

## Identifying the Effective Social Factors on the Formation of Future Work Self

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**Purpose:** Career foresight is a new concept in career path ultramodern approaches about career choice, career transition and career development. As a result, the aim of this study was to Identifying the Effective Social Factors on the Formation of Future Work Self.

**Methodology:** This study in terms of purpose was developmental and in terms of implementation method was qualitative. The members of the research were the professors of human resource management and organizational behavior and human resource managers of Tehran Municipality. The sample size based on the principle of theoretical saturation was calculated 15 people who were selected by purposive sampling method. The tool of the present study was a semi-structured interview, which its validity was confirmed by the triangulation method and its reliability was calculated by the agreement coefficient method between two coders 0.83. Data were analyzed by thematic analysis method in MAXQDA software.

**Findings:** The findings of the interview with 15 people about the effective social factors on the formation of career foresight indicated that this structure had 28 basic theme, 11 organizing theme and 5 inclusive theme. The inclusive themes of this study were included the conditions of society (including two organizing themes of economic conditions of society and society's values), key characters (including two organizing themes of type of activity of models and heroes and opinions of influential people), educational conditions of school and university (including two organizing themes of content of educational courses of school and university and educational facilities and methods of school and university), family conditions (including three organizing themes of family behavior, family economy and family customs and values) and technology and media (including two organizing themes of lifestyle in media and technology). Based on the identified themes in the current research, a network of themes of effective social factors on the formation of career foresight was designed.

**Conclusion:** According to the findings of this study, municipal managers by recognizing the effective social factors on the formation of career foresight and guiding them through cooperation and coordination with influential institutions such as cultural institutions, education and higher education can create coordination between the individual's career goals with the organization's needs, goals and missions and create and reduce numerous changes in the career path of employees and waste of resources.

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## 1. Introduction

Today's world is a world of change and transformation, and this rapid transformation of societies affects individuals' future and their attitudes towards the future of societies. Indeed, the attitude towards the future, the evaluation of the future, and future orientation are important parts of life, expectations, concerns, and orientations of individuals (Sarpong, Eyres, and Batsakis, 2019). A macro view of today's world and its main actors reveals the existence of influential institutions and organizations in future studies and foresight in the centers of power and decision-making of the world's major and developed powers. Their future-oriented approach to global issues and planning for the future likely further solidifies their dominance in the world of tomorrow. Current societal problems arise from a lack of intelligent future recognition, and thus understanding future transformations with a foresight approach is essential (Taghvaei Yazdi, 2018). Future studies methodically and structurally utilize a wide range of methodologies to speculate, examine, and study multiple possible, probable, and desirable futures instead of envisioning just one future (Shafahi, Chenari, and Afkaneh, 2023). Foresight is a systematic effort to examine the long-term future of science, technology, economy, environment, and society to identify emerging phenomena and foundational research areas that yield the greatest economic and social benefits (Motamedi & Mohammadi, 2018). Foresight is a form of strategic thinking that learners can learn through discussions on future-oriented planning and link the present to the future (Iden, Methlie, and Christensen, 2017).

In addition to addressing current challenges, one of the major efforts of planners in developed countries is to think about future challenges and how to confront them in various fields through a future-oriented approach (May et al., 2021). Foresight and planning effectively merge into one another, with foresight being an imperative for planners and a foundation for planning and managing programs and activities (Bulley and Gullo, 2017). Foresight represents humanity's sensitivity and inclination to understand and predict future events, tasked with analyzing past trends, discovering, inventing, and evaluating possible, probable, and desirable futures (Hobday et al, 2020). Today's aware and forward-thinking managers and planners, instead of waiting to welcome the future in the workplace and making decisions when faced with the future, align their planning thinking with a time machine and design policies and strategies to reach that desirable future (Dufva, Konnola, and Koivisto, 2015). Foresight, while better understanding strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, creates the conditions for predicting events and significant life occurrences and allows for optimal use of resources. Any organization that does not envision and plan for its future will adopt a passive approach when faced with challenges, and its position will decline compared to competing organizations (Burrows & Gnad, 2018).

The reasons for the importance and necessity of foresight are as follows: 1. Assessing the ability to achieve missions, policies, goals, and considering environmental factors in their realization is an important and primary condition of prediction. 2. For the long-term survival of organizations, drawing long-term horizons of plans and predicting activities is essential. 3. Understanding the future environment and defining the factors affecting it is possible with foresight. 4. Foresight allows for the assessment of results and prediction of the consequences of actions, preventing organizational problems. 5. Prediction is the most important factor for defining missions and goals, and through prediction, one can design clear horizons for activities. 6. Envisioning an organization's future creates a commitment to the future and reduces insistence on implementing current organizational guidelines. 7. Predicting potential scenarios during strategic planning helps prevent decline and accelerates growth conditions. 8. Usually, in planning, foresight and the study of consequences and outcomes of plans have a special and essential place. 9. Recognizing the future and its importance can be a good guide for training forces to counter challenges. 10. Foresight in organizations and aligning educational programs with future needs prevents organizational stagnation. 11. Essentially, human superiority over other creatures is their ability to predict. 12. The culture of prediction and foresight are useful and important teachings from the philosophy of expectation (Hamidzade and Fathi Vajargah, 2009).

Foresight is a systematic effort that tries to outline the quantity and quality of current changes or lack thereof and their impact on creating future realities and seeks to analyze resources, patterns, and causes of change and stability to strengthen prediction and outline alternative futures (Marinkovic et al., 2022). This concept includes a set of advanced thinking methods used to recognize opportunities and threats and the potential of the future to enhance planning and policy-making. In fact, foresight is a structured method for discovering and systematically studying the future and developing visions and applying policies (Rohrbeck & Kum, 2018). One of the areas and approaches of foresight is career foresight, where individuals identify the future needs of the labor market and perform developmental behaviors for planning and improving job skills related to their future (Sacio-Szymanska, Kononiuk, and Tommei, 2017). The concept of career foresight focuses on a set of job predictions and behaviors that refer to self-directed activities individuals do to manage their careers (Gershmann, Bredikhin, and Vishnevskiy, 2016). Career foresight helps individuals anticipate the future needs of jobs and develop their capabilities and competencies, creating favorable conditions for increasing individual and organizational productivity (Yoon et al., 2019).

Very few studies have been conducted on career foresight, and no research was found on the social factors influencing its formation. The results of the most important studies in this field are reported as follows. Vshalghi and Sharifzadeh (2022), in a study on foresight in career development and intelligent education with the mediating role of future-oriented personality, concluded that foresight in career development has both direct and indirect effects on employees' intelligent education through the mediating future-oriented personality. Mohamadpour, Mousavi, Nazarpouri, and Vahdati (2021), in a study on designing a model of future-oriented career behaviors in the oil industry with an interpretive structural modeling approach, concluded that 22 indicators were identified at 5 levels, with human resource development, empowerment, efficiency, and productivity improvement at the first level; ensuring job security amid changes, improving employability, cultivating world-class human resources, and human resource flexibility at the second level; future-focused talent management, self-regulation and self-management, knowledge-based innovation, and proactive and predictive learning at the third level; skills for diverse career orientation, cultural and emotional intelligence, creative and innovative thinking, analytical and critical thinking, and change acceptance skills at the fourth level; and teamwork skills, communication and interpersonal skills, future-focused technological skills, problem-solving and strategic intelligence skills at the fifth level. Mousavi, Sepahvand, Shariatnejad, and Mousavi (2020), in a study on identifying and explaining future-oriented career behaviors to improve job applicants' employability, concluded that 18 factors including clear and realistic outlook, cultural intelligence, communication skills, stress management, dynamic learning, strategic thinking, creative courage, technological skills, emotional intelligence, knowledge-based innovation, change acceptance skills, problem-solving abilities, future-focused technical skills, strategic analysis skills, cognitive abilities, teamwork skills, social intelligence, and verbal skills were identified. Zhang, Maolin, Jian, and Yushuai (2016), in a study on the future of work: concept, measurement, and related research, reported that in addition to individual characteristics, social and economic conditions of society play a significant role in career foresight, and career foresight positively impacts professional behavior, job search outcomes, work creativity, and job performance.

Regarding the importance and necessity of foresight, it can be said that the future outlook is of great importance, and our awareness of the future and foresight affects our perceptions and beliefs about the future or even predicting the future. In fact, individuals' attitudes towards the future are related to their mental feelings about personal well-being. Also, in a world where job creation and loss have become common phenomena in the business environment, examining the social factors influencing the formation of career foresight is of great importance to maintain and even improve one's competitive advantage in the world of job creation and loss. Career foresight is a new concept in postmodern career approaches regarding job selection, job transition, and career development. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify the social factors influencing the formation of career foresight.

## 2. Methodology

This study was developmental in terms of objective and qualitative in terms of implementation method. The research members were professors in the field of human resource management and organizational behavior and human resource managers of Tehran Municipality. The sample size, calculated based on the principle of theoretical saturation, was 15 people, selected through purposeful sampling. According to the principle of theoretical saturation, sampling continues until research reaches saturation in terms of findings, and when new samples cannot add new findings to the previous ones, the sampling and research end. The number and percentage of interviewees' characteristics are presented in Table 1.

In order to test the research question, structural equation modeling was utilized using AMOS. The findings of the study were obtained through the questionnaire designed based on the qualitative section of the research, and the relevant component indices were subjected to statistical analysis. Two partial indices of critical value and significance level were used to test the research question. The critical value is the value obtained by dividing the estimated weight of regression by the standard error. According to the 0.05 level of significance, the critical path must be greater than 1.96 or less than -1.96; otherwise, the corresponding parameter is not significant in the model. Smaller values of 0.05 indicate a significant difference between the calculated regression weights and the value of zero at the 99.0 level of confidence.

**Table 1.** Fit indices for the structural equation modeling

| Variable   | Gender |       | Age (year) |       |         | Degree |           | Position               |
|------------|--------|-------|------------|-------|---------|--------|-----------|------------------------|
|            | Female | Male  | Under 40   | 40-45 | Over 45 | PhD    | Professor | Human resource manager |
| Frequency  | 5      | 10    | 2          | 6     | 7       | 15     | 8         | 7                      |
| Percentage | 33.33  | 67.66 | 33.13      | 40    | 67.46   | 100    | 33.53     | 67.46                  |

The instrument of the present study was a semi-structured interview conducted individually with each sample member. The main interview question was, "Can you explain the social factors influencing the formation of career foresight?" Side questions included discussions about employees' mental imagery of their future careers and how they portray and talk about it. Since the interview was semi-structured, other questions emerged during the interview based on discussions related to each interviewee, continuing until they had nothing more to add. Interview durations ranged from 50 to 70 minutes. The validity of the interviews was confirmed through triangulation, and their reliability was calculated using the inter-rater agreement coefficient method (0.83).

The following processes were pursued in this research to achieve the goal and conduct the study:

1. Reviewing the literature, including credible domestic and international articles related to career foresight.
2. Formulating interview questions with the help of professors aligned with the research objectives for conducting semi-structured interviews.
3. Selecting samples or interviewees from the statistical population using a purposive sampling method.
4. Explaining the importance and necessity of the research and obtaining samples' consent for participation in the interview.
5. Conducting individual semi-structured interviews and recording them.
6. Analytically reviewing each interview and extracting themes.
7. Analyzing all interviews in general using thematic analysis in MAXQDA software.

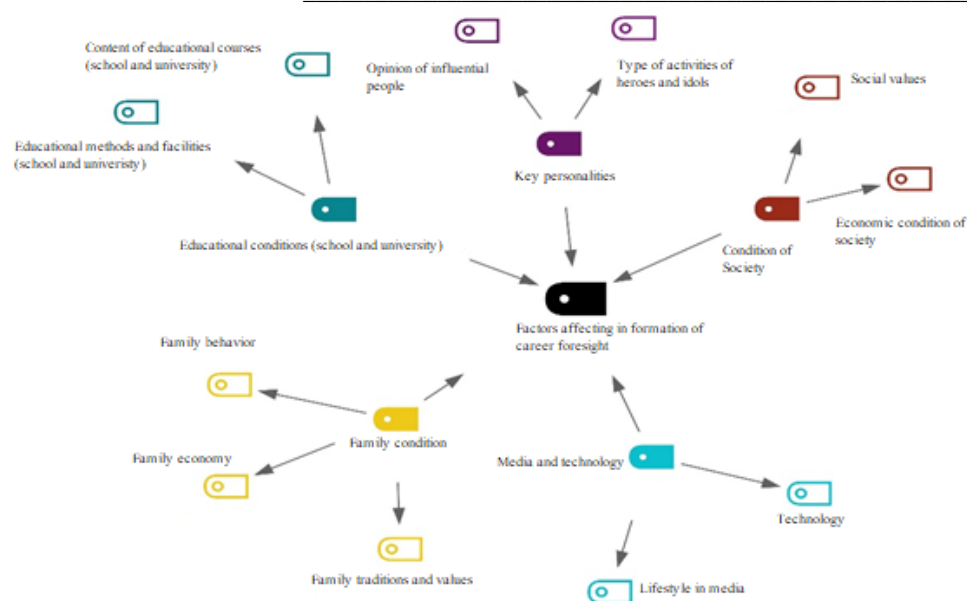
## 3. Findings

The findings from interviews with 15 experts about social factors influencing the formation of career foresight are reported in Table 2.

**Table 2.** The results of thematic analysis of factors influencing the formation of career foresight

| Comprehensive category                             | Organizing category                          | Basic category                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Social Conditions                                  | Economic conditions of the society           | Economic growth                                                    |
|                                                    |                                              | Employment problems                                                |
|                                                    |                                              | Job market needs                                                   |
|                                                    | Values of the society                        | Prestige                                                           |
|                                                    |                                              | Social paradigms                                                   |
|                                                    |                                              | Society's value system                                             |
| Key Personalities                                  | Type of activities, patterns, and heroes     | Model professions                                                  |
|                                                    |                                              | Heroic professions                                                 |
|                                                    |                                              | Professions of influential individuals in society                  |
|                                                    | Opinions of influential individuals          | Opinions of people who interact with the individual                |
|                                                    |                                              | Position of professions among friends                              |
|                                                    |                                              | Feedback from friends                                              |
| Educational Conditions in Schools and Universities | Content of school and university courses     | Occupational training courses in schools and universities          |
|                                                    |                                              | Apprenticeships                                                    |
|                                                    |                                              | Vocational counseling courses in schools and universities          |
|                                                    | Teaching methods in schools and universities | Training facilities and equipment in schools and universities      |
|                                                    |                                              | Teaching methods of professors and teachers                        |
|                                                    |                                              | Individual's freedom to make decisions within the family           |
| Family Conditions                                  | Family behavior                              | Educational upbringing of the family                               |
|                                                    |                                              | Family income                                                      |
|                                                    | Family economy                               | Facilities and equipment provided by the family for the individual |
|                                                    |                                              | Family values                                                      |
|                                                    | Customs and values of the family             | Family customs and norms                                           |
|                                                    |                                              | Professions and careers of ancestors and family members            |
| Technology and Media                               | Lifestyle in media                           | Lifestyle portrayed in media                                       |
|                                                    |                                              | Professions depicted in films and TV series                        |
|                                                    | Technology                                   | Innovative work methods<br>New software.                           |

The thematic analysis results of social factors influencing career foresight formation included 28 basic themes, 11 organizing themes, and 5 comprehensive themes. The comprehensive themes of this study included societal conditions (including two organizing themes of society's economic conditions and values), key personalities (including activities of role models and heroes and opinions of influential individuals), educational conditions in schools and universities (including course content and teaching methods and facilities), family conditions (including family behavior, economy, customs, and values), and technology and media (including lifestyles in media and technology) (Table 2). The results of the theme network of social factors influencing the formation of career foresight are presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** The results of themes network factors of influencing the formation of career foresight

The results of thematic analysis indicated that this construct contained 5 comprehensive themes of societal conditions, key personalities, educational conditions in schools and universities, family conditions, and technology and media.

#### 4. Conclusion

The goal of this study was to identify social factors influencing the formation of career foresight. Findings from interviews with 15 experts revealed that these factors comprised 28 basic themes, 11 organizing themes, and 5 comprehensive themes. The comprehensive themes included societal conditions, key personalities, educational conditions, family conditions, and technology and media. The study's findings were in line with research by Vshalghi and Sharifzadeh (2022), Mohamadpour et al. (2021), Mousavi et al. (2020), and Zhang et al. (2016).

The first comprehensive theme, societal conditions, includes economic conditions and societal values. Experts believe that these factors significantly influence career foresight. Economic prosperity, unemployment, employment challenges, market demands, prestige, societal paradigms, and valued societal norms influence career foresight formation.

The second theme, key personalities, includes the activities of role models, heroes, and influential individuals' opinions. Experts believe that these factors shape career foresight, including the professions of heroes, role models, influential individuals in society, friends' opinions, and their perceptions of various professions.

The third theme, educational conditions, includes the content of school and university courses and teaching methods. Experts agree that these factors influence career foresight, including internship programs, job training courses, subjects taught, career counseling, educational facilities, teaching methods, and instructors' approaches.

The fourth theme, family conditions, includes family behavior, economy, customs, and values. Experts believe these factors affect career foresight, including the level of individual freedom in the family, the environment for advancement and decision-making, parenting style, family income, resources provided, family values, customs, and ancestors' professions.

The fifth theme, technology and media, includes lifestyles portrayed in media and technology. Experts contend that these factors influence career foresight, including lifestyles in movies, media representations, portrayed professions, technology, modern work methods, and new software.

This study focused on identifying social factors affecting career foresight in Tehran Municipality. Given the results and considering Tehran Municipality's role as a non-governmental, public, and local entity addressing urban, service, social, welfare, and cultural needs, it can influence social indicators through cultural centers, neighborhood houses, citizenship education, cooperation with schools and higher education institutions. It can guide individuals' career foresight towards the needs and goals of Tehran Municipality through long-term planning. Given the results, it is suggested that training courses focused on Tehran Municipality's jobs and activities be conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology. Also, through job counseling and citizenship education in neighborhood houses, families should be informed about various factors such as decision-making freedom, family customs, and values of different professions and the impact of resources and facilities on career foresight formation. The Deputy for Social and Cultural Affairs should develop a comprehensive program through cultural centers and neighborhood houses in the form of citizenship education to familiarize people with the concept of career foresight and its influencing factors, introducing them to the jobs, objectives, and missions of Tehran Municipality. Considering the joint memorandum between the Deputy of Art and Cinema of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and Tehran Municipality's Deputy of Cultural and Artistic Affairs, it is proposed to produce films, animations, banners, and content about Tehran Municipality's jobs (e.g., mayor, firefighter, sanitation worker, gardener) to guide people's career foresight towards the municipality's job needs.

### **Ethical Considerations**

In this study, ethical norms including confidentiality and privacy of personal information were observed.

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### **Authors' Contributions**

In this study, the student was responsible for conducting interviews and data analysis, and the professors supervised the proper conduct of interviews and data analysis.

### **Conflict of Interest**

There was no conflict of interest.

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