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Explaining the Relationship between Political Literacy and Intellectual Capital a Study in the Department of Education in Zanjan Province

AliReza Hasanlu¹, Mostafa Jafari^{2*}

¹Department of Executive Management, Faculty of Humanities, Islamic Azad University of Zanjan, Zanjan, Iran

² Department of Management, University of Zanjan, Iran

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ABSTRACT

The study responds to two key questions: 1. Which one of the political literacy components has a greater impact on intellectual capital and its components? 2. How are the quantity and quality of this effectiveness? This study is based on the relationship between political literacy and intellectual capital among the staff of the Department of Education in Zanjan province. According to objective, result and methodology, this study can be considered descriptive - explanatory, applied and surveying (field work), respectively. The study population consisted of 245 employees working in the general office of Department of Education, Zanjan. The sample size was determined as 152 subjects by simple random sampling method. The data were collected through a researcher-made questionnaire. The research hypotheses were tested using the followings: Structural equation modeling method, dispersion indices, Pearson test and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Lisrel and SPSS applications. The results showed a significant relationship between political literacy that the components and intellectual capital. The results also indicated that political understanding and perception and understanding of national interests can increase the level of intellectual capital in the target population. Due to increased political issues and activities in Zanjan's Department of Education, providing useful programs to develop knowledge and gain social awareness and necessary skills in the field of political literacy in such organizations can lead to increased political literacy, and thus, it will improve the IC.

Introduction

Today, the survival and progress of societies depend on the existence of active and responsible citizens who are conscious of social and political issues. With becoming aware of own rights, the rights of others, responsibility towards the society and vice versa, the social order would follow a growing trend and the society becomes more dynamic (Mousavi et al., 2015). From a strategic

view, the intellectual capital is used to generate and use knowledge in order to promote the organization's value. The issue matters much more in educational organizations, such as Department of Education (Anvari Rostami & Rostami, 2004, as quoted by NurAliZad, 2015). The intangible aspect of economy is based on intellectual capital; the first and original material of which includes knowledge and information. To participate in today's markets in any form and type, the organizations need

*Corresponding Author: Mostafa Jafari, Department of Management, University of Zanjan, Iran (jafari.mostafa@znu.ac.ir)

information and knowledge to improve their performance (Ahmian and Ghorbani, 2014).

Scientific Bases

The concept of literacy

Despite its simple definition, literacy does not only mean the ability to read and write. In fact, literacy is a prerequisite for intellectual growth and ability to do research. Research activity dependent on systematic thinking and scientific method requires literacy in its simple concept (Fattahi, 2005). Different types of specialized literacy and literacy in its general meaning (political literacy, scientific literacy, cultural literacy, environmental literacy, social literacy, information literacy, etc.) have been defined differently in today's world. All these types of literacy should be developed in order to foster a generation that the knowledge is to be its greatest asset (Nazari, 2006). Since the original intention of the twenty-year vision of the education system, in particular, the "Optimal human qualities" project seeks to identify qualities and qualifications that must be represented in the graduates of the education system for effective living during the next twenty years, attention to life and its dimensions can be a good guide in this regard (Nazari, 2006).

Definition of political literacy

Political knowledge and awareness means developing virtues, knowledge and skills required for political participation. Political consciousness or awareness prepare the individuals to participate actively in the knowingly process of reconstruction, correcting and improvement of own society (Gutmann, 1989). In another definition, political education means access to the knowledge of politics and understanding the political issues and systems (Sid, 2006; quoted by Lotfabadi, 2007).

The need to understand political issues

Survival and continuity of any society depends on the transmission of beliefs, knowledge, insights and social, cultural and political values to the sections of the society. Comprehensive development of any country can be realized with the active participation of citizens aware of political and social issues in different areas. Solving of social problems and making change in them is only possible through the active participation of the community members. Without understanding and awareness of citizenship rights in civil, political and social aspects, the theoretical basis for active participation in public affairs will not happen, and the

citizens would not succeed to notify their demands correctly to the political sovereignty. In this regard, the importance of understanding adults political and social issues are prominently seen, since in addition to their participation, they have the responsibility to conduct their relatives and acquaintances as well (Hashemi, 2011).

The importance of social awareness and political participation

Social awareness includes developing and fostering the capacities of individuals and groups for conscious and responsible participation, decision-making and acting in social, political, economic and cultural life. This awareness includes human rights, sustainable and comprehensive growth of ethics and values, peace and peacefulness, social equality and respect for differences (Sid, 2006, quoting by Lotfabadi, 2007). Social awareness has a fundamental importance in life, since the people must learn to effectively participate in improving various issues of the local, national and global communities (Hemmati, 2009; quoted by Mousavi et al., 2015). Political participation is one of the manifestations of the people involvement in determining their fate. International Encyclopedias of the Social Sciences have defined political participation as voluntary activity of the community members in selecting the leaders and direct and indirect participation in public policy-making (Mosaffa, 1997). Nevzorov believes that the formation of partnership in the community occurs in 5 dimensions: Interaction between

1. People
2. Community groups
3. NGOs
4. Local communities
5. The whole society (Nevzorov, 2000, quoted by Bagheri Banjar & Rahimi, 2013).

Acquisition of skills in citizenship training

The acquisition of knowledge, skills and values transmitted from adult generations to immature and young generations is considered as an important issue for social life. The set of education characteristics for citizenship education in different societies:

Firstly, differ at different periods in terms of goals, philosophy, methodology and the content; secondly, such training should be done according to the economical, social and cultural structures of every society. Moreover, its planning must be conducted by geniuses and experts in politics, culture and economy. The most important abilities in citizenship education are as follows:

1. The ability to work with others as collaboration and accepting own social responsibilities
2. The ability of understanding and tolerance of cultural differences
3. The ability of critical thinking in organizing and development
4. The ability to solve own conflicts with others by peaceful means
5. The ability to understand human rights and defend them, wither in own society or in the international community
6. The ability to understand and identify own cultural norms in order to enrich and develop the local culture and ethnic
7. The ability to accept collective discipline and benefit from scientific attitude of cultural beliefs in own community and other communities (Aghazadeh, 2007)

Understanding of national interests

Sometimes, the term of national interest is too vague to easily establish a relationship between policy-making of the states and their national interests. It is also claimed sometimes that the principles of national interests are fixed and immutable and are rarely changed over a long period even with the change of regimes and systems of government and changes in values. In terms of the hierarchy of national interests, independence and territorial integrity is in the first place of importance. However, the kinds of issues considered among the common or vital interests of states depend on the condition sand circumstances of every government and the international atmosphere. It should not be expected that all the states consider specific and similar issues as their common or vital interests. In special circumstances, certain issues may be considered as national fundamental interests, while in other situations, completely different issues will replace them. In the view of a government policy makers and political elites, different priorities may be posed in the hierarchy of national interests. It should be noted that national interests have value load. This means a special strategy plan by a government may be in conflict with the interests of many other governments in the region. For example, gaining more benefits by a government may be considered as limiting the scope of the exercise of power of other states. National interests are often linked with two indices of reducing threats and increasing opportunities (security and development or survival and well-being). In fact, if the foreign policy of a government contributes to generate and strengthen the security and

development of its country, the foreign policy can be considered successful (Hashemi Bahramani and Saii, 2013).

Definition of intellectual capital

Intellectual capital is a vulnerable construct that must be constantly supported by a set of interrelated elements (White, 2007). Russ and others (1998, quoted by White, 2007) defined the intellectual capital as follows: "Intellectual capital is considered as a set of techniques enabling the administrator in better management (White, 2007). According to Edwinston and others, intellectual capital is defined as everything influencing the success of an organization in the future that is not determined on its balance sheet (Edwinston and others, 2005).

Elements of intellectual capital

Generally, the IC has three basic interdependent components: Human capital, structural capital and customer (relational) capital

- **Human Capital**

Human capital is defined as a combined knowledge, experience skill and ability of everyone in the organization (McGill, 2006). This capital is mobile and does not belong to a specific organization, since the employees are considered as the owners of the human capital. Stewart considers human capital as the source of creativity and vision. In fact, human capital represents the knowledge asset of the members of an organization (QelichLi and Moshabaki, 2007).

- **Structural Capital**

Structural Capital is knowledge that stays in the company / organization when the employees go home at night. Thus, the company is the owner of the structural capital. For example, the construction permit or license is created by the human capital, but after issuance, they belong to the company (Nazari and Hermans, 2007, according QelichLi and Moshabaki, 2007). Structural capital consists of all non-human knowledge resources within the organization. It includes proprietary software, computer programs, databases, organizational structure, patent and exploitation rights, trademarks (brands) and similar assets, which support the productivity of the organization (McGill, 2006, according QelichLi and Moshabaki, 2007).

- **Customer (relational) Capital**

It is the value considered by the customers for the organization (McGill, 2006). This value is created by communication between the organization and its customers. The customer capital includes things such as

the value of company-owned rights, its relationships with people and organizations associated with customers, market share, retention rate or loss rate of customers as well as net profitability per customer. The new definitions have developed the concept of customer capital to capital- relational concept, which covers the knowledge in all the relationships that the organization establishes with customers, competitors, suppliers, associations or the government (QelichLi and Moshabaki, 2007).

Intellectual capital and competitive advantage

IC provides a new resources base through which the organization can compete. Today, the basis of successful organization activities has turned from production-orientation toward knowledge-orientation. The knowledge-based school advocates such as Inkpen (1998) and Zack (1999) believe that if a corporate has better intellectual capital and knowledge assets in the business environment, it will have a competitive advantage (Mohseni Fard and Rezai, 2014). The organization's ability to achieve profitability will depend on two major factors: the industry attractiveness in which it operates and the competitive advantages that employs against its competitors. The organization's competitive strategy is very influential in its profitability, and its importance is much more than the attractiveness of the industry in which the organization operates (Grant, 1991).

Importance of intellectual capital and organizational performance

Although intellectual capitals were unknown in the past, but now, they play role in various forms in the process of economic, managerial, technological and social development. The resulting revolution in information technology, growing importance of knowledge and knowledge-based economy, changing patterns, creation of a networked society as well as the emergence of innovation, as the most important determinants of competitive advantage are as those factors that have provided the grounds of increased importance of intellectual capital in companies and organizations more than ever (Anvari Rostami and Rostami, 2004; quoted from Nouri Ali Zad, 2015).

Research background

In a study, Rahimi and Bagheri Banjar (2013) investigated the relationship of the citizens' sense of social belonging with their social, political and cultural participation in districts 3 and 12 of city of Tehran. The

research methodology was a surveying approach, and the questionnaire tool was used. The sampling was done by a multi-stage randomized clustering method. The results showed that the citizens' sense of social belonging had a significant positive relationship with their social participation, cultural participation and political participation. The results also indicated that the citizens have a more active participation toward cultural and political aspects than the social aspect. The women's sense of social belonging was higher than men. The subjects' type of occupation had influence on their social and political participation. In a research, Sharifi and Eslamiyeh (2013) studied the awareness rate of students on their citizenship rights in the Islamic Azad University, Semnan Branch. The research methodology was a descriptive and surveying approach. The study population consisted of all students as 8725 people. With a randomized simple sampling method, the sample size was determined as 368 subjects. The results showed that the knowledge rate of students in Semnan University on their civil rights was weak. Also, in a comparative study between the awareness of male and female students on civil rights, no significant difference was seen. In a research, Nazari et al. (2014) studied the influence of political participation on the political development of youth in city of Khalkhal. The study was done by a descriptive –surveying methodology. The study population included all youth, 15 to 29 years, city of Khalkhal accounted for 22636 people; the sample size included 250 subjects. The findings showed a significant relationship between the variables of trusting in the mass media, trusting in religious people, trusting in politicians, political trust and political participation with political development, which also led to increased political development. In a research, Mil broth (1997) examined the relationship between the higher education and political participation; he concluded that people with higher education will have higher political participation. Also, people in the middle class have higher political participation than the lower class. The followings were also obtained: Greater political participation in

- Older than the younger
- Urban residents than the rural residents
- Ethnic majority than the ethnic minority
- The members of groups and their organizations compared to non-members

In a study, QelichLi and Moshabaki (2009) examined the role of intellectual capital in creating competitive advantage in two Iranian automobile manufacturing companies. Due to the commitment to protect enterprise data, names of these two companies cannot be

mentioned. The study methodology was a descriptive and analytical approach. The research tool used was a questionnaire and a simple random sampling method was used. The study sample included the managers of A and B companies. Of the 500 respondents from Company A, a random sample of 91 subjects (51 Chairmen, 30 Presidents and 10 Managers) was selected. In addition, from the 258 respondents of Company B, a sample of 72 subjects (53 Chairmen, 16 Presidents and 3 Managers) was selected. The results indicated a significant positive relationship between the intellectual capital of the two companies and their competitive advantage. Obviously speaking, with increasing intellectual capital, their competitive advantage would increase as well. In a study, Dehghani and Marrofi (2012) examined the structural relationships between intellectual capitals, knowledge management and entrepreneurship in Kurdistan's Science and Applied University. The study methodology was a descriptive-correlational approach and the research instrument was a questionnaire. The study population included 200 students. The results showed that there is a direct relationship between the intellectual capitals of the university, knowledge management and the individual entrepreneurship. The findings also indicated that a complete harmony must be among knowledge management strategies (Generation, transmission and using it) in the field of education and university system to achieve high performance, and especially, to succeed in institutionalization of a culture of entrepreneurship in the university. In a study, Costa (2012) evaluated the performance and productivity of IC of 17 companies over a period of 4 years (2005-2008) in the manufacturing and building sector of Racing Yachts in Italy. In this study, data envelopment analysis techniques were used to evaluate the efficiency, and the Malmquist Index was applied to assess productivity growth of IC. The study results divided the companies into 4 groups:

1. High-performance and fast-growing group
2. High-performance and slow-growing group
3. Low-performance and fast-growing group
4. Low-performance and slow-growing group

Finally, some recommendations were provided to improve the productivity and efficiency of inefficient listed companies in the industry.

Methodology

Research objective

The study purpose was to improve the political literacy level of staff in the Department of Education, Zanjan Province, in order to increase their intellectual capital.

Research questions

The study sought for answers to the following two questions:

1. Is there any relationship between political literacy and intellectual capital (and its three dimensions)?
2. How is the quality and quantity, if there is any relationship?

Research Hypotheses

Main hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between political literacy and intellectual capital in the Department of Education of Zanjan Province.

Sub-hypothesis 1-1: There is a relationship between political understanding and perception and structural dimension of intellectual capital in the Department of Education of Zanjan Province.

Sub-hypothesis 1-2: There is a relationship between political understanding and perception and relational dimension of intellectual capital in the Department of Education of Zanjan Province.

Sub-hypothesis 1-3: There is a relationship between political understanding and perception and human dimension of intellectual capital in the Department of Education of Zanjan Province.

Sub-hypothesis 1-4: There is a relationship between understanding national interests and structural dimension of intellectual capital in the Department of Education of Zanjan Province.

Sub-hypothesis 1-5: There is a relationship between understanding national interests and relational dimension of intellectual capital in the Department of Education of Zanjan Province.

Sub-hypothesis 1-6: There is a relationship between understanding national interests and human dimension of intellectual capital in the Department of Education of Zanjan Province.

Research variables and its components

1. Independent variable (predictor): The independent variable in this study is "political literacy", since it is measured by the researcher to determine its effect on the dependent variable. The information literacy components include: Political understanding and perception understanding national interests
2. Dependent variable (criterion): "Intellectual capital" is the dependent variable in this study, since it is measured to ascertain and determine the effect of PL on it. The IC components include

structural capital, relational capital and human capital.

Research Conceptual model

The conceptual model is researcher-made based on the variables and hypotheses of the study. In the following model, the relationship between intellectual capital and

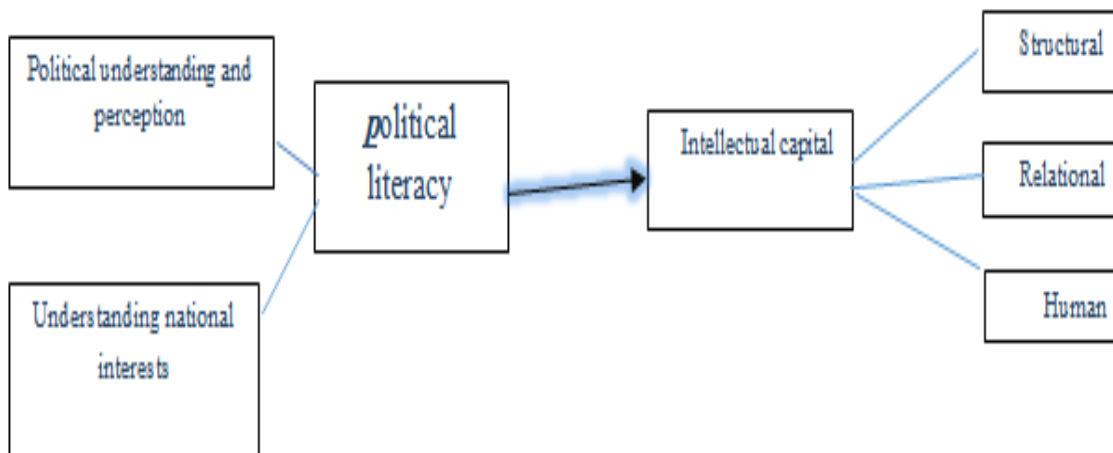


Figure 1: Research conceptual model

Population & Sample

The study population consists of "a number of desired elements that have at least a characteristic trait". The characteristic trait is one that is common among all the population elements and distinctive of the population from other communities (Azar & Momeni, 2012). All employees of the Department, "245" subjects, were considered as the study population. The sample includes "a limited number of the statistical society that reflects the main features of the society (Azar & Momeni, 2012). Using Cochran's formula with a 95% confidence level and possible accuracy of 5%, the sample size was determined as 152 subjects. To access the information of the specified population, 170 questionnaires were distributed in total, and finally, 152 usable questionnaires were completed and collected. Thus, the rate of return is 89%.

Collection tool and data analysis methods

In the present study, the data collection tool was a questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part was related to the population demographic information, including gender, marital status, age, education and work experience. The second part was related to the research variables. The IC and information literacy respectively with 15 and 30 questions were

political literacy is explained. In fact, the variable that the flash is set out from is considered as the independent variable (predictor), while the variable that the flash is set into is considered as the dependent variable (criterion).

analyzed using a 5-item Likert scale. Finally, after gathering the questionnaires, to review and respond to the research hypotheses and data analysis, the following techniques and software were used:

Descriptive and inferential statistics techniques by using the structural equation modeling, dispersion test, Pearson test, [Kalmogorov- Smiranov Test](#) and statistical software of SPSS and Lisrel.

Inventory Reliability

Reliability implies that any particular method used for times about a same thing subject would lead to the same result or not (Ahmadi and Kalhorian, 2015). To determine the reliability of this study, the Cronbach's alpha method and SPSS software were used. The Cronbach's alpha method is used to measure the internal consistency of measurement tools, including the questionnaires measuring different characteristics. In these instruments, the response can take a numeric Value. Closer coefficient value obtained to 100% indicates the higher reliability of the questionnaire (Sarmad et al., 2001). In the present study, the questionnaire reliability was calculated as 0.946.

Inventory validity

The questionnaire validity determines that how much the measurement tool measures the examined feature. The content validity is usually used to examine the

components of a measuring tool. The content validity of a measuring instrument depends on its constituent questions. In this study, the views of academics and experts confirmation were used for content validity. The construct validity of a measurement tool represents that how much a measurement tool measures a construct or a feature with a theoretical basis. The construct validity consists of two types (confirmatory factor analysis and exploratory factor analysis) (Sarmad et al., 2001). To determine the construct validity of the study, the confirmatory factor analysis method was used.

Research area

In terms of the subject, the study was in the area of political literacy and intellectual capital of Department of Education staff, Zanjan province. The period time occurred in 2014-2015.

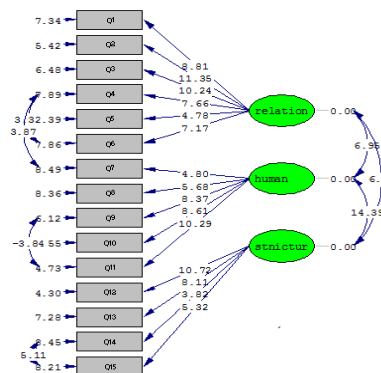
Demographic (biographical) characteristics of the target community members

- Gender: 81.6% (male) and 18.4% (female)
- Marital status: 92.1% (married) and 7.9% (unmarried)
- Age: 49.3% (41-50); 46.1% (31-40) and 4.6% (20-30)
- Education: 61.8% (bachelor's degree); 23% (master's degree); 8.6% (associate degree) and 6.6% (diploma)

- Work Experience: 66.5 % (21 to 30 years); 28.3% (11 to 20 years) and 5.3% (1 to 10 years)

Confirmatory factor analysis of intellectual capital variable

The intellectual capital construct is measured by three variables of structural capital, relational capital and human capital with 15 questions.



Chi-Square=151.31, df=83, P-value=0.00001, RMSEA=0.074

Figure 2: The T-statistic and significance of corrective model coefficients of intellectual capital

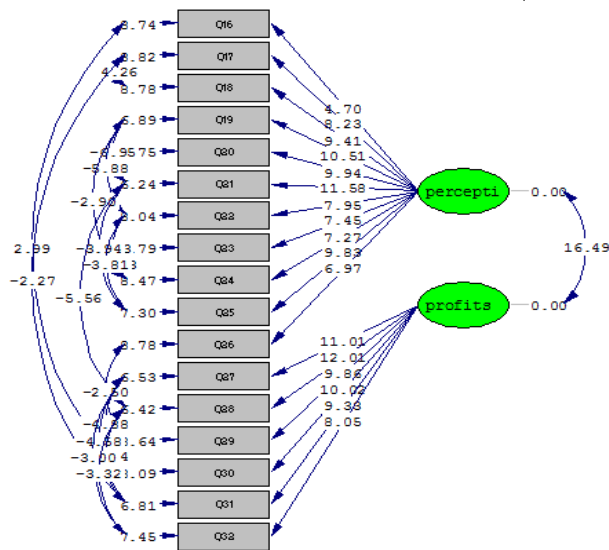
The fit indices of the relevant model are shown in Table 1. Given that all indices are in the acceptable range, thus, the fitness of the data collected with the model is optimal. Thus, the fitness of the final version of measuring the intellectual capital is confirmed.

Table 1: Fitness indices of the measurement model of intellectual capital

CFI	NNFI	NFI	AGFI	GFI	RMSEA	SRMR	χ^2/df	Fitness Index
> 0.9	> 0.9	> 0.9	> 0.9	> 0.9	< 0.1	< 0.05	< 5	Acceptance range
.98	0.97	0.93	0.92	0.91	0.074	0.025	1.823	Result

Confirmatory factor analysis of political literacy variable

The political literacy construct is measured by two variables of political understanding and perception understanding national interests with 17 questions.



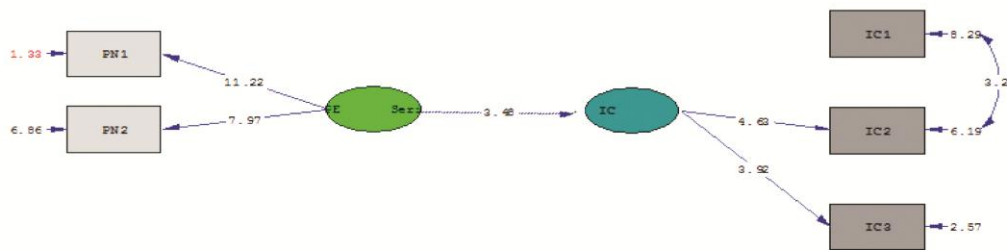
Chi-Square=190.83, df=101, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.077

Figure 3: T-statistic and significance of the corrective model coefficients of political literacy

The mentioned model fit indices are shown in Table 2. Given that all indicators are in the acceptable range, thus, the fitness of the data collected with the model is optimal. Therefore, the final measurement model fitness of the political literacy is approved.

Table 2: Fitness indices of the measuring model of the political literacy

CFI	NNFI	NFI	AGFI	GFI	RMSEA	SRMR	χ^2/df	Fitness Index
$\succ 0.9$	$\succ 0.9$	$\succ 0.9$	$\succ 0.9$	$\succ 0.9$	$\prec 0.1$	$\prec 0.05$	$\prec 5$	Acceptance range
0.99	0.97	0.99	0.94	0.93	0.077	0.029	1.889	Result



Chi-Square=32.26, df=16, P-value=0.00926, RMSEA=0.082

Figure 4: Significance of the relationships in the modified structural model

Answering to the research hypotheses

Table 3: Distribution test to evaluate the relationship between dimensions of PL and IC components

Hypothesis type	Sample size	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Main hypothesis 1	152	3.28	3/67	3/48	1.19
Hypothesis 1-1	152	3.26	3/63	3/44	1.15
Hypothesis 1-2	152	3.23	3/61	3/42	1.19
Hypothesis 1-3	152	3.24	3/62	3/43	1.20
Hypothesis 1-4	152	3.43	3/73	3/53	1.18
Hypothesis 1-5	152	3.28	3/71	3/54	1.02
Hypothesis 1-6	152	2.28	3/29	3/12	1/19

Table 4: Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) test to assess the normality of the research variables

Hypothesis type	Sample size	Kolmogorov statistic	Significance level
Main hypothesis 1	152	./860	./451
Hypothesis 1-1	152	./143	./146
Hypothesis 1-2	152	./890	./407
Hypothesis 1-3	152	./777	./395
Hypothesis 1-4	152	./573	./422
Hypothesis 1-5	152	./259	./224
Hypothesis 1-6	152	./622	./380

The results showed that the distribution of all the variables in the target population is normal.

Table 5: Pearson test to describe the relationship between political literacy dimensions and intellectual capital components

Hypothesis type	Sample size	Correlation coefficient	Significance level	Test results
Main hypothesis 1	152	./472	./000	Confirmed main hypothesis
Hypothesis 1-1	152	./566	./000	Confirmed main hypothesis
Hypothesis 1-2	152	./174	./032	Confirmed main hypothesis
Hypothesis 1-3	152	./433	./000	Confirmed main hypothesis
Hypothesis 1-4	152	./566	./000	Confirmed main hypothesis
Hypothesis 1-5	152	./366	./000	Confirmed main hypothesis
Hypothesis 1-6	152	./341	./000	Confirmed main hypothesis

Summary & Conclusion

Based on the data collected and their processing, all the study hypotheses were confirmed. Hence, the following results were obtained:

1. There is a relationship between political literacy and intellectual capital in the Department of Education in Zanjan Province. This means in general, increased political literacy can lead to improved intellectual capital.
2. There is a relationship between political understanding and perception and the structural

dimension of intellectual capital in the study target population. This means with increased political understanding and perception and social awareness and relevant skills in this area, the structural dimension of the intellectual capital would improve.

3. There is a relationship between political understanding and perception and the relational dimension of intellectual capital in the study target population. Thus, through establishment and strengthening of a favorable organizational

climate to political understanding and perception and political participation, the relational dimension of intellectual capital in the Department of Education in Zanjan would improve.

4. There is a relationship between political understanding and perception and the human dimension of intellectual capital in the study target population. This means by increased political understanding and perception and creation of grounds for development of human interactions and relationships between the networks and presence of employees with various intellectual ideas, the intellectual capital will also improve.
5. There is a relationship between understanding national interests and the structural dimension of intellectual capital in the study target population. Therefore, with favorable policy-making and planning in regard to understanding of the national interests and nationalism, the area for development and improvement of intellectual capital structure would be provided.
6. There is a relationship between understanding national interests and the relational dimension of intellectual capital in the study target population. Therefore, with favorable planning in regard to increased understanding of the national interests and evaluating the efficiency of human resources, the relational dimension of intellectual capital would improve.
7. There is a relationship between understanding national interests and the human dimension of intellectual capital in the study target population. Thus, through creating a support system to strengthen and increase the understanding of national interests, the staff's creativity and innovation will be expanded, which will lead to improved human dimension of intellectual capital in the Department of Education in Zanjan Province.

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