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## Designing the Framework of Specialization in the Recruitment of Non-Teaching Staff in Iran's Ministry of Education

Mehrnaz. Yoonesi<sup>1</sup>, Sakineh. Jafari<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PhD Student, Department of Education and Psychology, University of Semnan, Semnan, Iran.

<sup>2</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Educational Management, Semnan University, Semnan, Iran.

\* Corresponding author email address: sjafari.105@semnan.ac.ir

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The present study aimed to design a framework for recruiting non-teaching educational staff in Iran's Ministry of Education.

**Method:** The present study pursues a qualitative approach. The statistical population of the research included experts and professors in the field of specialization and the senior managers of the General Department of Education of Semnan province in the academic year of 2023-2024, among which 15 were chosen as the samples using theoretical saturation sampling and targeted sampling. The research instruments were a semi-structured interview and a review of the existing documents on this subject. The collected data were validated using member checking. The data validity was evaluated and confirmed using the quality criterion (reliability). The research data analysis method was thematic analysis in three levels: basic themes, organizing themes and Global Themes.

**Findings:** The data analysis led to the identification of 393 basic themes, 33 number-one organizing themes, and 13 number-2 organizing themes in the field of specialization in recruiting non-teaching educational staff in the Ministry of Education. These themes were categorized under 4 global themes including expertise management with two organizing themes (expertise management and performance management), resource management with four organizing themes (human, time, material, and information), change management with three organizing themes (change in organizational structure, change in competitive atmosphere, and change in attitude), and management of organizational development with four organizing themes (managerial capabilities, human resource planning, creation of specialization culture, and organizational interactions).

**Conclusion:** The use of elite and expert employees in the nonteaching sector of the educational system, as a leading institution in providing extensive services to the general public, depends on the presence of a specialization pattern in the recruitment of non-teaching staff. Identification of specialization criteria in the non-teaching sector, which has been done in this research, helps with the formulation of an appropriate specialization model to employ skilled and specialist staff in this sector.

**Keywords:** Model, Specialization, Human Resource Recruitment, Headquarters, Education

## 1. Introduction

A meritocratic society should provide all its members with equal opportunities. The first link in the chain of development and progress in any country is the desire, will, commitment, and expertise of the authorities, administrators, and managers in charge of that country. It is achieved when meritocracy governs the country (Talib & Fitzgerald, 2015). The research indicates that 70% of the world's wealth is in the form of human capital (Terziev, 2018), and obviously, a country that fails to develop and increase humanism knowledge and use it for economic development would not be able to develop in any of the social aspects. On the other hand, a society that has a skilled and specialized workforce and is systematic and meritocratic will be successful in any competition (Jin et al., 2018; Mak et al., 2011). Meritocracy in the administrative system and facilitation of occupation of sensitive administration and decision-making positions by the elites are among the significant axioms in the management of government organizations. In fact, meritocracy, as a common procedure, is the first step in specialization in organizations. Also, the exploitation of the elites is a supplementary approach to the implementation of meritocracy. Meritocracy is a process that includes a collection of measures such as setting the merit criteria (attitude, behavior, skill, ability, and beliefs for success at work and profession), measurement and selection of people based on criteria, and supporting and growing competent individuals (Russo, 2016). Also, the exploitation of the elites for decision-making in development and progress not only increases organizational productivity but also injects new ideas and opportunities into the organization (Beviá & Corchón, 2017). Specialization and the use of the elites and the competent individuals which is itself the main factor in meritocracy, has four essential features as follows: Having a high degree of general knowledge about the profession, prioritizing the interests of the society over the individual interests, compliance with ethical issues which have been emphasized by that profession, and presence of a financial and nonfinancial rewarding system proportionate to individual's efforts and efficiency (Mak et al., 2011). When it comes to the presence of competent people in the nonteaching section of the Ministry of Education, all people consider the nonteaching staff and the problems related to recruiting and supporting merited and capable individuals.

The Ministry of Education has been place to many revolutionary elites after the Revolution, and many talented people have selected the Ministry of Education for service,

among various positions. The presence of these skilled people, especially in the headquarters of the Ministry of Education had led to considerable growth in services of the education sector in the 60s and early 70s (AH), despite the unique conditions after the Revolution and the increase in the number of students. Also, this institution and its ministers have been intellectual and political references in high ranks of the decision-making system which is indicative of the specific position of the institution of public education in the country. However, gradually and in a decade, the Ministry of Education has lost its skilled workforce and the domain of its intellectual and administrative elites has gradually shrunk. The proof of this claim is that in the last four administrations, we have had 8 ministers of education and some of them have even not been the representative of education, but the government's representative in the Ministry of Education. Thus, the credibility of the members of this ministry with the government decreases day by day because the forces active in the field of education do not have enough ability to protect its interests (Khosravi et al., 2021).

Results obtained by Jin et al. (2018) with an emphasis on the role of the manager indicated that to reduce labor turnover by the specialist employees and proportionality of individual's capability and expertise with the organization, positive communications, and job satisfaction are required (Jin et al., 2018). Woods et al. (2020) dealt with the advancement of technology and the use of new technologies in the process of selection and recruitment of employees, online tests, multiple feedback, decision-making backup systems and data analysis, quality improvement, and the rate of recruitment. They believe that these factors can affect the future performance of employees (Woods et al., 2020). Potocnik et al. (2021) provided solutions to confront challenges in the field of specialized recruitment and selection of employees through investigation of recent studies and existing challenges, and exploitation of the opportunities the technology and other developments offer (e.g. the use of artificial intelligence and data analysis in the evaluation and specialized selection of employees in the field of organizational management, the development of policies and approaches to prevent conflicts of interest and discrimination for fairer and more optimal recruitment and selection of employees with a completely specialized approach) (Potočnik et al., 2021). Also, results obtained by Cutrini (2010) indicated that organizations should include information related to matching the individual's expertise with the organization's needs in their recruitment information sources so that they'll have more specialized

organizational recruitment (Cutrini, 2010). Spain et al. (2022) concluded that recruitment and selection of employees is a very important field that can finally help determine what job can be successful in doing the work related to this job and recruitment of these individuals. In addition, improper recruitment decisions can lead to considerable consequences and loss of income, reduction in productivity, and low spirit (Spain et al., 2022). On the contrary, a valid and reliable selection process can have several advantages including improvement in job performance, reduction in turnover, reduction in training costs, reduction in errors, and reduction in mutual productivity. Recruitment of managers with performance competency and strong leadership skills as well as performance-oriented staff have been introduced as requirements for professionalizing the organization by Fabel et al. (2022) (Fabel et al., 2022).

Weakness in planning, administration, and supervision, which are among the duties of non-teaching staff of the Ministry of Education, has led to a lack of required quality in the outputs in the curriculum, facilities, and equipment, teachers' recruitment and training, and generally, schools' performance. Moreover, the school institution is increasingly losing its educational authority. Thus, it can be concluded that solving the problem of educational human resources in the nonteaching and expert sectors is among the strategic priorities of this organization to achieve the objectives of The Fundamental Reform Document of Education. Considering the above-mentioned, the use of elite and expert employees in the nonteaching sector of the educational system, as a leading institution in providing extensive services to the general public, depends on the presence of a specialization pattern in the recruitment of non-teaching staff. Identification of specialization criteria in the non-teaching sector helps with the formulation of an appropriate specialization model to employ skilled and specialist staff in this sector. To achieve this goal scientifically and fundamentally, the Ministry of Education should develop an official plan and to have this plan, first, the indicators of specialization should be identified so that it can realize the Fundamental Reform Document and a basic desirability (vision, mission, objective, etc.). Therefore, the present study aimed to identify components of specialization in the recruitment of non-teaching staff in the Ministry of Education so that besides the identification of fundamental components of specialization, provide dynamic offers for the Ministry of Education to maintain its position as the center and headquarter of knowledge, research, and development

for nurturing the future generation, and lead the society towards development and sustainability based on its mission. Thus, the main problem dealt with in the present study is what components should be taken into consideration for the recruitment of non-teaching staff in the Iranian Ministry of Education based on the specialization model.

## 2. Methods and Materials

### 2.1. Study Design and Participants

The present study pursues a qualitative approach. The statistical population included experts and professors in the field of specialization and the senior managers of the General Department of Education of Semnan province in the academic year of 2023-2024, among which 15 were chosen as the samples using theoretical saturation sampling and targeted sampling. Qualitative research is the research that is aimed at the exploration and investigation of the research problem based on the collection of textual and visual data. It reflects the ideas of participants. Various research designs are used in the qualitative approach that are used for different researches based on the differences in their objective and procedure. Considering the problem statement and research objective which was "investigation and identification of components of specialization in the recruitment of non-teaching staff in the Ministry of Education", the design of qualitative research was selected as a "case study". Regarding the research objective, it is a "single instrumental case study". In this method, the researcher is focused on a challenging subject or problem and then, he chooses a limited and unique case to depict that subject. In the present study, the main subject or matter is "how employee recruitment is specialized" and the case study and the unit of analysis is "the non-teaching staff of the Ministry of Education". Fifteen samples were selected based on theoretical saturation and targeted sampling. To choose the samples, two criteria have been considered: Scientific expertise (those who have sufficient knowledge about the desired field, i.e. they have authored books or articles about specialization in the recruitment of non-teaching staff in the Ministry of Education or have academic education in this field), and practical experience (those familiar with the specialization in recruitment of non-teaching staff in Ministry of Education or have a managerial background in this field). As the procedure, first, among the experts that the researcher was familiar with, a number of them were selected after checking the inclusion criteria, and then, they were asked to introduce other experts, and a number of them

were selected after checking their compliance with the inclusion criteria. The samples were told about the importance of research and they were ensured that codes of ethics will be observed. Finally, their consent was obtained.

## 2.2. Data Collection

A semi-structured interview as well as the investigation of the existing documents (books, articles, domestic and international theses) have been used to gather the data. Interviews were conducted with a general question about the specialization of recruitment of staff in the Ministry of Education and two more detailed questions about operationalizing the indicators of specialization. When necessary, exploratory questions have been also used. The average interview time has been approximately 35 to 45 minutes. The gathered data were manually coded using the theme analysis method. Then the additional and duplicated codes were removed and the process of reducing the codes continued until a broader class and components were obtained and the components of specialization in the recruitment of education personnel were identified. The research data were analyzed using member checking methods (a- During the interview, the researcher presented his opinion of the views and statements of the interviewees to them to check if the data was accurate, b- after coding the data, the participants were asked to present their opinions about the extracted model), peer checking (the collaborators in the project presented some feedback on the data and the way they are coded), and external audit (some other researchers and professors were also asked to present their views of the work and research data).

## 2.3. Data Analysis

The data analysis method was the thematic analysis (identification of a phenomenon) in three levels of basic themes (key codes and points in the text), organizing themes (the categories obtained from combining and summarizing the basic themes), and global themes (supreme themes including the principles governing the text as a whole). King

et al (2018), investigating and compiling the works of other theme analysis scholars, proposed a three-stage process for thematic analysis that includes open coding (basic theme), axial coding (organizing theme), and optional coding (global theme) to integrate through global themes. In open coding, it has been tried to describe and code the categories in the documents and opinions of the participants, however, interpretation of meanings of these categories has not been intended. In the axial coding, it was tried to act a little bit beyond mere description of the opinions of the interviewees and focus on the interpretation of their meanings. In the present study, in the axial coding, the codes regenerated in the previous stage have been integrated or placed under each other through the interpretation of the meanings of the open codes and continuous and repeated comparison with them. In the third stage, which is the optional coding, some global themes were identified that expressed the key concepts of research. These themes are based on interpretational themes and have a higher level of abstraction. In this stage, any theoretical idea that constitutes the research foundation is directly used. In the following, it was tried to limit the number of global codes as much as possible, to be a logical minimum of interviews. It should be noted that the three stages of open, axial, and optional coding have been conducted in an overlapping manner, i.e., first, all codes were descriptively coded and after the descriptive coding was finished, continuous comparison of them led the researcher to interpretational codes and accordingly, the set of clusters was got gradually more and more complete, and through analyzing and clustering them, the global themes were positioned in a higher level.

## 3. Findings and Results

The results obtained from the interviews and investigation of the existing documents (books, articles, and domestic and international theses) to identify the components of specialization for recruitment of non-teaching staff in the Ministry of Education are presented in [Table 1](#).

**Table 1**

*Themes related to specialization of recruitment of non-teaching staff in the Ministry of Education*

Global theme	Organizing theme No. 2	Organizing theme No.1	Basic themes (components)	
Collaborative management	Expertise management	Promotion of expertise	Creating a learning organization; promoting learning culture; providing training and development opportunities (training courses, workshops, webinars); Formulating goals based on the specialized development of the non-teaching staff; Supporting creative and expert staff in the headquarters sector	
		Expertise collaboration	Learning groups, creating a feedback system, and knowledge transfer	
	Performance management	Performance	Accountability for the consequences of decisions in the organization; strengthening the freedom of action of non-teaching staff in line with the implementation of specialization; allowing access to the information in the organization for all staff; Creating positive competition, issuing the basic HR letter and rank of staff with higher expertise in the organization and proportionality of performance and salaries and benefits	
		Commitment	use of collective wisdom; activity of the manager as a conductor, supervisor, and facilitator; team building; Cooperation between senior staff and retired specialists for knowledge management organizational architecture; after-action review; the existence of a safe space for discussion between staff, and preventing work isolation	
Resource management	Human Resource	aptitude assessment- and justice-based recruitment	Implementation of the specialized recruitment process; considering the ability to translate the knowledge embedded in ideas and creativity into workable projects; attracting managers with a diverse set of experience and specialized backgrounds; Creating gradual and continuous corrective steps in the pattern of recruiting specialist non-teaching staff to prevent tensions caused by fundamental changes in the office sector	
		Training, development, and improvement of human resources performance	Teaching the principles of leadership; Training courses on understanding and accepting diversity (heterogeneity of the workforce); cyber security training; training to improve the public relations of the organization's non-teaching staff; Updating the information of the non-teaching staff continuously with the latest technologies related to their field of work; teaching team building skills and group interactions; Creating a wide and unique in-service training experience (possibility of customizing in-service training in the subjects required by the staff)	
		Maintaining and honoring the professional identity of talents	Determining the selected staff of different units of the organization and giving points for the career promotion of the forces; providing appropriate financial and non-financial benefits for specialized staff; Creating professional growth opportunities for specialized staff; Evaluating the performance of expert staff and providing constructive feedback	
		Benefiting from talents	Mentoring using more specialized forces; Managing lessons learned by using forces to record the knowledge resulting from innovation to share information and experiences and apply it in similar situations.	
	Time Resource	Optimal use and prioritization		Recruiting and employing expert staff to reduce time wastage and prevent redundancies; use of office automation; saving time with the possibility of quickly changing recruitment matters when necessary; Managing time demands (using time management techniques such as priority matrix and limiting additional barriers to time demands including meetings, calls, projects, and various tasks)
				Determining and providing financial resources and budget needed for specialization projects in the headquarters; Creating the necessary mechanisms to discover existing potential financial resources and protect them
	Material Resource	Funds		Development and establishment of technological infrastructures in line with the modernization of the organization's administrative system; Creating research infrastructures (coaching - modeling - access to education); Increasing in-service training spaces (electronic and physical spaces), providing equipment and facilities for specialized workshops (face-to-face and virtual) for headquarters forces; Development and renovation of the necessary infrastructure to improve and expand specialization in the headquarters
			Physical assets and equipment	
Informational Resource	Internal information		Playing a role in the process of recruiting specialized staff by transferring the right information according to the needs of the personnel; Providing accurate and comprehensive information about the needs of the organization and the benefits of specialization in recruitment	

Change management	Change in organizational structure	External information	Examining the experiences of similar organizations in recruiting staff; operational use of researches and reports related to specialization in recruiting staff; activities in associations, professional networks, and specialized groups to better understand developments and needs
		Work processes	transparency of different dimensions of competence in recruiting staff; Reducing complications
		Organizational units	Allocation of financial and human resources to organizational units to implement decisions related to specialization in recruitment
		Organizational hierarchy	Avoiding the non-abstract design of the components of the education system and increasing the intimacy of the ministry, departments, managers and staff; Delegation of authority, the possibility of self-determination and the right to choose in the regulation of some activities by the staff and increasing the sense of self-efficacy; Observance of balance and justice in allocating facilities and equipment between headquarters; Balanced distribution of power among managers
		Powers and responsibilities	Determining the powers of different departments in the process of recruiting staff, including determining job needs, advertising, conducting interviews and technical evaluations.
	Change in the competitive atmosphere	Communicative paths	Using social networks and online resources as communication channels; Participation in events, conferences and joint meetings with organizations and individuals; Continuous communication with media and society
		Recruitment technology and methods	Using recruitment sites, modern recruitment systems and human resources management software; Creating online portals to provide information on the organization's specialized needs and recruiting
		Applicants' needs	comprehensive analysis of the needs of applicants; paying attention to user experience
		Acceptance of specialization and executive commitments	Positive attitude towards the necessity of specialization in the recruitment of staff, approval of specialization in the recruitment of staff by laws; providing a model for accepting, confirming, and trusting specialization in recruiting staff by presenting successful examples; Helping to accept and confirm specialization through effective communication and cooperation between non-teaching staff and new specialists; A deep commitment to the implementation of specialization in recruiting staff and avoiding nepotism; Mutual commitment between managers and staffs in implementation of specialized recruiting
		Having a supportive and motivating environment	Creating a motivational work environment by showing the relationship between specialization in the recruitment of staff and organizational progress; Creating sufficient motivation by longitudinally positioning the interests of the non-teaching staff with the advantages of specialization in the recruitment of the organization; Valuing and appreciating the efforts and expertise of the staff
Organizational development management	Managerial capabilities	Soft skills	cognitive skills; member development skills; The persuasive power of manager (ability to convince people and change attitudes and behaviors); building trusting relationships; Maximizing the match between career opportunities and personal goals of specialists; the ability to create common values between the organization and the non-teaching staff; Ability to establish human communication inside and outside the organization and membership in collective programs; Ability to communicate with resources outside the organization to meet needs; inclusive negotiation and problem-solving; failure organizing skills; Using open innovation technique
		Hard skills	technical skills; Providing solutions for modeling and adapting effective and globally approved methods to the organization's conditions; reasoning skills; ability to process information and comprehensiveness; Leadership ability; Continuity in work until the organization's goals are achieved; Identifying the defects and inefficiencies of the recruitment and selection system of staff and creating gradual reforms; the skill of choosing the right combination of non-teaching staff; The ability to plan and deal with the crisis of the legitimacy of the organization's headquarters and to consider this issue in determining the organization's objectives
	Human resource planning	Need analysis	job analysis (tasks, skills, and necessary expertise); Analyzing the skills needed for specialization in recruiting staff; Assessing current and future needs (succession planning)
		Adapting expertise to organizational needs	Proportionality between academic degree and staff position; the relevance of expertise with the strategic goals of the organization; The relevance of the

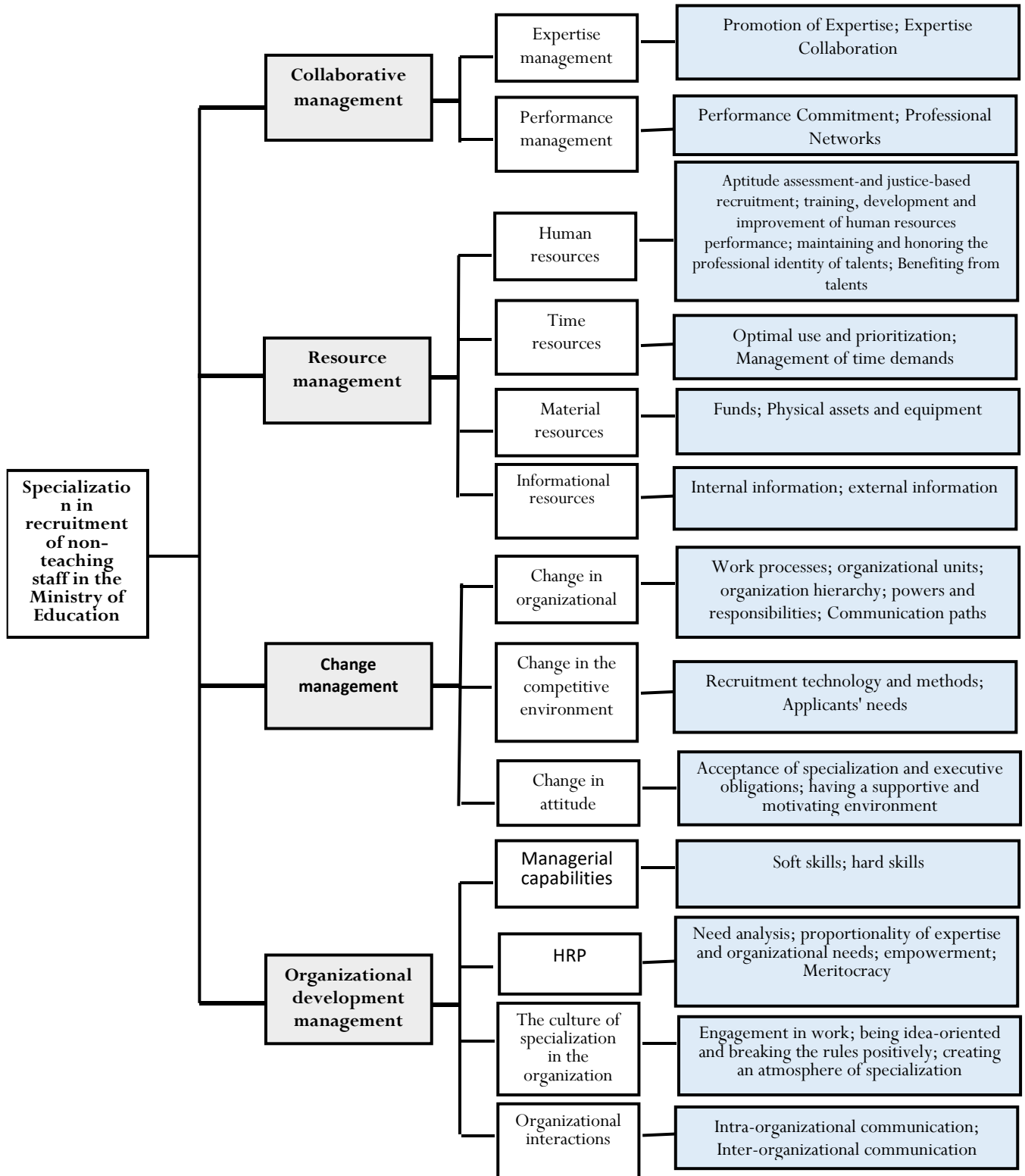
	Empowerment	expertise to the organizational position to coordinate with the knowledge map of the organization; Adaptation of work experience of staff and job needs
	Meritocracy	knowledge related to the task (holding pre-tests and post-tests to check the level of information and needs assessment of the non-teaching staff in the field of recruiting and developing the specialized skills of these staff and replacing new methods with traditional methods); Using the experiences of previous recruitment specialists; Providing the basis for the growth and expansion of the non-teaching staff by employing alternative staff when necessary
Creating a culture of specialization in the organization	Engagement in work	Paying attention to the merit system in recruiting non-teaching staff and monitoring institutions outside of government for domination of meritocracy in the headquarters; Establishing the competence model of managers and specialized staff in the administrative system; stability of managers and specialized staff in the organization; internal balance; Determining salary and bonus levels according to the complexity, knowledge, expertise and level of responsibility of each job; Using the benchmarking method to check the attractiveness and competitiveness of salaries and bonuses
	Being idea-oriented and breaking the rules positively	The forces are required to improve specialized and practical knowledge by participating in the power of the organization; Strengthening the individual belief of the non-teaching staff with the practical use of beneficial suggestions to create a sense of responsibility and maintain social capital
	The formation of an atmosphere of specialization	Creative thinking, accepting and presenting innovative ideas to respond dynamically to challenges and complex issues; Ability to work effectively with members and transformative leadership; Adapting to environmental changes and the ability to change and adapt the organizational structure when facing new developments and needs
Organizational interactions	Intra-organizational communications	Creating a suitable atmosphere to preserve the value and accreditation of the specialists in the headquarters and improving the atmosphere governing the organization to accept specialized measures; honoring and acknowledging experts; Fair and meritorious salaries and rewards
	Inter-organizational communications	Integrity of operation and supervision; Collaborative relationships and decision-making; Regular reporting and sharing of knowledge and information of each department for accurate need assessment; Cooperation of different departments of the organization in determining the specialization strategy
		establishing inter-organizational communication channels; Creating joint venture agreements and contracts; giving guidance and feedback to the staff by experts from other related organizations; Using the outsourcing technique; working experience in different departments and providing an environment for innovation and creativity; Employing a specialized talent search team for key positions in the organization's headquarters (headhunter); Joint staff

As it is seen, the collection of the reasons the interviewees have provided for components of specialization in the recruitment of non-teaching staff in the Ministry of Education have been categorized into global themes including expertise management with two organizing themes (expertise management and performance management), resource management with four organizing themes (human, time, material, and information), change management with three organizing themes (change in organizational structure, change in competitive atmosphere, and change in attitude), and management of organizational development with four organizing themes (managerial

capabilities, human resource planning, creation of specialization culture, and organizational interactions), based on the type of conceptualization. These components are created simultaneously, and change in any of them would change the others. In fact, there is a mutual correlation between the components of specialization in the recruitment of the non-teaching staff in the Ministry of Education, in a way that they create a single unit in interaction with each other as a related set, which is called specialization in the recruitment of non-teaching staff in the Ministry of Education (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Final Model





#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The model proposed based on specialization in the recruitment of the non-teaching staff in the Ministry of Education is an orderly path for the authorities to begin institutionalization of the basics of specialization in the recruitment of non-teaching staff in the Ministry of Education, to achieve a sustainable scientific authority for national prosperity. Obviously, this important initiation, like many other great innovations in the Ministry of Education, is challenging and exhausting and requires efforts, credits, and other requirements. The proposed model is by no means inflexible, and it can be adapted to any conditions and requirements. However, this model has set the framework for the design and implementation of missions, policies, strategies, methods, and indicators of specialization in the recruitment of non-teaching staff in the Ministry of Education. It seems that to go through this long and critical path, big steps must be avoided, and on the contrary, small steps should be taken. Perhaps, one of the first and most important steps is the creation of knowledge and establishment of a correct vision among the managers and employees towards the concept of specialization and its basics, and consequently, creating a higher commitment in the headquarters of the Ministry of Education to prioritization of expertise and ability of individuals for recruitment of staff in the headquarters.

The first identified component of specialization of recruitment of non-teaching staff is collaborative management including expertise management (expertise promotion and collaboration) and performance management (performance commitment and professional networks). This finding is in line with some of the findings of researches such as (Au, 2016; Cutrini, 2010; Woods et al., 2020). Collaborative management is the management of collaborations and participating in efforts and activities to achieve a specific goal (Woods et al., 2020) (which is the specialization of recruitment of non-teaching staff in the Ministry of Education in the present study) that can be investigated at the intra-organizational and inter-organizational levels. By creating participation opportunities and intra-organizational and inter-organizational collaborations, the organization of education is known as an attractive and dynamic working environment and it can facilitate the recruitment of specialized non-teaching staff. By provision of joint training and building work teams, the expert non-teaching staff can enjoy an opportunity for

learning and professional development (Au, 2016). Good relationships with other organizations such as the Ministry of Education, universities, and various educational institutions can help the organization of education to connect effectively with the specialized human resources in the headquarters. Also, inter-organizational creates opportunities for the transfer of knowledge and experience in terms of recruitment and maintenance of specialized non-teaching staff. Moreover, the coordination and communication between different departments within the education organization obviously affect the organizational strategies and objectives through the creation of effective communications and determining the type of expertise needed by the organization as well as integrated cooperation for recruitment of merited specialized non-teaching staff. Cooperation and interaction can lead to the sharing of resources, experiences and knowledge, the creation of educational opportunities, and professional development. In addition, cooperation and communication lead to the flexibility of the organization against changes in the needs of the staff (Cutrini, 2010).

The second identified component is resource management including human, time, material, and informational resources. This finding is in line with some of the findings of prior studies (Jin et al., 2018; Potočnik et al., 2021). The human resource includes the personal skills, knowledge, experience, and capabilities that accumulate in an organization (Jin et al., 2018). The presence of a specialist and experienced workforce in the headquarters can increase the attractiveness of the organization for the expert employees since these employees seek opportunities for professional growth and development, and the presence of powerful human resources in the headquarters of the Ministry of Education can attract such employees. Time resource refers to the amount of time and energy people in the organizations spend to do their duties. Specialized headquarters need people who can manage their time and can effectively attract qualified candidates. The presence of adequate financial resources, having enough resources for proper payment, and the existence of enough physical facilities and equipment in the organization can increase the attractiveness of the organization to people so that more experts would be willing to enter the headquarters of the Ministry of Education (Potočnik et al., 2021).

Change management (change in organizational structure, change in competitive space, and change in attitude) is the third concept of specialization in the recruitment of non-teaching staff in the Ministry of Education. This finding is in

line with some of the findings of researches such as (Jin et al., 2018; Mak et al., 2011). Specialization is an approach in which special expertise is focused in the organizations. This approach usually promotes the increase in productivity and effectiveness of the organization and the use of expertise and experience of individuals in specific fields (Mak et al., 2011). For the recruitment of non-teaching staff in the Ministry of Education, the commitment and group attachment to the organizational structure play an important role. Commitment to the organization means adherence and motivation to be present and active in the organization. Group attachment is also a sense of attachment and solidarity with group and organization members. Group commitment and attachment make people with the expertise needed by the organization want to join it. The sense of group attachment and commitment makes the members of the organization go along with the values and goals of the organization and support the realization of specialization. It can lead to an increase in the employees' satisfaction and commitment to the organization. Group attachment leads the organization's members to share knowledge, experience, and strong and weak points. It can also be effective in the implementation of specialization and improvement of the organization's performance. It also makes people in the organization realize common goals with greater cooperation and coordination (Talib & Fitzgerald, 2015). This can be effective in the recruitment of non-teaching staff by focusing on specializations and ultimately implementing specialization. Administrative commitment in specialization means the commitment of group members to perform their duties and responsibilities with quality and on time. By providing professional performance and progress in the execution of duties, the members show that they adhere to their commitment to achieving the group's goal (specialization in recruiting staff). Commitment and potential for specialization growth means the members focus on the development and improvement of their expertise. They seek to increase their skills and knowledge so that they offer their best performance in the field of their expertise. Sustainability commitment is maintaining the group and keeping the members in the group. The members allocate the required resources and energy to the group to maintain and continue the optimal performance, believing in the importance of presence and participation in the group. The promotion of ethical performance and values is also among the notable components of specialization. The members try to achieve supreme performance to achieve the goals through quality work and ethical values. Internal and

external relationships are also an important part of specialization in the recruitment of non-teaching staff in the Ministry of Education. It is the cooperation and coordination of the members inside the group and the proportionality of the group's needs and expectations and other classes of society (Jin et al., 2018). Also, external relationships include familiarity and cooperation with other organizations and the provision of data and information in a correct and on-time manner.

The fourth identified component of the specialization in the recruitment of the non-teaching staff in the Ministry of Education is the management of organizational development (managerial capabilities, HRP, creation of specialization culture in the organization, and organizational interactions). This finding is in line with some of the prior findings (Beviá & Corchón, 2017; Gift & Obindah, 2020; Potočnik et al., 2021). The creation of a professional identity for the organization attracts specialist and professional employees. To do so, the organization should announce its outlook and values clearly, and demonstrate its professional achievements (Gift & Obindah, 2020). These measures attract people who are compatible with the values and goals of the organization and have the necessary skills and expertise. Improvement of the process of non-teaching staff recruitment through respecting and valuing the experts can be incredibly effective. It includes the provision of opportunities for training and professional development, fair assessment of performance, and regular evaluation of employees. These measures not only attract experienced experts with high capabilities but also maintain existing experts in the organization. Proper and fair payment and rewards for the non-teaching staff, in addition to the attraction of the capabilities, help to retain them. Through the creation of a fair system for performance evaluation and setting salaries and rewards, the organization creates a competitive and motivational environment for its employees. The process of recruitment of non-teaching staff should take place with precision. Identification of employees with appropriate expertise for the headquarters of the Ministry of Education is greatly important. Bevia & Corchon (2017) believes that ability to communicate with experts and the formation of professional networks is greatly effective in the recruitment of non-teaching staff (Beviá & Corchón, 2017). These networks can prepare resources for the recruitment of people with the needed expertise and also allow the organization to use the experiences and knowledge of others. The ability to negotiate and solve problems comprehensively allows managers to cooperate with non-

teaching staff in the process of recruitment. These skills include the power of analysis and evaluation of problems, provision of innovative solutions, and negotiation in different situations. Using these abilities, managers can improve the trend of specialization in the recruitment of non-teaching staff and obviate various complexities and challenges. Skill in communicating with different people and mastering communication methods suitable for each person can be effective in recruiting non-teaching staff. Strong and effective communications create good relationships with non-teaching staff and increase the organization's attractiveness to them. The ability of idealistic thinking and the provision of innovative solutions can play a very important role in the recruitment of non-teaching staff. The non-teaching staff usually seek challenging opportunities and spaces with potential for innovation and rule-breaking. Potocnik et al (2021) believe that, a manager with soft and hard skills can play a fundamental role in the implementation of specialized recruitment of nonteaching staff in the Ministry of Education since he can accurately identify the specialized needs of the organization, predict the needs for improvement and development of various departments, and use these analyses to determine the needs for human resources, set a proper strategy for recruitment of non-teaching staff with needed expertise, and follow proper methods for recruitment of expert employees such as the social networks, industrial events, and cooperation with universities (Potočnik et al., 2021).

The authorities and managers in the Ministry of Education should properly set the duties and responsibilities after recruiting the non-teaching staff, and organize them effectively. It includes determining specified goals and duties, setting the roles and responsibilities, creating a proper organizational structure, and setting the communication and cooperation methods (Joo, 2020). The managers' personal improvement skills can lead to the creation of a positive and inspirational work environment for non-teaching staff by improving their motivation and leading them (Beviá & Corchón, 2017). This work environment itself can play an important role in the recruitment of talented and expert employees. Managers who are interested in self-improvement skills encourage the human resources in the organization to develop through the provision of required opportunities and facilities. This development of skills can also help with the recruitment and deployment of specialized employees since people with high capabilities often seek opportunities for development and learning. Managers who

are skilled in self-improvement usually have better organization and planning capabilities and these skills are very important for the specialized recruitment of staff since they allow for the optimization of the process of capable workforce recruitment and deployment. Also, the managers who have developed the self-improvement skills are usually more skilled at communicating which itself plays an important role in the recruitment of specialized non-teaching staff since effective communication with candidates and a close connection with the experts network provide more opportunities to recruit and deploy specialized workforce. As a result, the managers' self-improvement skills can be effective in the specialization of the recruitment of the non-teaching staff since it positively affects the motivation, development of skills, organization, planning, and communications. Knowledge management is the processes and methods used to collect, organize, maintain, share, and utilize knowledge in an organization. It helps with the recognition and identification of the organization's specialized needs to determine what expertise and knowledge are needed by the organization so that the strategy for the entrance of knowledge and expertise into the organization through the recruitment of expert employees or provision of specialized training to the non-teaching staff and knowledge transfer in the headquarters' departments can be set and implemented. It finally leads to the creation of a sharing culture in the headquarters of the organization for which the manager's perceptive skill is important. The managers should be able to organize and manage the failures in the implementation of specialization of recruitment of the non-teaching staff, analyze the failures, and use these failures as opportunities for learning. They should be able to make necessary improvements in organizational plans and structures to create a culture that accepts failures and tries to revise. Precise need analysis and non-teaching staff empowerment mechanisms are required for human resources planning to implement the specialization of the recruitment of the non-teaching staff. Paying special attention to meritocracy in the headquarters departments such as setting the job values for each position, the use of the benchmarking system (comparison of one's own organization's salary and rewards with those of similar organizations to assess the rate of its attractiveness for the experts), transparency in the criterion for determination of salary and rewards, and flexibility in non-teaching staff's payments (Crumpton, 2011) lead to higher motivation for the experts to enter the headquarters and improve their performance.

Finally, the transition from the stage of the recruitment of non-teaching staff in the Ministry of Education with the current traditional and non-specialized methods to implementation of specialization in the recruitment of these staff requires an all-out review and rethinking in effective approaches in the recruitment of non-teaching staff (Spain et al., 2022). The headquarters of the Ministry of Education are on this path when they obtain a better recognition of the effective factors in the recruitment of expert employees, existing problems and challenges, and the needs and expectations of these employees, and also implement the recommendations and solutions provided by the scholars for improvement. Unfortunately, despite the fact that there is an obvious need for expert staff in the headquarters of the Education Organization, sufficient attention has not been paid to the precise implementation of this matter. The findings of the present study can be used as a foundation and model for planning, implementing, revising, and improving the policies and strategies to recruit expert employees in the headquarters of the Ministry of Education.

Among the limitations of the present study were some problems in the execution of the project among which the shortage of domestic studies in the field of specialization of the recruitment of the non-teaching staff in the Ministry of Education can be named. Coordinating the interviews with the participants was a very difficult task, and in some cases, people introduced by others were not willing to be interviewed. Due to political interventions, the participants were not willing to discuss the challenges in the recruitment of expert employees in the headquarters.

Further studies are recommended in the following fields:

- Examining the barriers to the implementation of specialization in the recruitment of non-teaching staff in the education system and ways to improve it.
- Evaluation of the current situation of recruitment of the non-teaching staff in the education system based on the specialization framework formulated in the present research.

### Authors' Contributions

The first author was responsible for conducting the interview and collecting data, and the other authors were responsible for analyzing the data and writing the article.

### Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

### Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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### Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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### Ethics Considerations

In this study, to observe ethical considerations, participants were informed about the goals and importance of the research before the start of the interview and participated in the research with informed consent.

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