Identifying Dimensions and Components of Alienation

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Purpose: Alienation has a great impact on the performance of people. Therefore, the current research was conducted with the aim of identifying the dimensions and components of alienation.

Methodology: This study was applied in terms of purpose and qualitative in terms of implementation method. The research community included the experts on the alienation of Isfahan city in 2021, and according to the principle of theoretical saturation, 20 of them (employees of government organizations) were selected as a sample using targeted and snowball sampling methods. The research tools consisted of a demographic information form and semi-structured interviews, which the validity of the interviews was obtained by the verification methodology and the reliability of the collected codes was 0.88 obtained through the two-week retest method. Data were analyzed with open, interactive and selective coding methods in MAXQDA software.

Findings: Data analysis showed that alienation had 205 indicators, 29 components and 7 dimensions. The dimensions included extra-organizational alienation (with 5 components of dehumanization at work, cultural and social anomie, effects and values of industrial society, social alienation and cultural beliefs), organizational alienation (with 13 components of weakness in talent management, weakness of organizational socialization, unprofessional and weak managers, Organizational alienation, weak interpersonal communication, tension and conflict in the organization, weak rules and regulations, inefficient monitoring and control system, organizational disorder, organizational culture based on construction, corruption and rentier-seeking, autocratic management style and powerlessness at work), job alienation (with 4 components of sense of meaninglessness at work, lack of job motivation, ambiguity in roles, duties, job and organizational frustration), individual alienation (with 4 components of inability to work, low self-esteem, psychological disorders and lack of employees ethics), unfavorable behavioral and organizational attitudes (with 1 component), job fatigue (with 1 component) and aversion to work (with 1 component).

Conclusion: The identified dimensions and components for alienation can have many practical implications for specialists and organizational planners who can design and implement programs based on the identified dimensions and components to reduce employee alienation.

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1. Introduction

Organizations are always the subject of interest for study which are vital mechanisms for pursuing collective goals in modern societies among which are the basic concerns of managers of organizations to motivate human resources as the most important human capital and reduce their indifference and discouragement (Hazratian, Mohajeran, and Ghalavandi, 2021). The growth and development of any society and country depend on the efficient and optimal performance of organizations and institutions and the efficient and optimal performance of their employees. In fact, when the dependency and mutual relationship between people and different elements of an organization, responsible organizational behavior, accountability, ethical commitment and organizational behavior are realized, it opens the way to achieve short-term and long-term goals (Iman and Moradi, 2017). Employees who have similar beliefs and values with the organization establish effective interactions with the organization and their level of conflict and alienation is much less, on the contrary, the contradiction of values between employees and the organization increase conflict and alienation. if the employees' sense of value in the organization is not satisfied and do not have this feeling and perception that they are important and valuable for the organization, they withdraw from the organization and fail to fulfill their duties and responsibilities (Deniz and Cimen, 2022).

Today, the concept of job alienation as a reality that negatively affects people, organizations and organizational functions has been accepted and has attracted the attention of many researchers (Amarat, Akbolat, Unal and Karakaya, 2019). Therefore, the phenomenon of alienation is one of the favorite phenomena of researchers, managers, officials and organizational planners (Lagios, Lagios, Stinglhamber and Caesens, 2022). Alienation is a source of stress in the organization, and a person alienated from the organization loses the concept of focusing on time and place, and job alienation has a negative relationship with activity control, self-regulation of actions, job participation, and organizational commitment leading to increase in poverty and decrease in job satisfaction (Tummers and Dulk, 2013). Alienation refers to inhumane and immoral conditions and behaviors prevailing in the work environment, which leads to hostile behaviors toward work and production, and this structure psychologically separates employees from work and its environment, causing a decrease in job involvement and organizational identity (Brondolo, Eftekharzadeh, Clifton, Schwartz and Delahanty, 2018). Some specialists in organizational behavior believe that many people feel satisfied in jobs that give them the opportunity to serve others, which if employees feel that their efforts and activities do not provide any service to others, they will feel disillusioned and worthless, falling finally in alienation (Vanderstukken and Caniels, 2021).

Alienation indicates a lack of individuality, having such a lack as an unpleasant state for the individual and the larger society; So that at the individual level, alienation is associated with mental health, job dissatisfaction, problems related to alcohol, job stress, anxiety, depression and other forms of psychological diseases and at the organizational level, alienation causes low productivity, high absenteeism, high turnover, low commitment and reduced work ethic. At the community level, alienation causes various issues such as political and social alienation, irregularity, increase in crime, vandalism, increase in health care cost and sick economy (Shafique Khan, Jianguo, Mann, Saleem, Boamah, Javid and Usman, 2019). Alienation is a common reality of working life in professional service levels that causes a decrease in coordination with the job at the individual and group level and a decrease in job motivation. A person, in a state of alienation, cannot develop his talents and perceive himself as an effective person in the organization (Garcia-Contreras, Munoz-Chavez, Munoz-Chavez, Lezama-Leon and Barrios-Quiroz, 2022). Alienation is one of the psychological states whose occurrence brings about a negative impact on all dimensions of individual and organizational existence due to its components of futility, hatred of society, abnormality, disability, dislike of work and social isolation (Vtorushin and Chukreeva, 2015). Employees with a sense of alienation have inappropriate symptoms, including passivity, absenteeism, job turnover, leaving job, sense of job meaninglessness, and perception of powerlessness at work (Iliffe and Manthorpe, 2019). People who experience job alienation have problems with themselves, family, organization, and society, and moreover

their physical and mental health is severely threatened, which cause the organization's productivity to decrease or slow down through the problems they create for it (Xia, Wang, Li, He and Wang, 2022).

Very few researches have been conducted on the dimensions and components of alienation, and the results of the most important researches in this field are reported below. For example, the research results of Hazratian et al (2021) showed that variables affecting alienation include authentic leadership variables (with the components of self-awareness, transparency in relationship, internal moral perspective and balanced processing of information), organizational bullying (with the components of work-related bullying, related bullying with the person and bullying related to the intention to leave) and organizational culture. Ciftci (2021) concluded in a research that loneliness and job alienation had an effective role in leaving the job in which emotional exhaustion played a mediating role. In another study, Hajizadeh Meymandi, Koraei, Bonyad and DashtiZad (2020) reported that the factors affecting job alienation included organizational culture, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job characteristics, organizational justice, and quality of work life. Yousefi and Azizi Zeinalhajlou (2016) introduced the dimensions affecting alienation from work, including futility, cultural aversion, disability, awkwardness, work aversion and social isolation, and concluded that young age, being single, decreasing social satisfaction, job satisfaction, decline in social trust, inappropriate job characteristics, decrease in social effectiveness and decrease in organizational justice caused an increase in alienation from work. Also, findings by Kanten and Ulker (2014) showed that job alienation factors included job characteristics, lack of decision-making opportunities, weak control over work, organizational commitment, job conflict, performance pressures, organizational justice, structure adjustment, organization structure, and technological changes. In another study, Rastegar Khaled, Kaveh and Mohammadi (2014) entitled investigating sociological factors related to occupational alienation concluded that background factors (gender, marital status, education level, income level and passing in-service training), social trust, social participation, social support at work, life satisfaction and social responsibility were sociological factors related to job alienation. Moreover , Ghodarzvand Chegini, Noyan Ashraf and Alavi Saeb (2014) reported that the factors affecting alienation from work include concentration, formality, job independence, variety of skills, challenge and creativity, meaningfulness of work, self-expression, quality of work relationships, procedural and distributive justice. Sharafi, Mehdad and Fazel (2013) introduced communication justice and job feedback as factors influencing alienation. In addition, the results of Sedaghati Fard and Abdollahzadeh (2010) showed that the factors affecting job alienation of employees include feelings of emptiness (a person's feeling that the work does not have the desired outcome and efficiency), pessimism (distrust, not believing in people and doubting the behavior and words of others), laziness and numbness (having a kind of dullness and numbness that prevents the emergence of enthusiasm and warmth in one's behavior to do work), powerlessness (conditions in which a person loses the ability to exercise his will from an economic and social point of view), indifference (not reacting to different organizational events and having passive behaviors), concealment (trying to hide one's personality by avoiding explicit comments and doing expedient behaviors), meaninglessness (a situation in which there is no minimum satisfaction with work results) Isolation and loneliness (feeling of not belonging to common values in society), lack of independence (not using methods based on one's opinion in doing things), wasting time (unnecessary interruptions in work and prolonging rest), non-compliance of required working time with obligatory working time (having extra time due to the limited and repetitive nature of the work), the way of dividing the work (leaving most of the tasks to those who have the most connection and trust), the way of monitoring (lack of uniform monitoring and tolerance towards many behaviors), not taking things seriously (believing that everything is superficial), repetitiveness of assigned responsibility (limited and repetitive duties and responsibilities), physical working conditions (unsuitable facilities and environmental and health conditions), defective entry and exit hours (failure to be on time at the workplace and leaving earlier than the scheduled time), lack of interest in work (expressing reluctance and unwillingness to do obligatory work), welcoming free time and being happy about vacation days (accounting for all vacations and expressing happiness about extra vacations), the existence of formal relationships (absence of friendly

relations and lack of interest in socializing) and duality of personality (the external aspect of having a job for a person and the mismatch between statements and work behavior). In another study by Boeree (2001), six main variables identified include disability (lack of job autonomy, low control and lack of free work activities), futility (inability to understand how one's participation is related to larger goals), abnormality (the presence of a state of disorder), social isolation (giving little credit to goals and beliefs with value in society), self-loathing (considering work as a tool to satisfy external needs instead of revealing potential abilities) and cultural loathing (a person's lack of belonging to cultural values) as dimensions of self-alienation (quoted by Mehdad, Zaribafan and Mehdizadegan, 2015).

According to many behavioral scientists, organizations are the undeniable facet of today's modern world which form the nature of societies. The success of today's organizations depends on the efficient use of human resources, and one of the most important factors that threaten the physical and mental health of employees is alienation. The structure of alienation is considered as important and obvious results of unsuccessful socialization at the level of individuals and undesirable and ineffective socialization at the level of institutions and organizations, which indicates the separation of the individual from the system of beliefs, values, norms and patterns of action, organizational goals and collective expectations that influence all dimensions of existence. It affects the individual and the organization negatively (Sharafi et al, 2013). In order to reduce alienation, we need planning; for this purpose, its dimensions and components must be identified, and the present research is designed with this goal in mind. Having examined the research background, we found that very few studies have been conducted on the factors affecting alienation, and no research was found on its dimensions and components in a coherent manner using the coding method. The last thing about the importance and necessity of the current research is that the results of this research can help experts and organizational planners in designing programs to reduce alienation. Therefore, the current research was conducted with the aim of identifying the dimensions and components of alienation.

2. Methodology

This study was applied in terms of purpose and qualitative in terms of execution method. The research community was the alienation experts of the city of Isfahan in 2021, and according to the principle of theoretical saturation, 20 of them (employees of government organizations) were selected as a sample using the targeted and snowball sampling method. According to the principle of theoretical saturation, sampling continues until the research reaches theoretical saturation. It means that interviews with new experts do not lead to new information. Also, in the targeted sampling method, the samples are selected according to predetermined conditions, as in the present study, the most important conditions include having sufficient information on alienation, at least a master's degree, willingness to participate in the research, at least 5 years of work experience, and acceptance of the interview conditions. Among them were the recording of interviews. Also, the samples selected by the targeted sampling method were asked to introduce alienation to the researchers by other experts, which is called the snowball sampling method. It should be noted that the samples of this method were examined in terms of the criteria and conditions of the research selected as samples if they met the conditions.

The implementation stages of the current research were as follows: first, with the help of the supervisors and advisors, questions were designed for interviewing the experts based on theoretical principles. In the next step, the experts were identified and the necessity of conducting the research was explained to them and they were reassured about the observance of ethical principles including secrecy, confidentiality of personal information, privacy of subjects, data analysis in general and the conditions of the research were explained to them. Among the most important conditions of the current research, we can mention the recording of the interviews in order not to lose part of the information by mistake, and determining the time and place of the interview and using a semi-structured interview. After the experts were identified and they accepted the conditions of the research, each was selected as one of the sample members of the current

research and an interview was conducted with him. The above process including identifying experts and selecting them as a sample and conducting interviews with them continued until the research findings were theoretically saturated. After completing the interview with each of the experts, they were praised and thanked for agreeing to participate in the research and conducting the interview.

In this research, two tools were used to collect data including demographic information form and semi-structured interview. The first one, the demographic information form, was designed by the researchers of the present study including questions about gender, marital status, work experience, education, and age. The second tool, the semi-structured interview, included questions about alienation, which were designed by the researchers of the present study based on the theoretical foundations of alienation. Interview is a suitable tool for researchers to know about people's views, how they are formed and to know about the motivations of decisions and perception of their experiences. The duration of the interview with all samples or alienation experts took 41 hours. The validity of the interviews was confirmed by the triangulation method and the reliability of the extracted codes was obtained (0.88) by the two-week retest method. Interview questions with alienation experts were presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Interview questions with alienation experts

Row	Question
1	What factors in the organization have caused you to feel alienated? Please explain.
2	Have family factors (education, family and peers) had an effect on creating a state of alienation in you? Please explain.
3	How much did social and cultural factors have an effect on creating a state of alienation in you? Please explain.
4	What consequences has the state of perceived well-being had on your work, interest, mood, and personal and social life? Please explain.
5	What actions has your organization taken to resolve the alienation and situations created in you? Please explain.
6	Has alienation had an effect on your work and the way you provide services to the clients? Please explain.

The data obtained from conducting interviews with alienation samples or experts were analyzed with open, central and selective coding methods in MAXQDA software.

3. Findings

The first tool of the current research included the demographic information form, based on which, the frequency and percentage results of gender, marital status, work experience, education and age of alienation experts are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of the frequency and percentage of the demographic information of alienation experts

Variable	level	Frequency	Frequency Percentage
Gender	Male	13	65
	Female	7	35
Marital Status	Single	2	10
	Married	18	90
Work experience	6-15	7	35
	16-25	9	45
	Above 25 Years	4	20
Education	MSc	5	25
	PhD	15	75
Age	31-40	6	30
	41-50	9	45
	Above 50 Years	5	25

As in Table 2, most of the alienation experts are male (65 percent), married (90 percent) and have 16-25 years of work experience (45 percent), PhD education (75 percent), and age 41-50 years (45 percent). The

results of open, axial and selective coding to identify dimensions and components of alienation are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of open, axial and selective coding to identify dimensions and components of alienation

Selective Coding	Axial Coding	Open Coding
Transorganizational Alienation	dehumanization in the work	10 codes
	Cultural and social anomie	5 codes
	Effects and values of industrial society	5 codes
	Social alienation	3 codes
	Cultural beliefs	4 codes
Organizational Alienation	Weakness in talent management	2 codes
	Organizational socialization weakness	2 codes
	Unprofessional and weak managers	2 codes
	Organizational alienation	14 codes
	Weakness of interpersonal communication in an organization	2 codes
	Organization tension and conflict	2 codes
	Weakness of rules and regulations	16 codes
	Inefficient monitoring and control system	4 codes
	Organizational disorder	2 codes
	Organizational culture based on the construction	11 codes
	Corruption and rent-seeking	21 codes
	Authoritarian management style	3 codes
	Powerlessness in the work	11 codes
Occupational Alienation	sense of meaninglessness at work	9 codes
	Lack of job motivation	7 codes
	Ambiguity in the role and duties	5 codes
	Job and organizational frustration	7 codes
Personal Alienation	inability to work	5 codes
	Low self-esteem	12 codes
	Psychological disorders	4 codes
	Lack of employee ethics	7 codes
Unfavorable Behavioral and Organizational Attitudes	Unfavorable behavioral and organizational attitudes	11 codes
Job Fatigue	Job fatigue	5 codes
Dislike and Hatred of Work	Dislike and hatred of work	14 codes

As in Table 3, alienation had 205 indicators, 29 components and 7 dimensions. The dimensions include extra-organizational alienation (with 5 components of dehumanization at work, cultural and social anomie, effects and values of industrial society, social alienation and cultural beliefs), organizational alienation (with 13 components of weakness in talent management, weakness of organizational socialization, unprofessional and weak managers, Organizational alienation, weak interpersonal communication in the organization, tension and conflict in the organization, weak rules and regulations, inefficient monitoring and control system, organizational disorder, organizational culture based on construction, corruption and rent-seeking, autocratic management style and powerlessness at work), job alienation (with 4 components of sense of meaninglessness at work, lack of job motivation, ambiguity in roles and duties and job and organizational frustration), individual alienation (with 4 components of inability to work, low self-esteem, psychological disorders and lack of employee ethics), unfavorable behavioral and organizational attitudes (with 1 component), job fatigue (with 1 component) and aversion to work (with 1 component). According to the

identified dimensions and components, the model of alienation dimensions and components is presented in Figure 1.
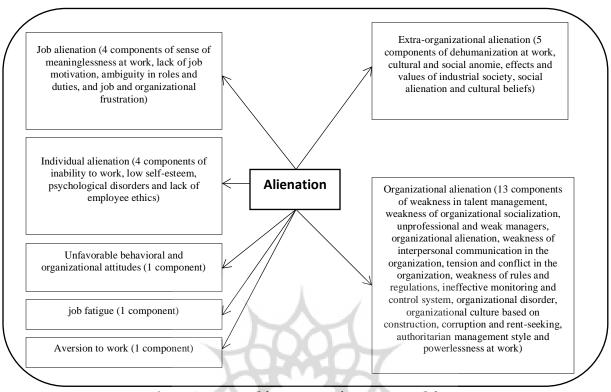

Figure 1. Pattern of dimensions and components of alienation

4. Discussion

Considering the importance of alienation and its role in the decline of people's performance, the present research was conducted with the aim of identifying the dimensions and components of alienation.

The findings of the present study showed that alienation had 205 indicators, 29 components and 7 dimensions. The dimensions include extra-organizational alienation (with 5 components of dehumanization at work, cultural and social anomie, effects and values of industrial society, social alienation and cultural beliefs), organizational alienation (with 13 components of weakness in talent management, weakness of organizational socialization, unprofessional and weak managers, organizational alienation, weak interpersonal communication in the organization, tension and conflict in the organization, weak rules and regulations, inefficient monitoring and control system, organizational disorder, organizational culture based on construction, corruption and rent-seeking, autocratic management style and powerlessness at work), job alienation (with 4 components of sense of meaninglessness at work, lack of job motivation, ambiguity in roles and duties and job and organizational frustration), individual alienation (with 4 components of inability to work, low self-esteem, psychological disorders and lack of employee ethics), unfavorable behavioral and organizational attitudes (with 1 component), job fatigue (with 1 component) and aversion to work (with 1 component). Although no research was found on the dimensions and components of alienation, these findings are consistent with the findings of Hazratian et al (2021), Ciftci (2021), Hajizadeh Meymandi et al (2020), Yousefi and Azizi Zeinalhajlou (2016), Kanten and Ulker (2014), Rastegar Khaled et al (2014), Ghodarzvand Chegini et al (2014), Sharafi et al (2013), Sedaghati Fard and Abdollahzadeh (2010) and Boeree (2001, quoted by Mehdad et al,2015) were aligned.

In describing the findings of this study, we conclude that extra-organizational alienation through a machine-like view of humans and dehumanization at work, cultural and social alienation, the influence of industrial

societies and the dominance of the ruling values in these societies in the organization and on employees, social alienation and lack of attention to social and environmental consequences of work and inappropriate cultural beliefs can increase alienation in the organization and employees. Organizational alienation also leads to increase alienation in organization and employees through weakness in identifying and managing the talents and capabilities of employees, weakness in the socialization of employees and organizations, the existence of unprofessional and weak managers, organizational alienation, weakness of interpersonal communication among organization members, organizational tensions and conflicts, weakness and defects in rules and organizational regulations, inefficient and weak monitoring and control system, organizational chaos and disorder, inappropriate and construction-based organizational culture, corruption, bribery and rent-seeking in the organization, authoritarian management style and powerlessness and feeling of weakness at work cause alienation. Also, alienation is created through the sense of meaninglessness and indifference at work, lack of proper job motivation, ambiguity in job and organizational roles and duties, and job and organizational frustration. In addition, individual alienation through inability and weakness at work, low and negative self-confidence and self-esteem, suffering from psychological disorders and lack of attention to ethics and morals among organizational employees can increase alienation in the organization and employees. In addition, the three dimensions of unfavorable organizational and behavioral attitudes, job fatigue and dislike and hatred of work also through negative and unfavorable attitudes towards oneself, employees and the organization or even other organizations, fatigue from job and profession, burnout from job and profession, hating one's job, hating work in the organization and hating oneself and organizational colleagues cause alienation.

Researchers are always confronted with limitations in their research, some of which show themselves even at the very beginning of the work. In general, every research work has its own limitations, some of which are mentioned below. The first limitation is that the current research was a qualitative research and it has all the limitations of this study method. Also, in this study, in order to collect data, semi-structured interviews were used with employees of government organizations in Isfahan city. Probably, if interviews are conducted with the managers and vice-presidents of the organizations or the customers and masters of the organizations, different results will be obtained from the results of this study. Another limitation of this study was the limitation of the research community to employees of government organizations in Isfahan city. Therefore, it is suggested that this research be conducted on the employees of non-governmental organizations and even other cities and its results be compared with the results of this study. Another research suggestion is to build a tool to measure the level of alienation in organizations and to check the level of this structure providing solutions to reduce it. Generally speaking, the findings of this study indicated the existence of seven dimensions of extra-organizational alienation, organizational alienation, occupational alienation, individual alienation, unfavorable organizational and behavioral attitudes, job fatigue, and aversion to work for alienation. These findings and results have many practical implications for managers, officials, specialists and organizational planners, which based on these findings and results, they can design and implement programs to reduce alienation in order to provide a basis for improving the working conditions of employees in the organization.

Acknowledgments

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