

Designing and Explaining a University Autonomy-Oriented Organization Model Using a Mixed Approach (Case study: Payame Noor University)

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Abstract

The present study aims to design and explain a university autonomy-oriented organization model using a mixed approach. In the qualitative section of the research, the statistical population consisted of scientific and organizational experts from Payam Noor University. So, 16 experts were selected for interviews using targeted snowball sampling. Moreover, in the quantitative section of the study, 245 people were selected out of 675 professors and staff, who formed the statistical population based on the sample size determined by Krejcie and Morgan table using random sampling. This study made use of semi-structured interviews and a researcher-made questionnaire as instruments of data collection in qualitative and quantitative sections, respectively. The qualitative data were analyzed through the thematic analysis technique using Maxqda10 software, while the quantitative data were analyzed using PLS3. Content and face validity were assessed, as well as the intercoder reliability. The results identified a total of 4 dimensions and 8 components for a university autonomy-oriented organization. The identified dimensions include organizational autonomy, personnel autonomy, financial autonomy, and academic autonomy. Also, the components consisting of supportive policy, clear policy perspective, organizational values,

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success trend analysis, financing, financial management, organizational communications, and sustainable thinking were approved by the software.

Keywords: Organization, University Autonomy, Mixed Approach.

1.Introduction

In the present era, societies are dramatically becoming knowledge-based. Among the various factors contributing to this change, universities play the most prominent role in social issues, so they are referred to as "the innovation engine" (Cai, Ma, & Chen, 2020). Scholars believe that universities can make a lot of fundamental changes in the environment surrounding them due to their diverse educational, research, and service functions (Shaabani et al., 2019: 25). Universities are important places of research that reflect the capability needed to revolutionize scientific and technological achievements. The University's efficiency, which is a key component of innovation, leads to national sustainability development along with technology transfer (Liu & Liu, 2021). As one of the key elements of human development, universities serve as the central factor of the development of societies and coordinators of different dimensions of society (Yaghoubi & Salimi, 2018: 75). As one of the most stable institutions, universities have to succeed in a new and complex test and take over some responsibilities in the new society (Hejazi et al., 2015: 230). If universities do not have the autonomy to adapt to environmental changes and solve new and emerging problems in society, they fail to achieve their goal.

The nature of knowledge demands liberation, freedom, and autonomy in scientific institutions. Since truth, innovation, criticism, and questioning are requirements in universities, a university is a source of power and a reference institution that is involved in the development of humans, ideas, and government. Moreover, due to their career and specialized traits, universities must enjoy autonomy (Ghiathi Nadooshan & Khalili, 2018: 185). The autonomy of academic settings is considered a contributor to the success of educational systems. Some concerns of universities and governments in developed societies are as follows: universities should be



independent of the state and state institutions, their officials should have enough power to make decisions, their autonomy and authority should be guaranteed, their academic and cultural goals should be a priority, and the recent social needs must be the basis of training the university students (Golabgirnik et al., 2020). The political power of the government limits and influences universities due to the nature of legislation, management, and justice. The autonomy of a university should not be under the influence of the state, or at least it should be under the influence of the state to a lesser extent (An, 2021). Academic autonomy broadly includes the freedom to make decisions about academic issues, self-regulation, and managerial autonomy respecting student admission, curriculum, teaching, evaluation, and research methods, establishing scientific rules, and internal management of resources (Atugonza et al., 2016).

Autonomy is one of the structural and functional requirements for universities as universities have to be autonomous due to the specialized complexity of knowledge. On the other hand, when universities are not autonomous and accountable, enough attention will not be paid to the quality of their services, resulting in some problems such as academic failure, scientific dependency, brain drain, lack of entrepreneurship, and poor knowledge production. Interference from external bodies, such as the government, in university affairs distorts the principle of loyalty to scientific truth in universities and damages the credibility of the knowledge that is produced and taught in universities. Granting autonomy to universities is a principled policy to increase accountability and stability. However, it is not easy to protect the true autonomy of universities without turning them into centralized organizations rather than education systems. On the one hand, universities and scientific communities insist on their autonomy, and on the other hand, universities need financial aid increasingly due to their economic problems and a centralized structure. Attracting financial resources, making decisions, and making policies are important issues that should be taken into account when discussing the autonomy of universities, and financial resources are one of the key instruments of the government to control higher education (Fathollahi et al., 2015). Autonomy of higher education settings is one of the success factors of the educational system in developed countries.

Of course, it should be noted that although different universities enjoy a lot of commonalities in university missions and other activities, they have some differences. Among them, one of the largest and most extensive universities in the country are the centers and units covered by Payame Noor University, which cover a significant number of candidates for admission to higher education. This university is based on the method of distance and semi-face-to-face education and has a special educational method. Semi-face-to-face education is an educational system that reduces the necessity of student attendance in classrooms by using educational technology and the use of self-learning and student-centered textbooks in learning. Considering the special structure and teaching method of this university, the unusual conditions of the country due to the prevalence of COVID-19 that has challenged education at all levels resulting in virtual education. Moreover, due to the influence of university autonomy on teaching methodology, it is necessary to investigate the importance of an autonomy-oriented organization. Given that there is a gap of investigation in the mentioned field, this research tries to design and explain a model of autonomy-oriented organization for Payam Noor University. Therefore, the researchers are concerned to answer the following question:

How is a model of an autonomy-oriented organization?

2. Research Background

Some studies have been conducted on university autonomy (Table 1), but The Association of European Universities has carried out the most prominent research that criticized the dimensions of university autonomy thoroughly and in detail. This study compared 34 European Union countries based on more than 30 indices in four critical areas:

Organizational autonomy: This autonomy includes the implementation of determined regulations, the authority to select and appoint directors at different levels, and the leadership of academic and administrative structures.

Academic autonomy: This autonomy includes the authority to formulate and plan curriculum, to change and modify it based on the needs of society, to define research priorities and research methods, to decide on the manner



of student admission, and to determine the structure and content of different academic levels.

Financial autonomy: This autonomy includes the authority to allocate a budget based on university needs (this budget will be acquired from public resources in the form of state grants), determine tuition, use endowments and public donations, raise funds or use buildings, and borrow money.

Employment autonomy: This autonomy includes the authority to hire independently and grow and develop the faculty and academic staff.

Researcher	Research Title	Results
Shabani et al. (2019)	Identifying Dimensions of University Autonomy in Pursuit of Transformation and Innovation Policies in Medical Sciences Education	Academic autonomy has two structural and content dimensions, and each of these dimensions has some components: organizational, financial, policy-making, national and regional relations, scientific-educational research, and technology.
Ghanbari (2019)	Concept, Criterion, and Effects of State University Autonomy with an Emphasis on the Legal System of Iran	University autonomy has gone through six stages since the establishment of the University of Tehran in the historical context of laws and regulations of higher education. Since university autonomy is formed in the body of the government, universities enjoy relative autonomy at times.
Khalili (2018)	Critical Discourse Analysis of University Autonomy in Iranian Higher Education	In the university autonomy dispute between power and ideology, power gained superiority to a tangible extent, and the government highly intervenes in Iranian higher education.
Ferasatkha (2017)	University Autonomy in Iran: Promoters and Deterrents	During the last hundred years, university autonomy in Iran has been struggling with three promoters: surplus for society, social capital, and professional and vocational support of academic institutions. It was also struggling with three deterrents: the dominance of politics over the university, the dominance of state economy and interest over the university, and the dominance of ideology over the university.
Aqatabar Roudbari et al. (2017)	The Study of Academic Independence Gap Based on University Experts	The dimensions of academic independence are divided into organizational independence, actual independence, academic freedom, financial independence, and staff independence. Moreover, there has been a gap between the current and desirable situation in all dimensions of academic independence.
Gorgi Azandaryani and Bazargan	Distinguishing the Structural, Content, Normative, Financial, and	Academic governance will not be possible without recognizing and guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of the three sides of a triangle, that is, the academics,

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(2017)	Administrative Harms from the Governance of Universities	students, and staff. The legal system and management mechanisms governing Iranian universities and higher education institutions are suffering from structural, content, normative, financial, administrative, behavioral, and other harms.
Kupriyanova et al. (2020)	Autonomy, Efficiency, and Effectiveness— Opportunities for Higher Education	Due to the ability to decide on internal budget allocation and the capacity to maintain the surplus, financial independence allows higher education institutes to reinvest in efficiency.
Singh & Singh (2019)	University Autonomy and Sustainable Finance	After gaining autonomy, universities may find investment ways to generate sustainable income due to the fall in government grants.
Chia-Ming (2018)	Academic Freedom: The Soul of Higher Education	Currently, universities are recognized as the most important national assets for addressing many policy priorities and as sources of new knowledge and innovative thinking since they contribute to innovation, attract international talents, and invest in business, they are also agents of social justice and mobility, and they contribute to social and cultural life.
Michavila and Martinez (2018)	The Excellence of Universities versus Autonomy, Funding, and Accountability	Universities need to make fundamental changes in their organizational structures and performances to meet current social expectations. Capital and increasing academic independence are the policy priorities of today's universities.
Land (2018)	Academic Freedom and University Autonomy under Threat	University autonomy and academic freedom are concepts that are central to the measures of free universities. Over the past years, censorship has steadily increased within academia, damaging academic freedom not only at the regional but at the international level.
Singh et al. (2016)	Autonomy in Higher Education, Shifting Paradigm	An increase in the number of students, the population explosion in many countries with different political and social systems, and numerous and diverse higher education centers as phenomena that have increasingly influenced paradigm shifts.
Konstantinos et al. (2016)	Academic Freedom and Tenure: Introduction	The declining productivity of tenures is the result of declining academic freedom, and it is affected by some factors, such as increased commercialization, political pressure to suppress unwelcome scientific findings, and economic crisis.
Serkan et al. (2016)	An Exploratory Study on University Autonomy: A Comparison of Turkey and	Variables such as the ratio of higher education to population, job opportunities of graduates, number of articles published in international journals, and academic



	Some European Union Countries	performance of academics in high-ranking countries have a significant relationship with organizational, financial, academic, and employee autonomy.
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Table 1. Research Background



3. Research Methodology

Today, it is inevitable to use qualitative research methods because they help to identify the problems of social-behavioral systems in general, as well as the problems of state organizations in particular. Due to the complex nature of organizations, quantitative methods cannot be used to properly identify certain situations. Therefore, it is necessary to use qualitative methods (Sarlak & Noori, 2016: 560). The present study is a field, applied, qualitative research which is based on thematic analysis and uses interviews as an instrument. As this is a qualitative field study, interviews are the best and the most comprehensive instruments for data collection. The participants of the qualitative part of the study were 16 experts who had the authority to make decisions at Payam Noor University. These participants were selected through targeted sampling (snowball) for interviews. The inclusion criteria were theoretical and practical knowledge about the research subject.

The statistical population of the quantitative part included all staff and professors of Payam Noor University in 2022, who were 675 individuals based on the statistics provided by the university secretariat. Then a sample of 245 individuals was selected through simple random sampling based on Krejcie Morgan Table. The instrument for data collection was semi-structured interviews in the qualitative section. Moreover, the valuable opinions of experts were used to ensure the validity of the qualitative part. In the quantitative section, a researcher-made questionnaire consisting of 65 items was used. The items used a 5-point Likert scale: "very low (1), low (2), medium (3), high (4), and very high (5)". The questionnaire was designed based on the interviews conducted in the qualitative section and distributed among the statistical population after final corrections. To evaluate the questionnaire validity, face validity (experts' opinions), content, and factor analysis were used. The factor analysis was performed using the indices of PLS3. The confirmatory factor analysis showed that the factor loadings of all questions and items were higher than the determined minimum (0.5). Therefore, the validity of these variables was confirmed. The questionnaire reliability was also assessed using Cronbach's



alpha, and the alpha values of the model dimensions were calculated separately. All alpha values were higher than the limit of 0.7.



4. Research Findings

The qualitative findings of this research are the results of semi-structured interviews with participants (experts) (Table 2).

Row	sex	Marital Status	Age	Education	Academic Rank	Row	sex	Marital Status	Age	Education	Academic Rank
1	Male	Married	52	PhD	Associate Professor	9	Man	Married	42	PhD	Assistant Professor
2	Male	Married	47	PhD	Associate Professor	10	Male	Married	45	PhD	Assistant Professor
3	Female	mere	38	PhD	Assistant Professor	11	Male	Married	47	PhD	Associate Professor
4	Male	Married	47	PhD	Assistant Professor	12	Female	Married	45	PhD	Associate Professor
5	Male	Married	45	PhD	Assistant Professor	13	Male	mere	34	PhD	Assistant Professor
6	Female	Married	39	PhD	Assistant Professor	14	Male	Married	44	PhD	Associate Professor
7	Male	Married	36	PhD	Assistant Professor	15	Male	Married	36	PhD	Assistant Professor
8	Male	Married	49	PhD	Associate	16	Male	Married	47	PhD	Associate



					Professor						Professor
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Table 2. List of interviewees

When the interviews were completed, themes (data) were extracted through open coding from the content of interviews, and a code was determined for each point (examples of responses to the interviewees are given in Table 3).

Key Points of Interviews	Primary codes	Code Marker
The philosophy of the establishment of a university is to make decisions about the educational policies of the country.	Decision-making in educational policies	A1
Communicating the educational policies leads the managers to recognize their organizational tasks, and the roles will be well defined.	Recognizing organizational tasks	A2
	Defining tasks and roles specifically	A3
Office automation can be used to perform tasks and to clarify administrative operations.	Applying office automation	A4
	Clarifying administrative operations	A5
Executing the instructions issued is possible based on sustainable thinking.	Thinking sustainably when executing instructions	A6
These guidelines set a common goal for the internal sectors of the organization.	Setting common goals for sectors	A7
Many of the problems of organizations can be solved through proper organizational communications.	Solving administrative problems through organizational communications	A8
Managers' decisions are very effective in promoting educational policies.	Valuing the managers' decisions	A9
All activities of the organization must be predetermined and based on the plans.	Focusing on plans and programs	A10
Valuing autonomy in decision-making is a pillar of proper management.	Valuing autonomy in decision-making	A11
Coordination and harmony of employees and managers play a very important role in promoting teamwork and the participatory spirit of individuals.	Encouraging cooperation among employees and managers	A12
	Strengthening the spirit of participatory and teamwork	A13
Organizational relationships can be enhanced through communication and information channels resulting in	Enhancing the communication among	A14

stronger trust among employees. When this relationship lasts, enough attention will be paid to the cultural values of society.	managers and employees	
	Strengthening employee confidence	A15
	Establishing communication and information channels	A16
It can be efficient to implement the employees' opinions and pay attention to their constructive suggestions.	Paying attention to constructive suggestions from employees	A17
	Implementing employees' opinions	A18
Revising the organization's macro decisions and reviewing how the educational policies are implemented are among the most important tasks of faculty members.	Re-evaluating macro decisions	A19
	Analyzing the trend of the implementation of educational policies.	A20
Plan budgeting should be based on received priorities, and the environment and its changes should be taken into consideration while making organizational decisions.	Budgeting based on received priorities	A21
	Making organizational decisions adaptable	A22
Managers should encourage employees to come up with new ideas and benefit from the decisions of the elite.	Valuing coming up with new ideas	A23
	Applying experts' decisions	A24

Table 3. Codes extracted from the first interview

Then, the codes were compared, and the data with more thematic and conceptual similarity were collected in the form of a concept and, finally, formed their related categories during a complementary process (Table 4). In this step, categories were presented as a pattern after extracting and naming through coding. Compatibility was used to identify and categorize the relationship and proportionality that existed among expressions into four dimensions (i.e., organizational autonomy, personnel autonomy, financial autonomy, and academic autonomy) and 8 essential components (supportive policy, clear policy perspective, organizational values, success trend analysis, financing resources, financial management, organizational communications, and sustainable thinking). Moreover, an intercoder was used to evaluate reliability. Three interviews were selected and re-coded to assess the intercoder reliability. The percentage of calculated inter-subject



agreements equaled 75%, which was higher than 60 percent, the acceptable amount to confirm reliability.

Main Theme	Subsidiary Theme	Concept	Interview Markers
An Autonomy-Oriented Organization	Organizational Independence	Supportive Policies	Determining common goals for sectors, valuing autonomy in decision-making, encouraging the coordination of the dean of education department with operational policies, setting plan-oriented goals
		Policy Perspective	Selecting the chancellor, setting criteria for selecting the chancellor, defining the conditions of chancellor dismissal, determining the duration and working conditions of the chancellor, making decisions in academic structures, being able to create profitable legal institutions, making decisions in educational policies, integrating accountability, being aware of organizational duties, solving administrative problems through organizational relations, paying attention to instructions issued, thinking sustainably about the implementation of supportive guidelines
	Independence of Personnel	Organizational Values	Deciding on the manner of recruiting faculty members, Deciding on how to attract administrative staff, deciding on the salary and rights of faculty members, deciding on the salary and rights of administrative staff, deciding on the dismissal of faculty members, deciding on the dismissal of administrative staff, deciding on the promotions of the faculty members, deciding on the promotions of administrative staff.
			Attracting creative and innovative staff, valuing coming up with new ideas, valuing material and spiritual needs, receiving job feedback, emphasizing the influence of the education department head on promoting educational policies, strengthening the spirit of participatory and teamwork, valuing new solutions, applying the elite decisions, and valuing job duties.
	Financial Autonomy	Financing	Determining student tuition fees, being able to buy administrative real estate, being able to take out a loan, using state resources
		Financial	Investing in research, supporting new ideas, defining specific financial tasks and roles, budgeting based on

		Management	received priorities, being able to use surplus budgets, making adaptable financial decisions, analyzing implementation trends in financial policies, re-evaluating macro decisions
	Academic Autonomy	Organizational Communications	Promoting employees' information and technical knowledge, establishing communication and information channels, clarifying administrative operations, applying employees' opinions, establishing communications based on cultural values of managers and employees' communication methods
		Sustainable Thinking	Applying an integrated educational system, deciding on the total number of students, defining the student admission criteria at different levels, determining the start and end times of study programs, selecting the language of instruction, designing the content of the degree programs, updating and setting educational regulations, updating and regulating research regulations, issuing educational guidelines to use the benefits of elite participatory decision-making, updating curriculums, reducing redundant educational laws, paying attention to employees' constructive suggestions

Table 4. Encoding the interviews

After categorizing and coding, the clauses and paragraphs resulting from the implementation of texts were organized, categorized, and recreated using the software, and the data was sorted and categorized for final interpretation.

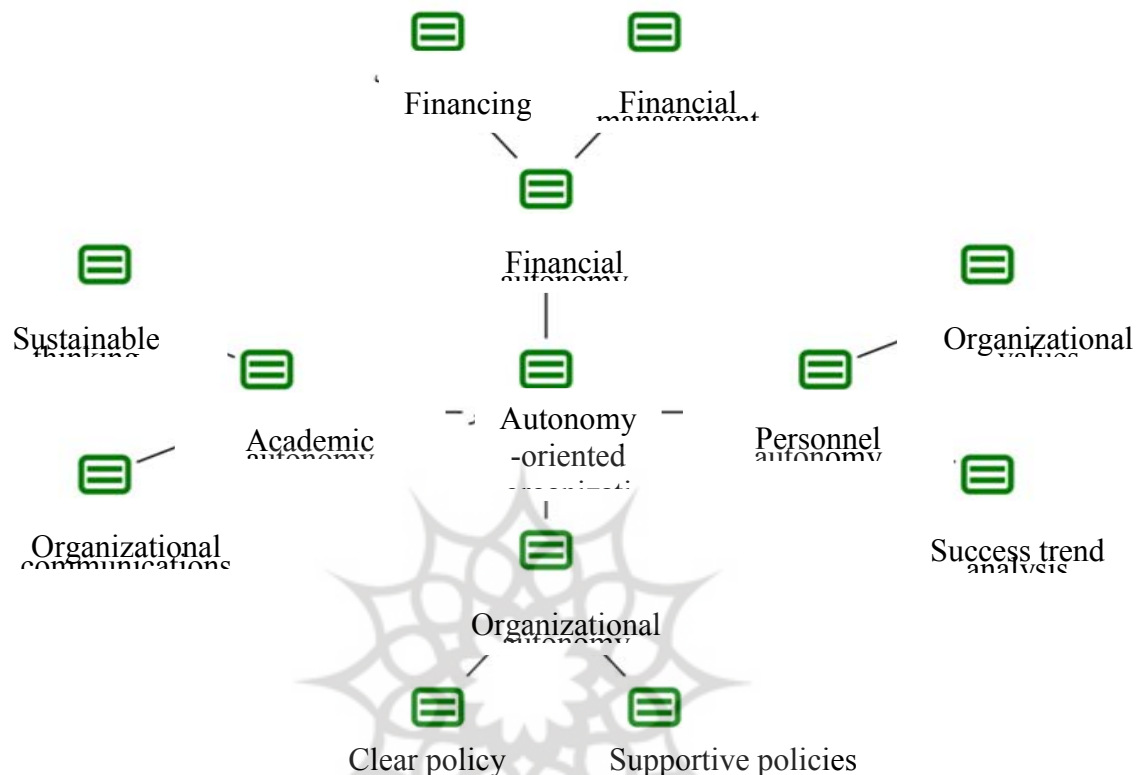


Figure 1. The initial model obtained from the MAXQDA output

The quantitative section of the research was performed to test the model developed in the qualitative section. In this section, a researcher-made questionnaire consisting of 65 questions was designed based on the interviews conducted in the qualitative section. Then the questionnaire was distributed among the statistical population of the study. The demographic characteristics of the sample, which are based on the results of descriptive statistics, are expressed in Table 5.

	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage		Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Marital Status	Married	156	85	Experience	Less than 10 years	35	17
	Single	35	28		10 to 20 years	131	60
Educational	Associate Degree or a	12	5		More than 20 years.	51	23

	lower degree						
	Bachelor's Degree	131	60	Employee's Rank	Faculty Member	74	35
	Masters's Degree or a higher degree	74	35		Employee	143	65

Table 5. Demographic characteristics of the quantitative section

The validity of the questionnaire was enhanced through face validity, expert opinions, and factor analysis, and the reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated by calculating Cronbach's alpha. To verify the factors of the research model, factor analysis was performed using PLS3. To fit the model of each variable, the indices in Table 6 should be investigated.

Variable	Combined Reliability CR	Cronbach's alpha	Average Variance Extracted for Structures (AVE)	R Square
Supportive Policies	0.75	0.86	0.61	-
Clear Policy Perspective	0.79	0.72	0.86	-
Organizational Autonomy	0.80	0.74	0.62	0.9
Organizational Values	0.83	0.79	0.61	-
Success Trend Analysis	0.84	0.74	0.80	-
Personnel Autonomy	0.80	0.82	0.83	0.7
Financial Management	0.84	0.71	0.53	-
Financing	0.78	0.75	0.69	-
Financial Autonomy	0.85	0.80	0.84	0.9
Organizational Communications	0.79	0.85	0.68	-
Sustainable Thinking	0.85	0.84	0.69	-
Academic Autonomy	0.87	0.81	0.57	0.9

Table 6. Indices for fitting the model

All calculated values of the research model are higher than the acceptable minimums. Therefore, it can be concluded that the mentioned model enjoys validity and reliability. An instrument enjoys convergent



validity when the respondents understand the questions (indices) related to each hidden variable as desired by the question designer. To prove that the research instrument has convergent validity, two criteria must be fulfilled: first, the probability values must be less than 0.5, and second, the values of the respective factor loadings must be greater than or equal to 0.55 (Cook, 2012). As seen in Table 7, both criteria are fulfilled for the present research instrument. Therefore, the research questionnaire has a suitable convergent validity.

Construct reliability makes it possible to examine the internal consistency of indices that measure a concept. In other words, construct reliability shows how accurately the observed variables (indices) measure the hidden variable. Two measures (i.e., Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability) were used to measure construct reliability. Composite reliability is a more modern measure than Cronbach's alpha, and it is superior to Cronbach's alpha since it is not calculated in absolute terms but according to the correlation of the structures. As a result, both criteria are used to evaluate reliability more accurately. If the values of composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha are higher than 0.6, the internal reliability of the measurement model is appropriate (Davari & Rezazadeh, 2014). As shown in the table, all values of composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha are higher than 0.6; as a result, the measurement model has acceptable construct reliability. Convergent validity (reliability) is calculated through the AVE criterion, which indicates the average variance shared among each structure and its indices. In simpler terms, AVE shows the extent of correlation between a structure and its indices. The higher the correlation, the better the fit. As can be seen in Table 7, the AVE index is higher than 0.5 for all variables. Therefore, it can be concluded that the measurement model has a suitable convergent validity. Figure 3 assesses all research components; that is, all 27 components of this research are approved using confirmatory factor analysis. In the next step, the sub-themes related to the main theme are combined and presented in the form of the main theme to perform confirmatory factor analysis for the main dimensions or themes. Then confirmatory factor analysis is performed separately to empower the variables to approve or reject the main dimensions.

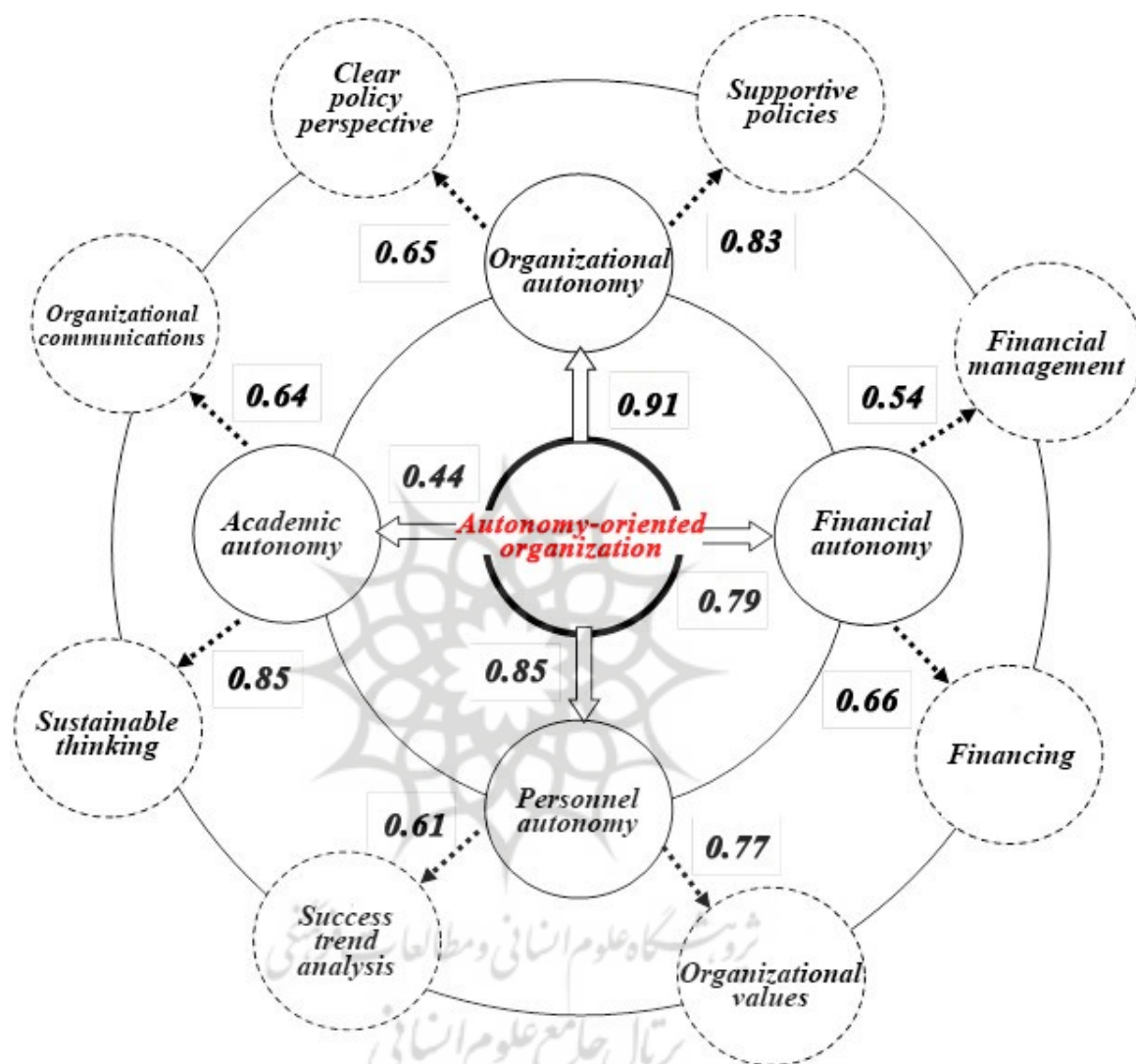


Figure 2. Final model

Discussion and Conclusion

Higher education is a pillar for governments to achieve sustainable development. The international status of a state depends on the extent it is equipped with weapons of science and knowledge. No country can achieve economic and industrial development without scientific development. Scholars believe that university autonomy is an index of scientific development since autonomous universities are the basis for the scientific



development of a country. Therefore, this study aimed to design an academic autonomy-oriented organization model based on a qualitative approach at Payam Noor University to revive the dimensions and components of university autonomy. For this purpose, a mixed research methodology and interviews were applied. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis and coding. Then, the obtained dimensions and components were distributed among the statistical population in the form of questionnaires. The results of this study showed that a university autonomy-oriented organization has some dimensions: organizational autonomy, personnel autonomy, financial autonomy, and academic autonomy. Moreover, the results of this study are consistent with some results presented by some researchers such as Rohani and Rashidi (2021), Singh and Singh (2019), Kupriyanova (2020), Aqatbar Roudbari et al. (2017), and Chia-Ming (2018). In turn, each of these dimensions includes some basic components such as supportive policy, clear policy perspective, organizational values, success trend analysis, financing resources, financial management, organizational communications, and sustainable thinking.

The results indicate that the university's academic autonomy should not be under the influence of administrative rules, and universities should be free to make decisions based on environmental conditions and requirements and according to their discretion. This will enable the scientific departments to discover creativities and innovations and solve the problems of society in their specialized field. In competitive environments, academic freedoms lead to improved university quality. Academic autonomy refers to a university's ability to address issues such as student admission criteria, academic curriculum, university curriculum, quality assurance, educational fields and levels, international cooperation, research commercialization, and communication with scientific communities.

Financial autonomy refers to the university's ability to manage its capital and realize its spending and revenue goals. Some spending and revenue goals of universities include determining tuition fees, financing through taking out loans and investing in knowledge-based companies, funding, and allocation of funds. Therefore, if a university has financial autonomy, it can easily allocate funds and tuition fees received from students to different parts of the university and contribute to the university's development. Universities need organizational autonomy and flexibility to meet the

evolving needs and demands of society and stakeholders and to fulfill their missions. This will lead to the efficiency of universities and scientific centers so that they can use all their resources, including financial resources, in the best possible way and achieve their goals. On the other hand, university autonomy, especially autonomy in scientific approach, human resources, internal decision-making, and financing, along with appropriate funding, allows universities to train more efficient students. The competency of these graduates paves the way for the promotion of labor productivity, economic innovation, and organizational development.

Based on these results and considering the importance of each component of the university's autonomy-oriented organization, the following suggestions are made:

A kind of fear of ambiguity is evident in the process of obtaining university autonomy at Payam Noor University. This fear should be removed by academics, and university autonomy should not be confused with political autonomy.

The government's policy towards higher education should be based on supportive, facilitative, and helpful roles, and attempts should be made to increase quality at Payam Noor University.

The government should focus on support rather than supervision and avoid unacademic interference in the affairs of Payam Noor University so that the people involved in this field will not be discouraged and the professors will not leave the country to obtain a degree from poor-quality universities.

The faculty members of Payam Noor University should have the freedom to teach, conduct research, and hold scientific discussions. They should improve their qualitative and quantitative responsibility without any worry. Directors and university officials should eliminate or modify some academic disciplines that are not popular or replace them with some novel and applied academic disciplines by analyzing the state of society and considering the needs of the labor market.

The members of the public board of Payam Noor University should be able to express their intellectual views freely and without any special



orientation to exchange and develop their ideas in scientific and cultural fields while maintaining their views and thoughts.

The government should provide a platform in which Payam Noor University can follow the fundamental ideals of the country and, at the same time, can freely and scientifically interact with international scientific and research centers. This university should have the necessary autonomy in scientific and international communications.

Autonomy should be granted to Payam Noor University so that this university can organize and revise its structure and administrative organs. Moreover, this university should be free to decide on the type of government funds and their distribution.

An accountability system should be implemented in this university because such a system is necessary for university autonomy.

Payam Noor University should have the power to make decisions on financing sources such as tuition fees received, and it should have enough autonomy to consume and spend the budget and also allocate and distribute it among sectors.

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