacies, neglecting the capabilities of the university, the occurrence of work-family conflicts, the occurrence of negative psychological reactions and anti-organizational productivity and low vitality in the university spaces.

Hadian & Rahmanzade (2018) investigated the factors affecting organizational vitality in the working environment of the National Library of Iran and placed these factors in three categories: demographic factors (gender, income and age), individual (locus of control, mental health and positive thinking and beliefs), and organizational (trust between employees, cultural dimensions of the organization, sports and recreation programs and competence of managers).

Taherian, Feiz & Heydarkhani (2014) investigated management and organizational factors affecting vitality in universities and introduced self-openness, positivity, leadership style, trust, organizational justice, working environment conditions, organizational structure, job stress, interaction with colleagues, job security, salaries, benefits and rewards, human relations, organizational culture, extracurricular activities, organizational participation and organizational capabilities as effective factors.

Fani & Aghaziarati (2013) concluded in a research that the components of individual happiness included self-esteem, self-openness, life satisfaction, good mood, peace of mind, sense of efficiency, positive thinking and physical health, and the components of organizational happiness included flexible structure, meaningfulness of work, reward system, salaries and wages, physical work environment, work security,

collaborative management, organizational culture, sense of justice, interest in work and organization, organizational learning and interaction with colleagues.

Investigating organizational vitality is important because it can bring positive outcomes such as very high performance and productivity through increasing positive feelings and emotions and reducing negative feelings and emotions in the workplace. The health of employees plays an important role in the proper performance of job duties, and undoubtedly, one of the most important health-related factors is organizational vitality. There are now various stresses, many of these stresses are specific to the work environment, and organizational conflict, deprivation of rewards, lateness and absenteeism, organizational injustice, pressure from managers and officials, etc. are among the factors that affect the health of employees. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the barriers to organizational vitality in a coherent research. It is also important to note that there have been studies on organizational vitality, but there has been no published study on the factors affecting organizational vitality; therefore, this research is new, innovative and unique from this point of view. At the same time, this research can have practical implications for managers and organizational officials, and they can use these results to design and implement programs to reduce barriers to organizational vitality and provide appropriate condition to improve organizational vitality. Therefore, the aim of the present study was research to provide a model of factors affecting the barriers to organizational vitality in public organizations (case study: public organizations of Mazandaran province).

## 2. Methodology

This was an applied and quantitative study. The study population included employees of public organizations in Mazandaran province in 2019, 246 of whom were selected based on Cochran's formula and using cluster sampling. In this sampling method, after preparing the list of all public organizations, three organizations, i.e. social security, tourism and Islamic guidance organizations, were randomly selected and all their employees were selected as samples if they had the inclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria included the willingness to participate in the research, having at least a diploma, no addiction and use of psychiatric drugs such as anti-anxiety and anti-depressants, and the absence of stressful events such as divorce and death of relatives in the past three months. Exclusion criteria also included refusing to complete the research instrument or failure to respond to more than 10% of items.

Coordination was made with the officials of social security, tourism and Islamic guidance organizations, and then the importance and necessity of the research was explained to their employees and they were reassured about the observance of ethical considerations. Then they were asked to read and answer the questionnaire carefully. The completed questionnaires were then collected and they were appreciated for their participation in the research. The collected be entered the computer.

Data collection tool included a researcher-made questionnaire of barriers to organizational vitality. This tool consists of 120 items that were scored based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Completely unsuitable) to 5 (Completely suitable). The tool score was calculated based on the total score of the items and no items were scored in reverse. The content validity was confirmed by the opinion of 11 experts, but the results of construct validity and reliability were reported in the Results Section.

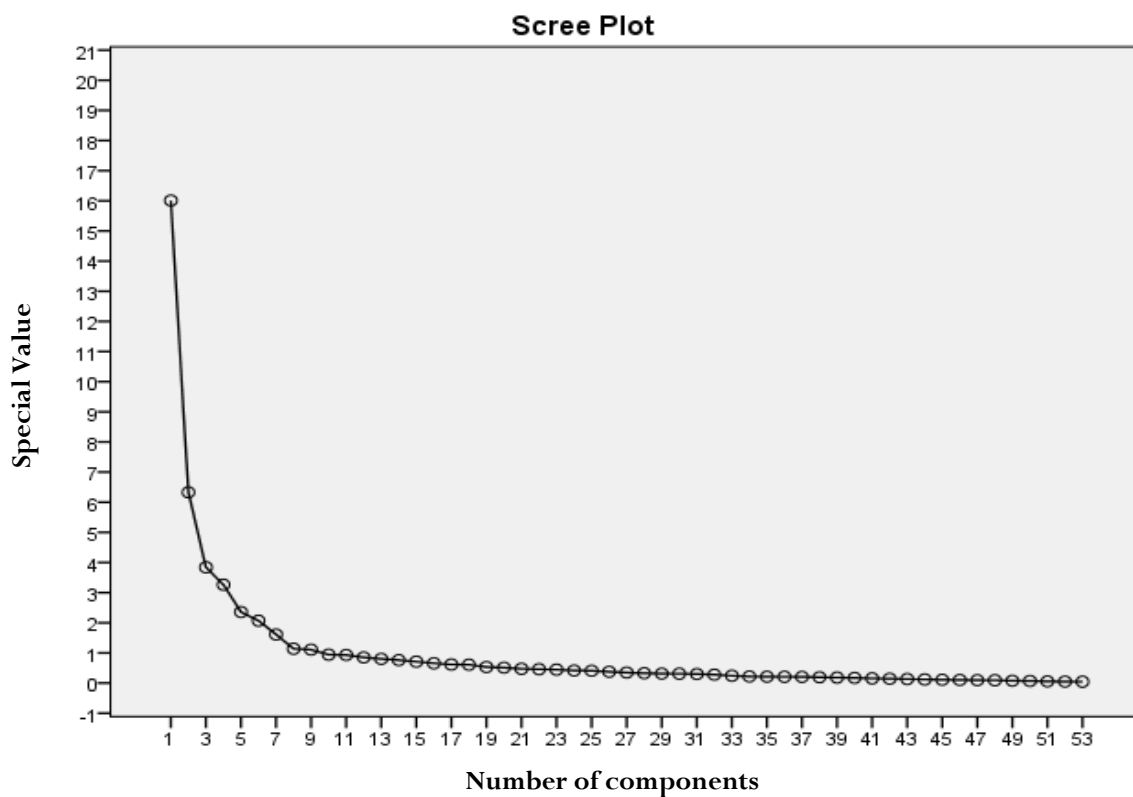
The collected data were analyzed using exploratory factor analysis and structural equation modeling in SPSS and Amos software.

## 3. Findings

There was no drop-out in the present study. The results of frequency and frequency percentage of age and educational levels of employees in public organizations were presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Results of frequency and frequency percentage of age and education of employees in public organizations

Variable	Levels	Frequency	Frequency percentage
Age (years)	21-30	29	11.79
	31-40	76	30.89
	41-50	107	54.30
	More than 50	34	13.82
Level of education	Diploma	58	23.58
Variable	Associate degree	35	14.23
Age (years)	MA.	82	33.33
	Levels	63	25.61
	21-30	8	3.25

**Figure 1.** Scree plot to identify the number of factors affecting organizational vitality in public organizations

According to the results of Table 2, most of the employees aged 41-50 years ( $n=107$  people, 43.50%) and most of them had bachelor degree ( $n=82$  people, 33.33%). Prior to factor analysis, the values of KMO index (0.84) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (5632.78) were significant ( $P<0.001$ ), which indicate sufficient correlation and sample adequacy. To identify the number of factors affecting organizational vitality in public organizations, a scree plot was presented in Figure 1.

According to the results of Figure 1, there were nine factors affecting the barriers to organizational vitality in public organizations. The exploratory factor analysis was used to identify the factors affecting the barriers to organizational vitality in public organizations (Table 2).

**Table 2.** The results of exploratory factor analysis to identify factors affecting organizational vitality in public organizations

Factors	Components	Number of items	Factor loading of components	Reliability of factors
Management	Authoritarian leadership style	2	0.85	0.96
	Distrust at work	3	0.84	
	Strict supervision	3	0.85	
	Inefficiency of managers	1	0.88	
	Negative attitude of managers to employees	4	0.84	
Individual	Workplace negativity	3	0.83	0.89
	Self-censorship and organizational silence	2	0.85	
	Introversion	1	0.88	
	Job dissatisfaction	4	0.88	
	Intergenerational gap in the organization	1	0.59	
	Gender discrimination	3	0.58	
	Organizational injustice	5	0.87	
Organizational	Harsh working conditions	2	0.85	0.75
	Centralized organizational structure	4	0.87	
	Job instability	2	0.84	
	Controlled human relations	4	0.78	
	Job stress	2	0.83	
	Pay irregularities	1	0.85	
Economical	Delay in returning rewards and benefits	3	0.86	0.81

	Inflation, high prices and unemployment in recent years	3	0.86	
	Social class inequality	2	0.86	
	Improper distribution of services and facilities among employees	1	0.84	
	Paying disproportionate taxes	4	0.51	
	Income disproportionate to living expenses	4	0.58	
Political	Restriction of political and individual freedom in the organization	1	0.84	0.92
	Distrust in the government's ability to improve the country's situation	2	0.83	
	Corruption in the administrative and financial system	1	0.86	
	Distrust of planning in managers' affairs	1	0.46	
	Non-adherence of managers and supervisors to rules and regulations	3	0.42	
Physical environment	Inappropriate resting environments	3	0.76	0.93
	Lack of sports facilities and equipment	2	0.85	
	Using cold and inappropriate colors in the building design	3	0.85	
	Absence of native symbols and principles in the	1	0.87	

	architecture of buildings				
	Improper lighting in buildings	4	0.83		
Religious-value	Neglect of collective and national religious celebrations	1	0.89		0.85
	Neglect of holidays and religious rituals	1	0.73		
	Neglect of religious and spiritual activities	2	0.82		
	Ignoring traditional cultures	3	0.79		
	To regarding bad temper with others as a value	5	0.81		
	Distrust in God's judgment and destiny	3	0.79		
Technological	Employee communication with new technology instead of human relations	1	0.85		0.90
	Reducing the need for human resources due to the use of technology	4	0.85		
	Allocating too much time to technology	2	0.86		
	Using new technology (robots) instead of humans	1	0.83		
Sociocultural	Lack of attachment and sense of belonging to the place of residence	2	0.55		0.89
Factors	Having no sense of identity and fond memories of the place of residence	4	0.90		Reliability of factors



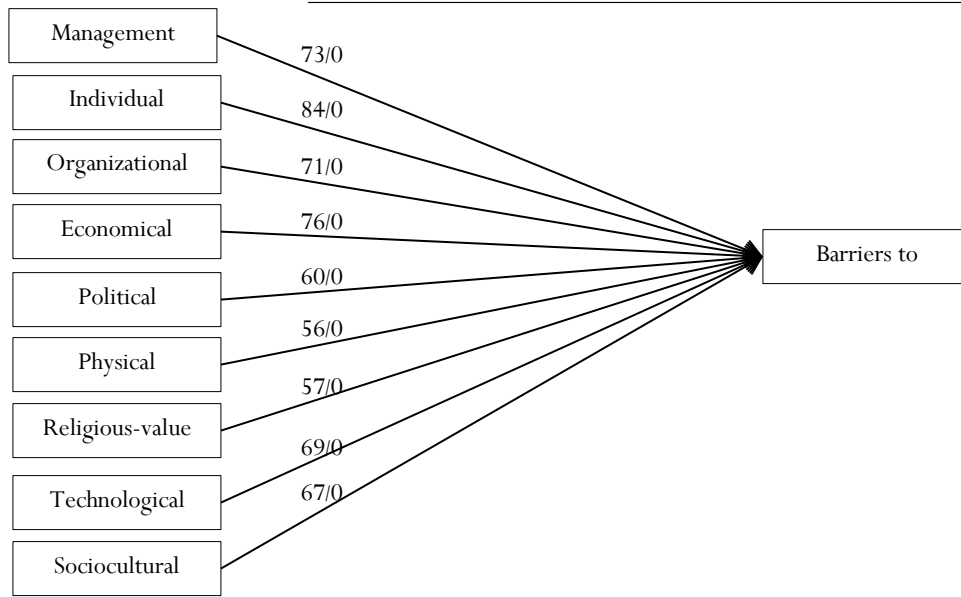
Management	Membership in specific social groups and organizations	3	0.85	0.96
	Lack of sense of freedom and security in society	2	0.82	
	Lack of access to spaces, services and facilities in cities	1	0.81	

According to the results of Table 2, there were 9 factors and 49 components affecting organizational vitality barriers in public organizations. The management factor includes five components, the individual factor includes six components, the organizational factor includes six components, the economic factor includes seven components, the political factor includes five components, the physical environment factor includes five components, the religious-value factor includes six components, the technological factor includes four components, socio-cultural factor includes five components. Besides, the factor loading of all 49 components was higher than 0.40 and the reliability of all nine factors was higher than 0.70. The results of the fit indices of the model of factors affecting the barriers to organizational vitality in public organizations were presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** The results of the fit indices of the model of factors affecting the barriers to organizational vitality in public organizations

Indices	Calculated value	Acceptable value
$\chi^2/df$	2.088	>3
RMSEA	0.069	>0.08
GFI	0.991	<0.90
AGFI	0.974	<0.90
NFI	0.992	<0.90
CFI	0.999	<0.90
RFI	0.984	<0.90

According to the results of Table 3, the model of factors affecting the barriers to organizational vitality in public organizations had a good fit. The results of the effect of the model of factors affecting the barriers to organizational vitality in public organizations were presented in Figure 2 and Table 4.



**Figure 2.** The model of factors affecting the barriers to organizational vitality in public organizations

**Table 4.** The results of the effect of model of factors affecting barriers to organizational vitality in public organizations

Effect	Standard coefficients	Significance	Result
The direct effect of the management factor on barriers to organizational vitality	0.73	0.001	Rejected
The direct effect of individual factors on barriers to organizational vitality	0.84	0.001	Rejected
The direct effect of the organizational factor on barriers to organizational vitality	0.71	0.001	Rejected
The direct effect of the economic factor on the barriers to organizational vitality	0.76	0.001	Rejected
The direct effect of the political factor on the barriers to organizational vitality	0.56	0.001	Rejected
The direct effect of the physical environment factor on	0.60	0.001	Rejected

barriers to organizational vitality			
The direct effect of the religious-value factor on the barriers to organizational vitality	0.57	0.001	Rejected
The direct effect of the technological factor on barriers to organizational vitality	0.69	0.001	Rejected
The direct effect of the sociocultural factor on barriers to organizational vitality	0.67	0.001	Rejected

According to the results of Figure 2 and Table 4, all 9 factors had a positive and significant effect on barriers to organizational vitality. Also, the individual and political factors had the highest and lowest effect, respectively ( $P < 0.001$ ).

#### 4. Discussion

Organizational vitality plays an important role in organizational performance and effectiveness, and knowing the factors affecting the barriers to organizational vitality can be an effective step towards reducing its barriers. Therefore, the aim of the present study was to present a model of factors affecting the barriers to organizational vitality in public organizations (case study: public organizations of Mazandaran province).

The results showed that the barriers to organizational vitality included 9 factors, 49 components and 120 concepts. The management factor includes five components, the individual factor includes six components, the organizational factor includes six components, the economic factor includes seven components, the political factor includes five components, the physical environment factor includes five components, the religious-value factor includes six components, the technological factor includes four components, socio-cultural factor includes five components. Besides, the factor loading of all 49 components was higher than 0.40 and the reliability of all nine factors was higher than 0.70. Also, all nine factors had a positive significant effect on barriers to organizational vitality. These results are somehow consistent with the results of studies by Masouminezhad et al (2021), Dhamija (2021), Shojaei et al (2020), Adabi et al (2020), Jovari et al (2020), Hadian & Rahmzade (2018), Taherian et al. (2014) and Fani & Aghaziarati (2013).

To explain the mentioned results, it should be stated that various components of the management factor such as having an authoritarian leadership style and absence of a suitable (authoritarian) leadership style, insufficient trust at work and organizational environment, strict, unnecessary and frequent supervision of employees, low efficiency or the inefficiency of managers and the negative attitude of managers towards employees led to barriers to organizational vitality. Besides, according to the individual them, factors cause a drop in organizational vitality, such as workplace negativity, self-censorship, organizational silence and not expressing organizational problems in order to solve them and improve the organizational conditions, introversion and lack of expressing one's feelings and knowledge to other employees, job dissatisfaction due to various material and non-material reasons, social class inequality and intergenerational gap in the organization and lack of mutual understanding between different generations in the organization and gender differences and discrimination and receiving rights and benefits based on gender. Also, with regard to organizational theme, components or factors such as organizational injustice, harsh conditions of the work environment due to overtime, inappropriate working time, etc., centralized organizational structure and high concentration in the organization, job instability and fear of unemployment due to various reasons, especially

the reduction of employees and other personal, social and organizational factors, controlled human relations and lack of necessary freedom, and having frequent job stresses cause the loss of organizational vitality.

According to the economic theme, various factors such as payment irregularity and non-compliance with payment equality, procrastination in returning rewards and benefits by employees or organizational officials, inflation, high prices and unemployment in recent years and inability to control to them, the social class inequality caused by economic, social and cultural differences, unfair distribution of services and facilities between different employees, the payment of taxes disproportionate to the employees' salaries and the failure to pay an equal percentage of salaries as taxes for all low-rank and high-rank employees and inappropriate income and lack of increase in salaries commensurate with the current inflation make the ground for the growth of barriers to organizational vitality. Besides, according to the political theme, factors cause a drop in organizational vitality such as political and individual freedom in the organization, lack of freedom in expressing organizational demands and problems, distrust in the government's ability to improve the state of society, and its poor management of challenges and crises and the loss of public trust in the government's ability, material and non-material corruptions in the administrative and financial system, distrust in planning in managers and doubting the planning of managers and the lack of commitment of managers and supervisors to laws and regulations. Also, according to the physical environment theme, components or factors such as inappropriate environments for employees to rest or the absence of such environment, lack of sports facilities and equipment in workplaces, use of inappropriate coloring and design in the buildings of organizations, lack of attention to locality symbols and principles and cultural context in the architecture of buildings and improper use of lighting in buildings and lack of proper design for light and lighting.

According to the religious-value theme, various factors such as neglect of collective national and religious holidays and celebrations, neglect of religious holidays and rituals, neglect of religious and spiritual activities and ceremonies according to the cultural context, inattention or little attention to the national traditional cultures or the traditional cultures of groups and tribes, improper communication with others and showing misbehavior to them and distrust to God's destiny and fate lead to the development of barriers to organizational vitality. Besides, according to the political theme, factors such as excessive use new technology employees instead of establishing human and emotional relationships with other employees, reducing the need for human resources due to the use of technology and reducing manpower due to the use of technology, allocating a lot of time to use technology and reducing human communication and using new technologies such as robots instead of humans reduced organizational vitality. Also, with regard to socio-cultural theme, components or factors such as lack of attachment and sense of belonging to the place of residence, showing indifference to the change in the place of residence, not having a sense of identity and happy, pleasant and fun memories from the place of residence, membership in certain social groups and organizations that are inappropriate to the organizational goals, lack of feeling of freedom and security in the society and fear of living in it and lack of access to the spaces, facilities and services available in the cities lead to a reduction in organizational vitality.

All researches had their own limitations. The important limitations of the current research also include little theoretical background about barriers to organizational vitality, no study on factors affecting barriers to organizational vitality or a suitable tool to examine it and compare the results of the current research with it, the study population being limited to employees of public organizations in Mazandaran province, and ignoring the research results on each of the organizations separately. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out further study on barriers to organizational vitality, build different and diverse tools to identify barriers to organizational vitality in different organizations, conduct research on the employees of non-government organizations, or even to conduct research on each of the government and non-government organizations separately. It is also recommended observations or interviews can be used in addition to the questionnaire to investigate and identify barriers to organizational vitality. It is expected to use these tools in future studies, especially observations, which have been used in few studies.

The results of the present research have practical implications for experts and organizational planners, and can help them design and implement programs to reduce barriers to organizational vitality. For this purpose, they can take advantage of factors and components and create appropriate conditions for improving organizational vitality. Undoubtedly, the use of incentive policies, daily, monthly, and annual programs to encourage and provide rewards to employees, giving appropriate freedom of action to employees, trusting employees, holding courses and recreational camps, etc., to formulate efficient and practical plans and solutions to remove barriers affecting organizational vitality can be effective on the dynamics of employees and organization.

### **Acknowledgments**

Herby, the authors would like to express their thanks to employees who participated in the research as well as their managers.

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