Designing and Validating of the Scale of Virtuousness-based Leadership in the Education of Iran

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Abstract

Background: The present study is a small step in designing and validating a virtue-led leadership scale in Iranian higher education.

Objectives: The purpose of this study was designing and validating a scale of virtuous leadership in the education of Iran. So far, extensive and wide efforts have been made in this regard but to date. It seems that there is no comprehensive and credible scale that ca n be valid and from a practical point of view that can be validated and practically guides faculty and faculty in professional practice.

Method: The research method was descriptive-correlation with emphasis on structural equations. To accomplish the purpose, two studies were conducted, first a theoretical study through which the basic themes were extracted and important research related to the topic, then the validation process and the scale adequacy were determined. The study population consisted of all faculty members of Shiraz University, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz and Persian Gulf University of Bushehr. Samples were selected using multistage Random Sampling Method in a total of 370 samples. Data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire of Virtuousness Oriented Leadership.

Results: This questionnaire was developed based on theoretical and research studies in 53 items with basic personal (personality, skill) and organizational factors. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.92 was obtained. Face and content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by experts. Data were analyzed using SPSS and LISREL software.

Conclusion: The results showed that the scale studied is valid. Thus individual factors with personality, skill and organizational factors are appropriate for designing a Virtuousness Oriented Leadership scale in the education.

Key words: Virtuousness-Oriented Leadership, Design scale leadership, Validity, Reliability, Education

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Introduction

Leadership is a vast and complex process. The complexity of the leadership process has led to this process having multiple structures and methods, as well as distinctive styles and patterns. From a theoretical point of view, the leadership process can be considered as one of the most important pillars of management. From this perspective, leadership, along with planning, decision making, organizing, communication, and control can be the guiding and influencing factors on people's attitudes and behaviors in organizations. A leader with distinct personality traits always encourages people to behave effectively to achieve the goals of the organization. The goal of the organization is an important criterion that the leadership in every position is trying to set it as an objective (Luthans, 2011).

From another perspective, leadership can be seen as a broader process of management, in that this inspiring flow, on a very large scale, leads the flow of management and its components in the interaction with the organization. The leadership process is a social flow perspective that not only emphasizes the interaction and dynamics of the organization with its environment, but also the structure and management process within the organization (Scott, 1998).

It has been several decades since the leadership debate in organizations has been scientifically followed, and the theoretical studies and scientific evidence abound have shown that leadership has styles, patterns, methods and there are many different techniques (Hoy & Miskel, 2005). Among leadership styles, ethical leadership style and more specifically virtue-based leadership style can be mentioned. Leadership is actually the creation of virtue and excellence, which should oversee the change, innovation, and traditional academic values to meet new and, sometimes, strange needs (Rajaipour et al., 1977, 297). In the ethical leadership style, the issue of values, their preservation and survival within and outside the organization, the development of values and the creation of ethical behavior styles among the individuals of the organization is of particular importance. The ethical leader strives to develop ethical values within the organization and to attract other behaviors as a magnetic force. But leadership in organizations is subject to many variables. The increasing growth of technology, the constant transformation of the organization structure, the creation of opportunities, the growth of information and knowledge of individuals, the growing increase of expectations and serious competitiveness of organizations all indicate the complexity of the leadership process. Given the complexity and diversity of the above variables, ethical leadership in organizations needs to emphasize the complexity and creativity of the organization's ethical values and culture, and to put them at the core of this complexity. Virtue-based leadership is one of the most important ethical leadership styles. Emphasizing virtue and extending it as a core value is one of the challenges that small and large bureaucratic organizations are facing. Leaders of bureaucratic organizations seek to combat immoral traits that are widely embraced by organizations and individuals today, using virtue as their core value. The virtue of eternal value is unique and distinct that has been emphasized in moral schools, especially in Islam. Virtue means the excellence of grace, goodness, righteousness, truth, and justice. Virtue as a noun means advantage, superiority, and strength.

Barata (2016) believes that it is necessary to identify organizational values and norms in order to continuously develop follower performance. If these ethical themes become prevalent in the organization, in fact the organization will continue to exist on the basis of grace. Education is an important, influential and widespread social organization. From one point, it is moving from its social space and social environment and from another point, is a very important variable affecting

all institutions and social relationships. Leadership in education is a vital and crucial process. The value orientation of higher education relies largely on the leadership of the organization. Higher education leaders can strive to institutionalize the values expressed by social philosophy. Ethics is defined as a philosophical system that involves the spiritual guidance and decision making of humans (Arasteh & Jahed, 2011: 33). If university managers provide the conditions for employees to become involved in their work and their potential forces become effective, their performance will certainly improve (Homayne-Mamirchi et al., 1977: 290). Higher education can be virtuous as long as its leaders have faith regarding the virtue of personal and organizational. By placing virtue as a core goal of the organization, higher education leaders can take an effective step toward building value. The development of moral virtues in higher education is a fundamental step in the development of these virtues in society. Higher education graduates, if raised in the university environment, are honest and capable of conveying values to the community. (Singh & Berger, 2017) It seems that the cultural and value dimensions of universities can have widespread impacts in the future of higher education, with leadership approaches important in controlling them. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, higher education and, consequently, the university, can carry Islamic values and at the heart of them are the virtues-based moral values.

The development of spirituality, ethics and religious culture is one of the main concerns in the higher education of the Islamic Republic of Iran, but the question of how well higher education has been successful in attracting and developing authentic Islamic-Iranian culture has been a matter of concern. The challenges are profound, the challenges are profound and serious, and the effort to address them continues. A glance at the efforts made in higher education over the past few decades suggests that higher education officials, administrators and practitioners have done a great deal of serious, responsible work so far, but because of many efforts. Trials have been done through trial and error and there has been no well-established theoretical basis and conceptual framework for guidance, many of these activities have not been fruitful, either inefficient, marginalized or partially ineffective. The attempt to find a theoretical and conceptual framework that is capable of guiding education managers to lead the institution in the path of divine, religious, and ethical values derived from the school of Islam is of fundamental importance in theory and research. The present study is a small step in designing and validating a virtue-led leadership scale in Iranian higher education. In this section of the paper we will give a brief overview of theoretical and research studies in developed countries and Iran.

Research background

Many studies have been or are being conducted in the world of leadership debates, styles, and patterns that emphasize ethics. Cardwell (2016) acknowledges the complexity of the culture and structure of educational organizations and considers leadership in such organizations complex, ethical, and political. Notrthhouse (2013) and Yuki (2011) define leadership as the process of influencing a group of people to achieve common goals. A process that is based on the behaviors and values of the leader in order to link important organizational activities to organizational goals. Targeted research to identify leadership styles goes back several decades. Examples of leadership studies in Ohayo (1945), McGregor's X and Y theory in 1960, Lewin participatory leadership (1978), Blake & Mouton managerial grid (1964), and Fidler's contingency leadership model (1967) can be cited. The growing interest in literature today focuses on servant leadership, participatory leadership, ethical leadership, spiritual leadership, genuine leadership, and accountable leadership. (Brown et al., 2005) (Avolio et al., 2009) (Carter & Greer, 2013). In the area of organizational

culture, managing the values of the organization is one of the key roles of leaders (Chikeleze, 2014). It can be said that leadership and organizational culture are highly intertwined (Mathew, 2016). With the transformational leadership plan by Burnez in 1970 and its development by Bass, serious attention was paid to development. In the second half of the twentieth century, the title of servant leadership by Greenleaf was discussed in an article. . Ethical leadership was then introduced in the late twentieth century, and Ciulla first discussed the subject of one of his essays on ethical leadership. Hegarty and Moccia (2018) have described traits such as gratitude, humility, justness, compassion, compassion, forethought, chivalry, and coherence for the moral leader.

Hazrat and Mimarzadeh (2014) mentioned two individual and organizational dimensions for ethical leadership and reported the individual dimension including, education, service, spirituality, and organizational dimension: role-maker, enabler, and communicator. According to Chikeleze (2014), its most important components include: honesty, awareness, popular orientation, motivation, empowerment and ethical responsiveness. In authentic leadership, being authentic is important and behaviors are shaped by values. Bobokcarnea (2016) believes that the roots of authentic leadership are in ancient Greece. Characteristics of this leadership style include: cohesion, honesty, responsibility and self-confidence, communicative transparency, self-awareness, creating and maintaining a genuine culture, positive psychological capital. Pless & Maak (2011) listed responsive leadership traits: accountability and responsibility, trustworthiness, empowerment, insight, transparent communication, appropriate decision making, concern for others. All of these styles pay close attention to the ethical values in the organization, but they do not explicitly express virtues. Cameron (2003) believes in the extraordinary power of virtues in the individual and collective consequences of the organization. The discussion of virtues is essentially concerned with the evolution of those traits or traits that influence one's behavior and decision making (Corona, 1396, 105). Leaders influence the development of group virtues. (Rego et al., 2013). The virtues are diverse, Brown (2011) in his research deals with features that are considered by scholars to be the virtues of leadership, such as: futurism, goodwill, reverence, merit and worth, inspiration. Part, courage, foresight, justice and moderation, hope and trust, integrity, humility and cohesion. And Callina et al. (2017) introduce good personality with traits such as honesty, kindness, and usefulness. Singh and Berger (2017, 41) have also mentioned attributes such as honesty, kindness, caring, transparency, responsibility, reliability, respect, humility, courage, gratitude and generosity.

Racelis (2013) named the theory of virtue as an ethical paradigm appropriate for the organization and named factors such as concern and care, competencies, ambition, and excellence as virtues. Hessel (2013) believes that the virtuous behavior of individuals in an organization can be derived from religion, spirituality, philosophy, ethics, law and genuine humanity. In the study by Balliett and Kelloway (2011) entitled Virtual Leaders: Evaluating Strong Workplace Atmosphere, they concluded that the relationships between visual leader and employee emotional commitment, leader humanity and employee well-being, employee organizational citizenship behaviors, and employee cognitive trust Emotional trust between employees and between leader moderation and employee trust. The attribute of a leader's accountability plays a key role in his becoming a virtuous leader (Pearce, Waldman, & Csiks, 2006).

Hejazi far et al. (2015) in their research identifying the components of virtue-centered and jihadist organizations; discussed the transcendental virtues, organizational strengths, organizational brotherhood, wisdom, epidemics, courage, devotion, continuous striving, leading cited management and flexibility. Caldwell, Hasan, and Smith (2015) in a study entitled Virtual Leadership: A

Perspective for the 21st Century, concluded that virtuous leaders have an unusual level of commitment to their employees, which is to their customers, stakeholders and individually. Serving, possessing, and expanding the concept of ethical community as a whole, they recognized the importance of a virtuous approach to optimizing, creating capital, fostering relationships and outcomes in value and commitment, and in their view The personality traits of a virtuous leader include personality (committed and honest), technical competence, commitment, courage, transparency, compassion, and compassion. Wang (2011), in his research, empirically and conceptually examining the virtues of leader and virtuous leadership, concluded that leader virtues are predictors of virtuous leadership, and the six main characteristics of virtues leader are: courage, compassion, justice, moderation, Humanity and integrity are also positively associated with virtue perceptions of followers 'ethical leadership and leader effectiveness, as well as with followers' ethical behaviors and performance in the role and beyond that assessed by the leader.

Cameron (2003) concluded in his study of organizational virtues and performance that positive organizational performance is related to virtues. Virtues such as optimism, hope, kindness, forgiveness, emotional cohesion, intimacy, and self-esteem are associated with better employee performance in the workplace, and Smith (2013) believes that organizational virtues are associated with improved social status. Araju and Lopez (2014), in a study aimed at understanding followers of the effect of virtuosity leadership on organizational commitment as well as contributing to individual performance, concluded that employees understand three dimensions of virtuous leadership, one dimension of virtuous leadership (value, perseverance and maturity), the second dimension contributes to organizational commitment, and especially the third dimension to their norms and emotions, so it can positively influence individual performance. Moral virtues are emphasized in Islamic sources, and one of the reasons for the Prophet's (PBUH) promotion is to promote good ethics in society. There are many ethical virtues expressed in Islam including: divine mercy, patience, trustworthiness, justice, belief in faith, avoidance of greed, acquisition of a legitimate money, acquisition of knowledge, benefaction, kindness, mercy, benevolence, faithfulness etc.

Many of the virtues that great Prophet have described, and some of Imam Ali's criteria for leadership in Nahj al-Balagha include: piety, justice, tolerance, moderation, fairness, and self-restraint, knowledge, honesty, trust and loyalty to the covenant has been raised in ethics and behavior. They see humility as a means to increase human greatness, and have devised their primary strategy of tolerating people (Roshnavadi et al., 2016, 659). What this research seeks to answer such questions as: what are the factors and components of virtue-led leadership in the education of Iran? How is the prioritization of the virtues-driven leadership components and components in the education? Is the scale designed for virtue-based leadership in the education valid? Therefore, based on the theoretical foundations, research background and researcher's experiences, the conceptual framework of the virtue-based leadership scale is presented in Figure 1.

Method

The purpose of this study is to describe descriptive-correlational data in terms of purpose. The statistical population of this study included faculty members of Shiraz University, Shahid Chamran University of Ahwaz and Persian Gulf University of Bushehr. The number of samples was selected using multistage Random Sampling. (Table 1) The instrument used was a researcher-made questionnaire consisting of 53 items, in three personality domains with 26 items, skills with 10

items, and organizational items with 17 items based on the five-point Likert range from very low to very high Has been edited. Reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha of 0.92, indicating acceptable validity of the questionnaire. Valid statistical methods such as KMO test and exploratory factor analysis were used.
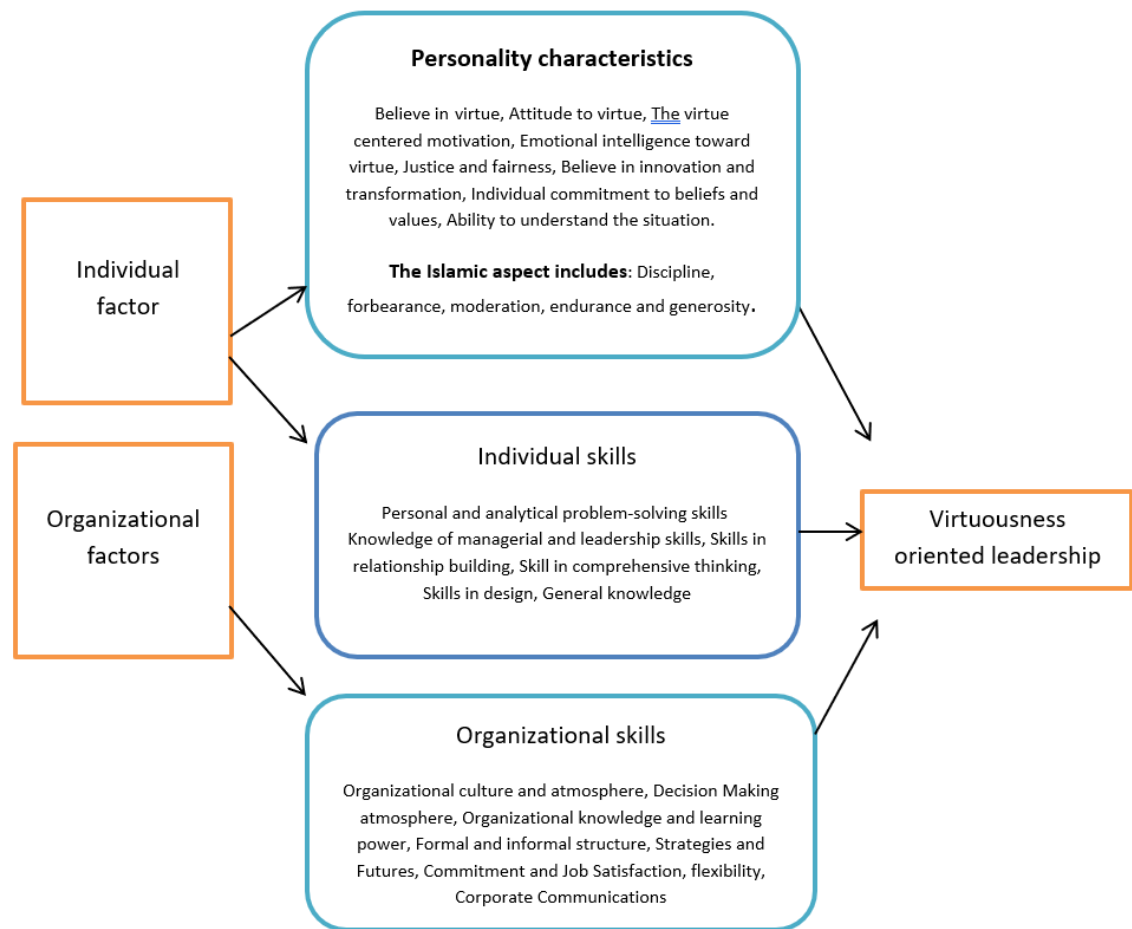

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of research

Table 1: Statistical population and sample size

Title Number of Faculties		Select 50% of the faculties of each university	Select 50% of departments	Sample size
Shiraz University	15	8	34	170
Chamran University of Ahwaz	13	7	27	135
Persian Gulf University of Bushehr	8	4	13	65
Total	36	19	74	370

Here's a look at the KMO (Kaiser Meyer Olkin) index

Table 2: KMO Index Table

Agents	Test	Results
Identifying the Virtual Leadership Scale Factors in Higher Education	KMO sampling adequacy index	0.90
	Chi-square	12207.69
	Degrees of freedom	741
	Significance level	0.000

In the above table (KMO test) the results show that the value of the index is 0.90 which is higher than 0.6 indicating that the data are suitable for factor analysis. Significance level of the test also indicates the suitability of the research variables for factor analysis. KMO index is sufficient for first and second order factor analysis, so factor analysis was performed (Table 3).

Table 3: Exploratory Factor Analysis Results Based on Principle Components

	Total Variance Explained					
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	17.254	44.218	44.218	17.254	44.218	44.218
2	3.352	8.594	52.812	3.352	8.594	52.812
3	1.959	5.024	57.836	1.959	5.024	57.836
4	1.312	3.365	61.201	1.312	3.365	61.201
5	1.164	2.984	64.185	1.164	2.984	64.185
6	1.117	2.865	67.050	1.117	2.865	67.050
7	1.031	2.642	69.693	1.031	2.642	69.693

The table above, in two parts, shows the eigenvalues and the sum of squares of the extracted loads. First- and second-order factor analysis was performed to determine the factor loadings, and seven factors were extracted from the table. These seven factors include ethical factors, emotional factors, social factors, intellectual factors, intellectual factors, skill factors, and organizational factors. These factors are validated on the basis of a table of values and a number. The rotating factor analysis was performed to investigate the above operations (Table 4).

Table 4: Rotated Exploration Factor Analysis

Component	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.673	17.109	17.109
2	5.484	14.061	31.170
3	3.708	9.507	45.677
4	3.332	8.544	49.221
5	3.289	8.432	57.654
6	2.965	7.603	65.257
7	1.730	4.435	69.693

The result of the rotated factor analysis showed the same seven factors in the operation confirmation. Find Descriptive statistics show that the gender composition of the participants was 28% female and 72% male. A description of the participants' service records can be found in the following tables. The faculty members in this study are classified in four levels (3% professor, 16% associate professor, 72% assistant professor, 9% instructor). About 83 percent of participants had less than 15 years of service and 17 percent had more.

Question 1: What are the factors and components of virtue-centered leadership in the education of Iran?

The extracted scale depicts virtue-based leadership in two dimensions (personality, skill) and organizational. Figures 3, 4 and 5 show the factors and their components.
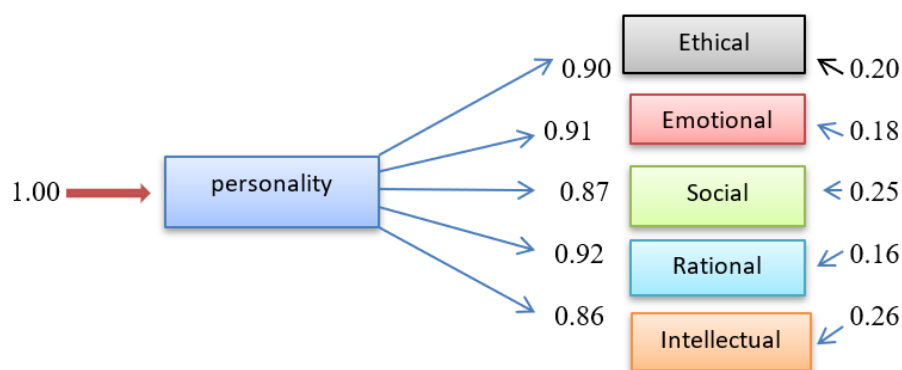
Chi-square = 71, df=25, p-value=0.00, RMSEA=0.07

Figure 3: Individual Factor Analysis Results

The three main components of the figure include rectangles, ellipses, and display arrows. Ethical factor with 0.90 factor; Emotional factor with Load factor 0.91; Social factor with Load factor 0.87; Intellectual factor with Load factor 0.92; Intellectual factor with Load factor 0.86. The RMSEA index is 0.07, the chi-square index indicates a chi-square 57.71, and the p-value = 0.000 indicates this scale is significant. The highest factor load of personality factors was intellectual factor, which was 0.92, and the least factor load of personality factors was intellectual factor, which was 0.86. Another component in the individual dimension of skills is shown in Figure 4.
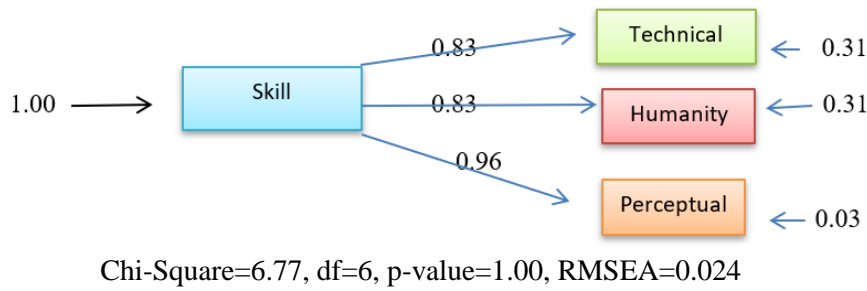
Chi-Square=6.77, df=6, p-value=1.00, RMSEA=0.024

Figure 4: Individual Factor Analysis Results (Skill)

The RMSEA statistic is 0.024, indicating that the scale is appropriate, and the scale is well-suited. Factor load With factors include: technical skill factor load With factor 0.83; human factor load With factor 0.83; factor load 0.96. The highest factor load in skill factors was perceptual factor, which was 0.96, and the lowest factor load in technical factors, which was 0.83. The With factor load of the organizational component is presented in Figure 5. The highest factor load in skill factors was perceptual factor, which was 0.96, and the   factor load in technical factors, which was 0.83. The factor load of the organizational component is presented in Figure 5.

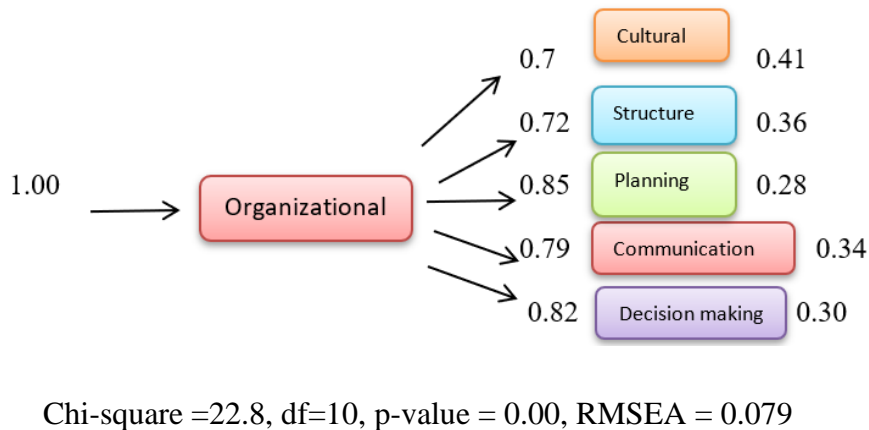Chi-square =22.8, df=10, p-value = 0.00, RMSEA = 0.079

Figure 5: Organizational Factor Analysis Results

As the figure shows, the RMSEA statistic is equal to 0.079, and since the test indicates a significant p-value = 0.000, the model fits in well. Factor loadings of each of the organizational factors are as follows: Organizational culture with a factor of 0.70; Organizational structure with a factor of 0.72; Planning with a factor of 0.85; Organizational communication with a factor of 0.79; Decision The factor loadings are 0.82. The highest factor load among the organizational factors was 0.85, while the least factor among the cultural factors was 0.70.

Question 2: How do you prioritize the virtues-driven leadership elements and components in the education?

We use factor load power to prioritize scale factors and components. Factor determines the importance of each factor.

Table 7: The order of importance of factors on the scale of virtuous leadership

factor		Component	Factor load
Individual	Personality	Rational	0.92
		Emotional	0.91
		Ethical	0.90
		Social	0.87
		Intellectual	0.86
Skill		Technical, humanity, perceptual	0.87
Organizational		Cultural, structure, communications, planning, decision making	0.78

The table below shows the importance of each factor in the virtue-based leadership scale, respectively. The emotional, moral, social, intellectual, skill, and organizational components are respectively.

Question 3: Is the scale designed for virtue-based leadership in the education valid? To answer the above question, consider the following:
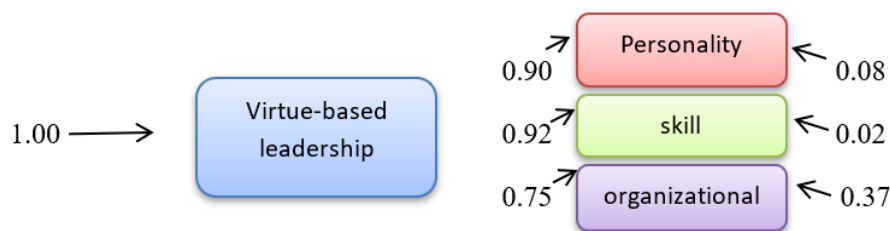
Chi-square = 34.4, df = 25, p-value = 1.00000, RMSEA = 0.025

Figure 6: The Virtue-Based Leadership Scale in the Education of Iran

Figure 6 shows the factor loadings of personality, skill, and organizational factors: The RMSEA statistic has a value of 0.025, which is less than 0.08, and is acceptable. Personal skill has a factor of 0.92; personality has a factor of 0.90 and an organization with a factor of 0.75, which, based on indicators and statistical calculations, has an acceptable level of all factors.

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of the present study was to design and validate the scale of virtuous leadership in the education of Iran. The first findings of this study indicate that this scale is valid in the individual (personality, skill) and organizational domains. After analyzing the adequacy of the samples, KMO test was performed for factor analysis, and seven factors related to individual and organizational characteristics with higher EQ were: ethical factors, social factors, emotional factors. Intellectual, Perceptual Skills and Organizational Factors. All of these factors fall into the three main dimensions of personality, skill, and organization. Each of these factors includes components. Ethical factor components include: Believing in the development of virtue, encouraging the virtue of honesty and integrity, fair conduct, courageous decision-making, generosity, compassion and kindness, creating a friendly atmosphere, tolerance in behavior and speech. These attributes are needed for a leader's

virtuous orientation. Studies have shown that ethical factors have a positive impact on job satisfaction (Chaikelis, 2014) and employee commitment (Hazrat & Memarzadeh, 2014).

Emotional factor components include: having a leader motivated to spread virtues, avoiding unilateralism and self-centeredness, striving to grow personal commitment, a spirit of hope, positive thinking, and self-confidence. Khorshid and Gholizadeh listed trust and sincerity, altruism, compassion, and factors that influence the spiritual well-being of employees and the quality of the leader's relationship with followers. Caldwell, Hassen, and Smith (2015) cite the components of honesty, behavioral competence, commitment, courage, compassion, and realism for virtuous leadership. Components of the social factor include: socialization, mutual respect, expanding areas of change, a spirit of diversity, realism, encouraging healthy competition, and attention to physical appearance. Components related to the rational factor include: the spirit of lawmaking, avoidance of extremes, and the future of virtue. The components of intellectual factor include: the ability to categorize, the preference of organizational interests over personal interests, and the enjoyment of intellectual independence. Researchers have pointed to these indicators in their studies. Ballet and Clive (2011) in their study point to the importance of moderation in virtuous leadership. In his study, Cameron (2003) linked employee compassion, intimacy, hope, emotional cohesion, and self-esteem to better employee performance.

Lutz's (2011) studies show that self-esteem and hope have a positive effect on organizational performance; Wang (2011) associates ethical virtues with leader effectiveness. The components of the skill factor include: human skill, technical skill and perceptual skill. Virtue-centric leaders need the skills to succeed. Skills are effective in effective leadership practices. Skills in this research with indicators of knowledge development and management literacy, striving for technical knowledge development, development of diagnostic skills and individual abilities, development of problem-solving abilities, development of innovation and skill development, field development Measures of analytical skills development, development of perceptual skills, and efforts to develop technical self-esteem have been measured.

The components of organizational factor include: communication, organizational culture, decision making, planning and organizational structure. These factors influence the performance of leaders in the organization, and all of these factors are continually influenced by the social, cultural, political, and economic conditions of society. The organizational dimension, although less operational than the individual dimension, is essential for the realization of virtuous leadership. Virtue-based leadership in higher education pursues the development of virtue-based relationships, providing the basis for transparent communication. Expands group participation and makes ethical decisions, and develops organizational structure in line with virtue. It focuses on job satisfaction and improving the professional development of employees, as well as recognizing the important role of climate and organizational culture in the development of ethical virtues. It provides the appropriate context for the flourishing of ethics in the organization, and supports learning, productivity, group formation and informal virtue-based relationships.

Bryman (2007) considers team participation and group decision making to be important for leadership. Lutz (2011) also identified a number of relevant cultural, organizational, and environmental factors in determining ethical behavior. Transparent communication enhances trust in the leader and results in satisfaction and commitment from members, which is similar to the results of Hargrove's (2017) research that considers transparency in communication essential for leadership. It is recommended that policy makers and education planners consider this scale.

Courses can be formulated on the basis of this scale for the moral development of education. Consider the above-mentioned scale, goals and missions in education.

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