



ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Investigating the Effect of Succession Planning on Organizational Sustainability Considering the Mediating Role of Employee Training (Case Study: Power Distribution Company in Tehran)

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ABSTRACT

Undoubtedly, one of the factors affecting organizational sustainability is succession planning. The main reason is that succession planning is active and aligned with the organization's overall strategy, so it requires a succession management strategy to support its sustainability. In this article, in line with the relationship between the issues of possible problems resulting from the lack of attention to succession planning and employee training, as well as the existence of a research gap regarding the relationship between succession planning, training, and organizational sustainability in the country and scientific literature, the main research question is what is the impact of succession planning on organizational sustainability about the mediating role of employee training in the Greater Tehran Electric Power Distribution Company. The structural equation modeling method has been used to answer this question. The statistical population of the present study is the employees of the Greater Tehran Electricity Distribution Company, which is equal to 5000 people, and based on the Cochran method, the statistical sample is 357 people. Training acts as an intervention to improve the quality of the organization's goods and services in tough competition by enhancing the technical skills of the employees, which confirms the necessity of conducting research in this regard, because without knowing this field, the employees' technical skills cannot be improved. ©authors

1. Introduction

In today's era of advanced technologies, companies are struggling to retain, plan and develop their human resources to face two major challenges: the loss of key skilled talent and the changing market and business processes (Lilian Atieno, 2024).

Retaining and developing employees is a priority for companies that want to achieve sustainability. The concept of sustainability is rooted in the principles of sustainable development, Brotland (1987) defined organizational sustainability as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Organizational sustainability is described as the capacity to continue in the long term. Sustainability activities should be designed from the outset with environmental costs and consumer and worker health and safety in mind. It is cleaner, safer and more resource-efficient. One of the several components of a sustainable society, secure and meaningful employment, providing sufficient purchasing power for workers and employees is an essential part of a sustainable and socially cohesive economy as a way to provide sustainable skills training, which if not, will create numerous problems for the organization (Susilo & Winarto, 2023).

Researchers such as Awogbemi et al (2022), Acar (2005), McIntosh & Arver (2001), Feoland and Lowndes (2010) have proposed dimensions of sustainability including environmental, social, and economic sustainability. Feoland and Lowndes (2010) stated that these three aspects (environmental, social, and economic) have an interrelated effect on each other. Unfortunately, it seems that organizations have focused most of their efforts on achieving the economic dimension of sustainability and operate within the political sphere, while environmental and social components have been left to the background, and instead of implementing a comprehensive annual training program based on budget and calendar, training employees on the necessary skills is done randomly (Fada & Sobo, 2017; Ahmadi Nazari, 2023). According to Susilo & Vernato (2023), one of the factors affecting organizational sustainability is succession planning. The main reason for this is that succession planning is proactive and aligned with the overall strategy of the organization, therefore it requires a succession management strategy to support the sustainability of the organization.

According to Parks (2018), establishing practices between successors and incumbents affects performance by improving continuity within the organization, as succession planning is an important effort to find potential employees, determine the necessary skills, and provide learning experiences to improve employees' ability to face challenges and prepare for a flexible leadership mindset (Javadiyar et al., 2022).

Therefore, the problem arises when the company does not have a succession plan and plan and the relevant employees have left the job for any reason, and the tasks assigned to new employees will certainly be difficult, which can be seen in abundance in an operating company such as an electricity distribution company (Monyei et al., 2021), of course, if the issue of succession planning is ignored. Some of the challenges of succession planning include identifying and selecting successors, training and development, performance appraisal and feedback, practical experience and work opportunities, and supervision and guidance, which will be examined in the research (Daniali et al., 2018; Mafi et al., 2022).

Also, among the variables that influence or are related to organizational sustainability and succession planning is employee training, in other words, employees who have not been previously trained cannot be replaced by an employee who has left due to circumstances such as retirement or leaving the job (Zulqurnain et al., 2019). As Marquardt (2002) states, unless companies continue to transform themselves into learning organizations and become places where people at all levels are involved in new learning processes in order to gain a

competitive advantage in this new environment, they will not be able to retain their employees and ultimately become a high-performance organization.

According to Eichner and Lombardo (2004), the expression of an individual's ability to learn from previous experiences and apply that knowledge to succeed in new situations is known as learning intelligence, which can be acquired through training. It seems that skills training is not given the attention it deserves, even though human resources are the driving force of any system. There are very few studies on the impact of skills training on organizational sustainability (Fada and Sobo, 2017).

Meanwhile, the question is to what extent does an organization like Tehran Electricity Distribution Company train and provide its employees with the role of succession planning? How is this done? And if so, has this training been able to affect the sustainability of the company? (Susilo & Winarto, 2023).

From the aspect of organizational sustainability, the development of succession planning in the Greater Tehran Electricity Distribution Company plays an important role because employees who participated in the development program have increased their participation and loyalty to the company, which has a positive effect on employee retention rates (Bakhtiari Findari et al., 2011). Therefore, the development of succession planning not only contributes to the company's growth but also to the organization's sustainability by creating a base of skilled, capable, and committed employees. Organizational sustainability is the ability of a group of people to withstand the internal and external pressures of a culture, through change and innovation, while striving to deliver specific products, which shows the importance of examining it in scientific research. Organizational sustainability is also the search for a balance between socially desirable, economically viable, and environmentally sustainable. From the perspective of McIntosh & Arora (2001), organizations need to pay attention to economic, social, and environmental areas to advance the sustainability agenda, which indicates the importance of researching organizational sustainability.

One of the variables affecting sustainability is employee succession, the importance of conducting research in this regard lies in its name, namely, replacing an individual with another who has specific skills in a particular job. Succession in an organization is an approach that, considering the importance of key roles, trains individuals to replace and benefit from their abilities. This process is carried out to maintain the sustainability and continuity of organizational activities and develop future leaders in the organization. The management of the succession process in an organization is the responsibility of human resources (Ugoani, 2022). Succession is one of the most important human resource management strategies that has a significant impact on organizations. The importance of this variable is that it reduces the rate of employee resignation: Succession planning reduces the rate of resignation and job abandonment by preparing and training employees to accept key roles in the future. This allows the organization to prevent interruptions in its activities and continue its work process continuously. In general, succession planning is of great importance for organizations because it maintains and develops the organization's valuable human resources and helps them continue sustainably and successfully (Hosen et al., 2024).

On the other hand, in the discussion of organizational sustainability, employee training (Fada & Sobo, 2017) has a specific role in achieving an organizational goal by combining the interests of the organization and the workforce. Today, training and development are the most important factors in the world. Therefore, training and developing the workforce in the necessary skills is a principle to achieve the goal of sustainability. Training increases the efficiency and effectiveness of employees and the organization. Training is an organized method in which organizations provide development and improvement of the quality of new and existing employees.

Training is considered as a systematic approach of learning and development that improves the individual, group, and organization, and all of these emphasize the importance and necessity of research in relation to employee training. Training acts as an intervention to

improve the quality of the organization's goods and services in tough competition by improving the technical skills of employees, which confirms the necessity of conducting research in this regard because without knowledge in this field, the technical skills of employees cannot be achieved (Gholamalian et al., 2023).

The overall objective of this study is to critically examine employee training and development on organizational sustainability. Other objectives include determining the impact of training and development on employee productivity and examining different types of training and development strategies. Theoretically, this study helps to understand how succession planning can be key in achieving organizational sustainability (Karimi et al., 2010).

This study enriches the literature on human resource management and organizational development by analyzing the role of employee training in linking succession planning with sustainability (Susilo & Winarto, 2023). Also, from a practical perspective, the results of this study will guide the operational and administrative teams of the Greater Tehran Power Distribution Company in designing and implementing effective succession programs. The practical implications of this study will help the company prepare potential employees to play key roles in the future and also improve the ability of organizations to cope with external changes and challenges (Susilo & Winarto, 2023).

Therefore, considering the content of the title regarding the possible problems resulting from the lack of attention to succession planning and employee training, as well as the existence of a research gap regarding the relationship between succession planning, training, and organizational sustainability in the country and scientific literature, the question that arises in the researcher's mind is: What is the impact of succession planning on organizational sustainability concerning the mediating role of employee training in the Greater Tehran Electric Power Distribution Company?

2. Literature Review

Succession Planning in the Organization

Succession planning in the organization is an approach that, considering the importance of key roles, trains people to replace and benefit from their abilities. This process is carried out in order to maintain the sustainability and continuity of organizational activities and develop future leaders in the organization. The management of the succession planning process in the organization is the responsibility of human resources (McCullough, 2020).

Definition of succession planning

The process of succession planning is carried out in order to identify future successors for key roles in the organization. In fact, in this process, organizations seek to identify employees who can take on roles or duties in the event of an employee being promoted or leaving the organization (Al Suwaidi et al., 2020).

Succession planning is typically planned for 12 months to 3 full years. During this period of time, the individual is fully and comprehensively trained. Of course, the time period of the succession planning program will be slightly longer for key and executive roles. The minimum possible time for an executive role will be 12 months (Taghva et al., 2021).

The Importance of Succession Planning

Succession planning is one of the most important human resource management strategies that has a significant impact on organizations.

Reducing employee resignation rates: Succession planning reduces the rate of resignation and job abandonment by preparing and training employees to assume key roles in the future. This allows the organization to prevent interruptions in its activities and continue its work process continuously (Tootian et al, 2019).

Maintaining organizational talent: By implementing succession planning, the organization can manage its talents and thereby prevent the loss of valuable knowledge and experience of employees.

Ensuring team and organizational goals: By using internal talents trained through succession planning, the organization can provide the best roles to achieve its team and organizational goals.

Strengthening employee morale: By announcing and promoting employees as future successors, individuals gain a sense of responsibility and value in the organization, which increases work morale and commitment to the organization.

Increase competitive advantage: By attracting and retaining new talent as well as improving the performance of existing talent, an organization can strengthen its competitive advantage in the market and maintain its leading position.

In general, succession planning is of great importance to organizations because it preserves and develops the organization's valuable human resources and helps them continue in a sustainable and successful manner (Xin et al., 2020).

Succession Planning Models

Succession planning models in organizations can be divided into three main categories, each of which is carried out by human resource managers with a specific purpose in an organization. Some of the succession planning models in organizations are:

Organizational Leadership Succession Planning: This model is provided to replace the organization's main and key leaders such as the CEO, senior managers, and key leaders in effective and prominent roles. The goal of this model is to train and prepare successors to take over the leadership tasks and responsibilities of these important levels in the organization. Successors may be selected from existing employees or recruited from outside the organization.

Senior Management Succession Planning: This model is provided to replace the organization's senior managers such as the CFO, marketing manager, sales manager, and other senior managers. The goal of this model is to identify and train successors for use in the organization's senior management roles. This model may include professional development plans, management skills training, and practical experience in various roles.

Employee Succession Planning: This model is provided for replacing employees at all levels of the organization. This succession planning model is especially used for critical and key roles in an organization. The goal of this model is to identify, train, and prepare successors to take over the tasks and responsibilities of current people in the organization. This model includes personal training and development programs, performance evaluations, and experimental programs in various roles. In all three models, regular and continuous evaluation of successors and providing feedback to them to improve their growth and development is also very important (Huang et al., 2020).

Succession Planning Methods

To plan a succession planning program, human resource managers need to know the succession planning guidelines correctly and in principle and do this using the right methods. Otherwise, there is a high possibility of assigning the wrong roles to the wrong people.

Some of the succession planning methods in the organization are as follows:

Identification and selection of successors

In this stage, individuals with the potential and ability to take on key roles in the organization are identified. These individuals are selected based on criteria such as experience, skills, motivation, and leadership abilities.

Training and development

Successors selected to take on key roles in the organization should be prepared with appropriate training and professional development courses. These courses may include technical, skill, leadership, and management training. The planning of these courses for the selected individuals is the responsibility of the human resources management unit. In this case, the individual must attend the course and thus learn all the concepts well to accept the new job.

Performance evaluation and feedback

Successors should be regularly evaluated and receive feedback so that they can improve their strengths and weaknesses. These evaluations can be done in the form of performance interviews, 360-degree evaluations, or specific criteria. In this case, the individual and the organization will understand whether the role and job position are suitable for the individual or not (Li et al., 2022).

Practical experience and work opportunities

Providing work opportunities and practical experience in different roles helps successors to strengthen their skills and become familiar with the challenges in the organization.

Monitoring and guidance

Successionists need to be supervised and guided by experienced people in the organization so that they can perform at their best and act effectively in their new roles. Therefore, the organization should not abandon the individual at the beginning of the path. Guidance makes the successor act effectively and be useful to the organization.

Monitoring and Tracking

The organization should closely monitor the succession planning process and continuously track the progress of successors to ensure that they are properly prepared and able to take on key roles in the organization (Marques et al., 2023).

These methods are combined and implemented in the form of a comprehensive succession planning program to lead to the best results and continuous development in the organization.

Challenges of succession planning in organizations

Success planning in organizations, like any other management process, faces challenges and obstacles that must be addressed. Some of the important challenges in this regard are:

Identifying and selecting suitable successors

Identifying people who have the potential to take on key roles in the organization is one of the main challenges of succession planning. Accurate and correct identification of these people requires effective criteria and methods (Porfírio et al., 2020).

Appropriate training and development

Training and developing successors appropriately and according to the needs of the organization is one of the important challenges in succession planning. The training process should be designed based on the skills and knowledge required to take on the role.

Leadership and involvement of managers

The involvement and support of managers and leaders of the organization in the succession planning process is very crucial. Lack of approval and support from managers can lead to delays in the implementation of the succession planning program and, as a result, reduce its effectiveness.

Increasing the motivation and commitment of successors

Creating the necessary motivation and commitment in successors to take on key roles is a significant challenge. These people must feel valued and able to accept new responsibilities.

Maintaining organizational cohesion and continuity

When taking on key roles, the cohesion and continuity of the organization's performance may be affected. Managers must manage this challenge to prevent disruption in organizational activities.

Managing tensions and competitions

Taking on key roles may be accompanied by various competitions and tensions, especially if successors are competing with people who want to take on similar roles.

Continuous Assessment and Monitoring

Continuous assessment and monitoring of successors' performance in new roles is crucial. These measures can help identify successors' development needs as well as address potential problems during the transition.

By carefully managing these challenges and using appropriate approaches, organizations can successfully utilize succession planning programs and make the best use of their human resources (Su et al., 2023).

Organizational Sustainability

Organizational sustainability refers to the economic, social, and environmental activities and outputs of organizations. It provides an indicator to measure the level of commitment of businesses to social and environmental issues along with profitability.

Organizational efforts towards clean production and the use of renewable energy ultimately lead to sustainability and sustainable development. Environmentally friendly activities are the most critical issue in any organization. Organizations are trying to use green supply chains in their activities. They also respect the environment by recycling products and managing waste in a closed-loop supply chain. Human resource management has also changed to align with this approach towards green human resource management. Employees in such an organizational climate can materialize the organization's environmental goals with green innovation.

Today, corporate social responsibility is reflected in organizational activities and processes. Organizations and businesses are diligently trying to direct their production activities towards green production. Promotional and advertising activities are also organized in the form of green marketing and green marketing mix. Financial management is also mixed with concepts such as green accounting and cost management in the context of social issues. Given the importance of the topic, this article will conceptualize and define sustainable organizational performance (Zybura et al., 2021).

Conceptualizing organizational sustainability

Organizational sustainability has its roots in industrial and organizational developments based on social responsibility in the third millennium. Many studies by industrial and organizational researchers are related to identifying, evaluating, or promoting sustainable activities. Every organization needs its employees to perform their jobs at an acceptable level of productivity to achieve its goals. This is essential for both large government organizations and small and medium-sized companies.

From a social perspective, the best desire of every person for organizations is to have employees who do their jobs well. Good performance increases the productivity of the organization, which directly improves the national economy and also improves the services of the organization. Sustainable organizational performance is achievable when sustainability is considered in the organization's perspective. Also, both environmental and personal factors have an important impact on job performance and organizational performance. Paying attention to environmental issues is at the center of today's performance management.

Performance is a consequence of the interaction of ability and motivation. People do their jobs well if they have the necessary ability and motivation. Organizational operations and job conditions can enhance these individual characteristics and help remove barriers to sustainable organizational performance. Ability and motivation can lead to performance, but organizational barriers can restrain them. Good green performance requires ability and motivation.

Definition of Organizational Sustainability

Organizational sustainability is a general term for those organizational activities that deal with economic, social, and environmental responsibilities. Organizational sustainability is a way to facilitate communication and understanding between the organization and the environment. This leads to a more favorable work environment and a greater commitment to service quality. Environmental management can be defined as a set of actions and information for the optimal use of natural resources in order to achieve organizational goals efficiently and effectively.

Environmental management can be considered an approach that uses two-way communication between the organization and the environment. On the one hand, to understand the demands and expectations of the organization and employees, on the other hand, to transfer the demands and demands of employees to supervisors and the organization's management, it creates an environment for the optimal use of all facilities and resources to achieve the organization's goals.

Organizational sustainability makes it easy for supervisors to recognize poor employee performance and take action to improve it. On the other hand, by giving appropriate rewards to employees' desirable performance, it encourages desirable performance and helps them repeat it. Environmental management is a process that includes both performance evaluation and disciplinary systems and complaint handling policies as its management tools (Yan et al., 2022).

Organizational Sustainability Performance Index

Organizational sustainability can be improved with performance indicators to achieve economic savings, improve community conditions, and respect for the environment. Improving environmental outcomes saves business costs (Aladejebi, 2021).

Social indicators include:

- Social participation
- Employee satisfaction
- Human capital empowerment
- Respect for civil laws
- Community health and well-being
- Customer satisfaction

Environmental indicators include:

- Reduction of environmental pollutants
- Effective conservation of natural resources
- Recyclable materials
- Organic materials

Social indicators include:

- Employment
- Innovation
- Operating costs
- Productivity
- Financial health

It is by acting on such indicators that sustainable growth and sustainable performance of the organization can be ensured. The underlying hypothesis of the theory is that the intrinsic nature of job duties can motivate individuals to respect the environment. If the job is interesting and enjoyable, people will like their jobs. They will be more motivated and do better work. According to the sustainability theory, job characteristics induce certain psychological states that lead to satisfaction, motivation, and green performance.

Sustainable Organizational Growth and Sustainable Revenue Generation

There is no doubt that all organizations are seeking to gain economic benefits and expand their market share. Naturally, organizations strive for their continuous growth and development, and profitability is an element that guarantees their success. Previously, organizations focused mainly on economic activities and used indicators to measure their financial performance. However, in the present era, social and economic issues are also very important.

Current organizations must also pay attention to sustainability indicators for growth, and this has formed a concept called sustainable organizational growth. In this path, sustainable revenue generation plays a very important role and is considered a key performance

indicator. Sustainable revenue generation means earning economic income continuously while preserving the environment and respecting the rights of society. This method of earning income is the method that is consistent with the goals of sustainability and sustainable development (Chen et al., 2023).

Employee training

Employee training refers to all efforts and efforts that are made to improve the level of knowledge and awareness, technical, professional and job skills, as well as to create desirable behavior in the employees of an organization and prepare them to perform their job duties and responsibilities. In other words, employee training is a set of targeted and systematic actions and activities in order to create the necessary changes in the cognitive, emotional and psycho-motor structure that takes place between the teaching agent and the learner in the form of interaction in order to improve job performance.

The necessity of training employees

According to the proposed cases, the most important factors that indicate the need for training in the organization can be stated as follows:

- Horizontal and vertical movements in the organization
- Entry of new employees into the organization
- Rapid progress in science and technology
- Injecting human relations into the organization
- Moving towards comprehensive productivity in the organization
- Complexity and towards mechanization of the organization, etc.

Today, according to all experts and specialists, learning science as a general knowledge-based knowledge and learning science and acquiring the necessary skills in specialized fields in a specific way as an inevitable social necessity are of great importance in the matter of macro-development. This importance is because only through education can a person move his special and unlimited abilities from potentiality to action. Of course, it should be kept in mind that in transcendent cultures, education can only be beneficial through cultivation.

Principles of In-Service Training

The principles of employee training, considering the requirements of age, time, content, etc., govern the training in such a way that, on the one hand, the learners have the ability to adapt to it, and on the other hand, the training is able to transfer the maximum information, knowledge, and skills needed by the employees in limited time conditions. Therefore, the proper utilization of the benefits of employee training and the achievement of the organization's goals requires attention to multiple principles:

1. The learner's activity

Usually depends on several factors such as the connection of the content with professional and personal issues, the interest of the subject, the connection with previous experiences, motivation, etc. From the general principle of the learner's activity, a set of messages can be extracted: Emphasis on the active participation of the learners instead of passive acceptance of the content; Encouraging the learners to form their ideas and theories and testing them through various physical and mental activities; Providing various opportunities for the learners to freely and creatively express their ideas, skills, and attitudes; Emphasis on thinking, reasoning, and decision-making.

Concepts of employee training and education

Education is the process of transferring information, attitudes, and skills from an individual or group to another individual or group to create changes in their cognitive, attitudinal, and skill structures (Golverdi et al., 2016).

Education is a term that encompasses a wide range of activities. The length of an educational activity can range from a short-term training course, such as a one-day field trip, to a professional development course with different students and learners (Chizari, 1997, p. 23).

According to Shaari-Nejad, education is a social act that places individuals under the

influence and influence of a selected and strong environment to acquire social competence and reach the ultimate level of individual growth and development (Shaari-Nejad, 1985).

Employee training refers to all efforts and efforts that are made to improve the level of knowledge and awareness, technical, professional, and job skills, as well as to create desirable behavior in the employees of an organization and prepare them to perform their job duties and responsibilities. Employee training has a broad and extensive meaning and does not only include the meaning of apprenticeship, internship or practical training in a specific field, but its scope is so wide that it starts from learning a simple profession and technique and extends to a complete mastery of very complex sciences and techniques, proficiency in supervision and management in government, industrial and commercial organizations, as well as how to behave and deal appropriately with human, economic, social and cultural issues.

Employee training is the most important method of improving human resources, and planning for its development in line with the goals and strategies of the organization plays a major role in organizational improvement. Training and improving human resources leads to higher insight and knowledge, more knowledge and understanding, and better skills. Training is in fact management itself, and without employee training, the foundations of management become shaky and weak.

Employee training is a process for adapting individuals to the changing organizational environment and, as a result, the organization's adaptation to the external environment. Therefore, training and improving human resources leads to deeper insight and insight, higher knowledge and understanding, greater ability and skill of employees in the organization to perform job duties and responsibilities, and as a result, it leads to achieving organizational goals with better and greater efficiency and effectiveness, and it must be said that today no organization is able to improve and develop without training.

The importance and necessity of employee training

Since one of the dimensions of human social life is his organizational life, and organizational life, in addition to affecting other aspects of human life, is always subject to unstable changes, and this change is evident in the career path and methods of doing work in organizations. For this reason, humans and consequently organizations must somehow adapt to these changes in order to be able to maintain their durability and survival. The changes and challenges that are occurring in today's industrial environment indicate the fact that the success or failure of organizations in the global competition arena is affected by the role of employees who have high knowledge, skills, and capabilities. Usually, classical training in all fields is not completely effective for starting and continuing the activities of individuals in organizations, so the use of pre-service and in-service training can be an effective step for improving and advancing the activities of individuals in social organizations. Training is a vital and necessary measure for all organizations, and its tangible benefits include: reducing the learning time in order to perform work equal to an acceptable standard, increasing the quantity and quality of work efficiency in the job held by the trainee, adapting the character of individuals to the demands of the organization, helping to solve operational problems, meeting human resource needs, and finally preparing individuals for promotions and improving their income status.

Internal Background

A study on the relationship between employee professional development and succession planning and the mediating role of organizational learning with the approach of general policies for the transformation of the administrative system was conducted by Ahmadi and Nazari (2024). The findings of the study showed that professional development with a path coefficient of 0.79 is related to organizational learning, and organizational learning is also related to succession planning with a path coefficient of 0.63. Also, professional

development with a path coefficient of 0.27 is related to succession planning in the Expediency Discernment Council.

- A study on identifying the drivers and consequences of organizational succession planning was conducted by Ghoalaliyan et al. (2023). The results of the study showed that from the perspective of individual factors, the factor of the individual's emotional bond with the company and the factor of the individual's feeling of usefulness in the company's activities were influential, from the perspective of organizational factors, the factor of attention to ensuring the company's future management and the factor of promotion and improvement of the company, and from the perspective of environmental factors, the factor of attention to competitive requirements and the risk factor of poaching the company's talents were influential on the succession planning pattern, which were examined and identified. In addition, the results showed that the establishment and implementation of the succession planning model in Iran Insurance Joint Stock Company will be effective on individual, organizational and environmental outcomes and results. In addition, factors such as continuous training and reward mechanism also play a role as mediating factors in the effect of succession planning on outcomes and results in Iran Insurance Joint Stock Company. The added value of implementing succession planning for the insurance company will include maintaining the skill pool, reducing costs due to lack of skills of newly hired employees, and reducing training costs.
- A study on the subject of succession planning and its effect on organizational sustainability was conducted by Ugoani researcher (2022). In this study, an exploratory research design was used. The results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the succession planning program and organizational sustainability. Based on the results of this study, it is suggested that succession planning should not be about searching for the best person to lead the organization; rather, it should be about selecting the best person who has the motivation for the type of organizational leadership required for the organization's sustainability.
- A study on the subject of presenting a model of educational leadership succession in the Iranian formal public education system was conducted by Javadyar et al. (1401). The findings related to the first question led to the identification of three dimensions of organizational, individual and process factors and 61 components under them. In the second question, nineteen components were established in the three dimensions of organizational (including five components), individual (including nine components) and process (including five components) which were located and presented to present the proposed model of succession. In order to answer the third question, the validity of the model was examined and collectively approved by the experts of the focus group.
- A study on the subject of designing a qualitative model of educational leadership competence with a succession approach in the seven education districts of Mashhad was conducted by Bakhitari et al. (2024). In this study, using the data from the pre-test in which 25 members of the sample were studied, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated, which indicates the high reliability of the instrument / Cronbach's and this coefficient is greater than 0.8 of the study. Based on the findings of this study, the competency model has four dimensions: individual, communication, organizational and professional and 32 components. Also, the succession model has four stages: policy determination, volunteer assessment, volunteer development and effectiveness assessment and includes 9 components.

External background

- A study on the subject of training and development, career development and organizational commitment as predictors of job performance and sustainability was conducted by Hosen et al. (2024). This study significantly examined the correlation between training and progress and job performance (sustainability), career progress and job performance. In addition, organizational commitment in the hotel sector is significantly related to job

performance. In addition, the significant correlation between training and development and career advancement of work performance among hotel personnel is mediated by organizational commitment.

A study titled *The Effect of Succession Planning on Organizational Sustainability* was conducted by Susilo Voinarto (2023). The results of the study showed that organizational sustainability can be influenced by learning agility and resilience through the mediation of transformational leadership and succession planning. There is a significant relationship between the variable of learning agility and resilience and the mediation of transformational leadership and succession planning in organizational sustainability. However, the results of the study also show that transformational leadership does not have a statistically significant relationship with organizational sustainability, but there is a highly significant relationship between transformational leadership and succession planning.

A study on the effect of employee training and development on organizational succession was conducted by Fada and Sabo (2017). The findings show that training and development has an impact on organizational sustainability and it is also found that employee productivity increases as a result of training and development. For this purpose, this paper recommends that employee training and development program should be planned properly.

3. Method

The present research is a type of applied research and also in terms of the method of realization, the present research will be of the survey type and in terms of data collection, it is of the field type.

- In applied research, the main goal is not scientific discovery, but rather testing and examining the possibility of applying knowledge and choosing its subject in education from everyday educational and training issues and problems. (Delaware, 1401). According to Newman (2000), applied researchers seek to solve specific policy-making problems or help agents to carry out their tasks. Applied research is often descriptive and its main advantage is its immediate scientific application. People employed by businesses, government agencies, social service agencies, health organizations, and educational institutions conduct applied research. The decision to market a new product, choose a policy, or decide to continue or terminate a strategic program may be based on applied research.
- Library methods: To collect information related to the literature on the subject and the background of the research, library methods (file collection) are used, citing theses, books, articles, and reputable domestic and foreign journals.
- Field methods (surveys): One of the common methods in collecting field information is to inquire from the target community in a real place through various methods such as interviews, questionnaires, and observation (Delavar, 2022).

In the present study, taking into account previous research, including Hussain et al. (2024) for the relationship between training and organizational sustainability, Susilvo and Vernato (2023) for the relationship between succession planning and organizational sustainability, and Fada and Sobo (2017) for the relationship between employee training and organizational sustainability:

The succession planning variable with 3 dimensions, namely 1) organizational factors, 2) individual factors, 3) Frye factors, has been determined as an independent variable and the employee training variable as a mediating variable and the organizational sustainability variable with three dimensions 1) environmental performance, 3) economic performance, 3) social performance, has been determined as an independent variable, and the conceptual model of the research is defined as Figure 1.

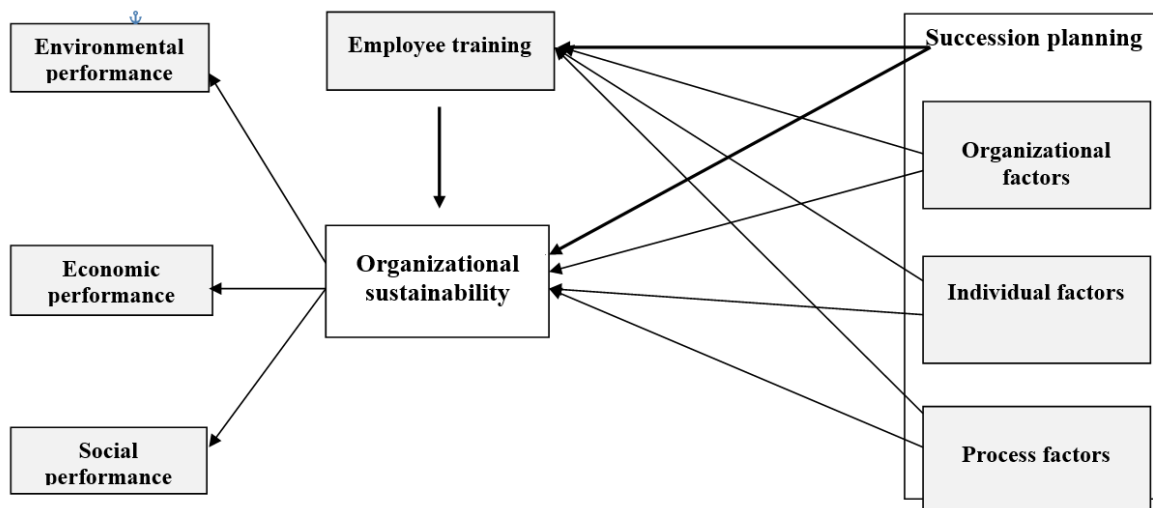


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the research
(Adapted from Hussain et al. (2024); Susilo and Vertato (2023), Fada and Sobo (2017))

In this study, the library method will be used to collect descriptive information, and a questionnaire will be used to collect field data.

The statistical population will be the Tehran Electric Power Distribution Company.

To determine the statistical sample, simple stratified sampling with the Cochran formula is used as follows:

1. The number of employees in each department, such as administrative, financial, distribution, etc., is determined and their ratio is determined,
2. The statistical sample is determined by the Cochran formula in relation to the total number of the population,
3. The sample of each department is determined in relation to the percentage of the population of each department in the total sample
4. The employees of each department are determined by simple random sampling and the questionnaire is distributed.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics indicators were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The frequency of respondents was studied based on gender, level of education, and work experience, and the relevant graphs were drawn.

Table 1. Frequency distribution by gender

Row	Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency
1	Female	237	66.4	Between 10 and 15 years
2	Male	120	33.6	Less than 9 years
3	Total	357	100.0	Less than 9 years

According to the results of descriptive statistics, 20 (33.6%) of the respondents were female and 237 (66.4%) of the respondents were male. With this description, the high percentage of the statistical sample was male.

Table 2. Frequency by education

Row	Education	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency
1	Diploma and Post-Diploma	34	9.5	9.5
2	BA	134	37.5	47.1
3	MA	177	49.6	96.6
4	PhD	12	3.4	100.0
5	Total	357	100.0	

Based on the results of descriptive statistics, 34 people (9.5%) had a diploma or post-diploma, 134 people (37.5%) had a BA, 177 people (49.6%) had a MA, and 12 people (3.4%) had a PhD.

Table 3. Frequency distribution based on work experience

Row	Work Experience	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency
1	1-5 years	9	2.5	2.5
2	6-10 years	41	11.5	14.0
3	11-15 years	90	25.2	39.2
4	16-20 years	92	25.8	65.0
5	20-30 years	125	35.0	100.0
6	Total	357	100.0	2.5

Based on the results of descriptive statistics, 9 people (2.5%) have 1-5 years of work experience, 41 people (11.5%) have 6-10 years of work experience, 90 people (25.8%) have 11-15 years of experience, 92 people (25.8%) have 16-20 years of experience, and 125 people (35.0%) have 20-30 years of experience.

Descriptive statistical analysis of research variables

The results of descriptive analysis of research variables based on central parameters (mean, median, mode) and dispersion parameters (standard deviation, variance, minimum and maximum) of research variables are given in Table 4.

Table 5. Descriptive analysis of research variables

Row	Research variables	Organizational factors	Individual factors	Process factors	Staff Training	Organizational Sustainability
1	Number	357	357	357	357	357
2	Mean	2.0070	2.3630	2.1477	2.5457	2.5028
3	Median	2.0000	2.4000	2.1429	2.6000	2.4286
4	Mode	2.13	2.40	2.29	2.80	2.36
5	Standard deviation	0.60309	0.67489	0.68015	0.65777	.66898
6	Variance	0.364	0.455	0.463	0.433	.448

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

Usually, parametric tests require assumptions, including normality of population distribution and independence of data (randomness of data). If the population distribution is not normal, the mean and standard deviation do not reflect the true representation of the data. In this study, the K-S test was used to determine normality. One of the common divisions in statistics is the division of parametric statistics and nonparametric statistics. In the simplest terms, it should be said that parametric statistics are used to test hypotheses whose variables are quantitative. Quantitative variables, due to their quantitative nature and unitability, have the property of being averageable and standard deviationable. The results of the (K-S) test are given in Table 5:

Table 5. Results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test

Row	Organizational factors	Individual factors	Process factors	Staff Training	Organizational Sustainability
1	0.089	0.100	0.117	0.118	0.079
2	0.000 ^c	0.000 ^c	0.000 ^c	0.000 ^c	0.000 ^c

According to the above results, the significance level, i.e. Sig, for the research variables is less than 0.05, so the first hypothesis is confirmed with Sig >0.05 and the zero hypothesis is rejected, in other words, the population distribution is not normal. Next, structural equation modeling was used to analyze the research hypotheses using Smart PLS3 software.

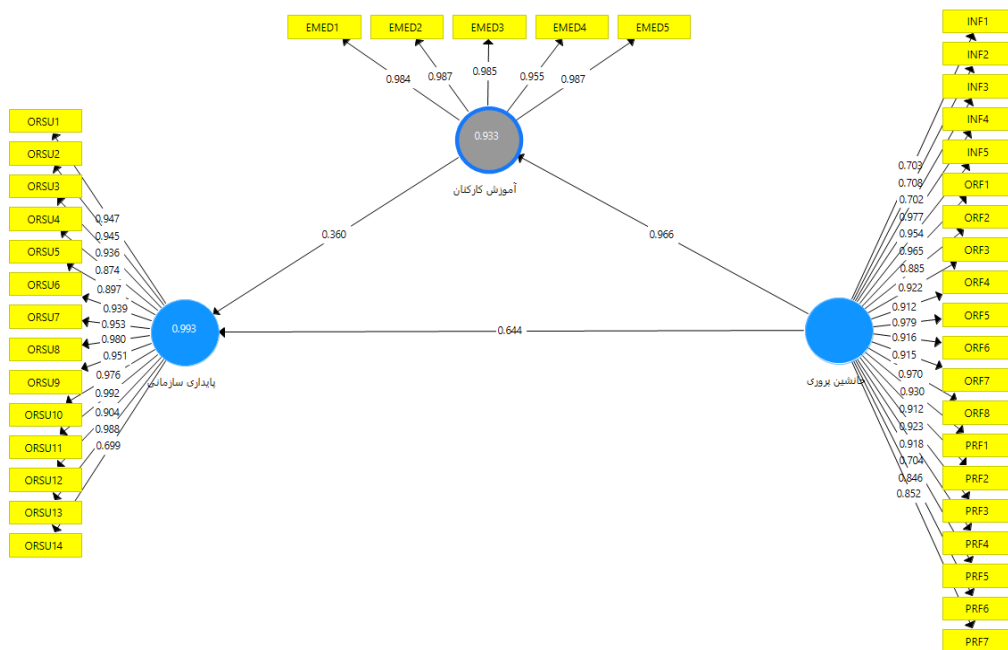
4. Findings

Model Fitting and Hypothesis Analysis

A: Reliability of Measurement Instruments

1) Factor loading values of observable variables: According to researchers, a reflective measurement model will be a homogeneous model if the absolute value of the factor loading of each of the observable variables corresponding to that latent variable of that model has a value of at least 0.7. For this purpose, the outer loadings values were examined. These values are given in Figure 1 and Table 6.

Figure 1. Research measurement model in the state of estimating standard coefficients (main variable)



In Table 6, all the apparent variables have factor loadings above 0.7, indicating adequate model fit. The table below shows the factor loadings of the items.

Table 6. Factor loading values of the observed variables for the main variables

Items	Employee Training	Succession planning	Organizational sustainability
EMED1	0.984		
EMED2	0.987		
EMED3	0.985		
EMED4	0.955		
EMED5	0.987		
INF1		0.703	
INF2		0.708	
INF3		0.702	
INF4		0.977	
INF5		0.954	
ORF1		0.965	
ORF2		0.885	
ORF3		0.922	
ORF4		0.912	
ORF5		0.979	
ORF6		0.916	
ORF7		0.915	
ORF8		0.970	
ORSU1			0.947
ORSU10			0.976
ORSU11			0.992
ORSU12			0.904
ORSU13			0.988

ORSU14			0.699
ORSU2			0.945
ORSU3			0.936
ORSU4			0.874
ORSU5			0.897
ORSU6			0.939
ORSU7			0.953
ORSU8			0.980
ORSU9			0.951
PRF1		0.930	
PRF2		0.912	
PRF3		0.923	
PRF4		0.918	
PRF5		0.704	
PRF6		0.846	
PRF7		0.852	

Table 6. Continued for and subcomponents

Items	Employee Training	Organizational factors	Process factors	Individual factors	Organizational Sustainability
EMED1	0.984				
EMED2	0.987				
EMED3	0.985				
EMED4	0.954				
EMED5	0.987				
INF1				0.883	
INF2				0.873	
INF3				0.960	
INF4				0.958	
INF5				0.959	
ORF1		0.973			
ORF2		0.803			
ORF3		0.977			
ORF4		0.970			
ORF5		0.983			
ORF6		0.972			
ORF7		0.973			
ORF8		0.994			
ORSU1					0.949
ORSU10					0.976
ORSU11					0.992
ORSU12					0.900
ORSU13					0.987
ORSU14					0.701
ORSU2					0.948
ORSU3					0.939
ORSU4					0.870
ORSU5					0.893
ORSU6					0.942
ORSU7					0.955
ORSU8					0.978
ORSU9					0.948
PRF1			0.973		
PRF2			0.967		
PRF3			0.970		
PRF4			0.960		
PRF5			0.914		
PRF6			0.976		
PRF7			0.907		

According to the results of Table 6, all the factor loading values in the main dimensions and variables are above 0.7, which indicates the reliability of the measurement tools and the homogeneity of the reflective model.

Significance of factor loadings

The results of the T-Value significance study of the factor loadings (external) after correction are given in Table 7. If the value obtained is above the minimum statistic at the level of confidence, that relationship or hypothesis is confirmed. At the significance level of 90 percent, 95 percent and 99 percent, this value is compared with the minimum t-statistic of 1.64, 1.96, 2.58, respectively.

Table 7. Values and significance and t of observable variables

Items	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
EMED1 <- Employee Training	0.003	366.099	0.000
EMED2 <- Employee Training	0.002	512.803	0.000
EMED3 <- Employee Training	0.003	282.626	0.000
EMED4 <- Employee Training	0.006	173.233	0.000
EMED5 <- Employee Training	0.001	734.746	0.000
INF1 <- Succession planning	0.039	17.864	0.000
INF2 <- Succession planning	0.039	18.249	0.000
INF3 <- Succession planning	0.039	18.073	0.000
INF4 <- Succession planning	0.002	611.627	0.000
INF5 <- Succession planning	0.003	280.710	0.000
ORF1 <- Succession planning	0.007	130.042	0.000
ORF2 <- Succession planning	0.015	60.309	0.000
ORF3 <- Succession planning	0.006	161.424	0.000
ORF4 <- Succession planning	0.011	82.672	0.000
ORF5 <- Succession planning	0.003	376.466	0.000
ORF6 <- Succession planning	0.007	130.096	0.000
ORF7 <- Succession planning	0.009	96.740	0.000
ORF8 <- Succession planning	0.002	551.715	0.000
ORSU1 <- Organizational sustainability	0.005	178.172	0.000
ORSU10 <- Organizational sustainability	0.004	226.291	0.000
ORSU11 <- Organizational sustainability	0.001	780.806	0.000
ORSU12 <- Organizational sustainability	0.011	82.438	0.000
ORSU13 <- Organizational sustainability	0.001	868.618	0.000
ORSU14 <- Organizational sustainability	0.040	17.426	0.000
ORSU2 <- Organizational sustainability	0.006	160.300	0.000
ORSU3 <- Organizational sustainability	0.012	77.654	0.000
ORSU4 <- Organizational sustainability	0.015	57.028	0.000
ORSU5 <- Organizational sustainability	0.012	73.109	0.000
ORSU6 <- Organizational sustainability	0.012	77.385	0.000
ORSU7 <- Organizational sustainability	0.004	226.186	0.000
ORSU8 <- Organizational sustainability	0.002	436.592	0.000
ORSU9 <- Organizational sustainability	0.005	190.421	0.000
PRF1 <- Succession planning	0.012	78.312	0.000
PRF2 <- Succession planning	0.011	80.382	0.000
PRF3 <- Succession planning	0.005	171.401	0.000
PRF4 <- Succession planning	0.011	86.162	0.000
PRF5 <- Succession planning	0.039	17.912	0.000
PRF6 <- Succession planning	0.018	46.041	0.000
PRF7 <- Succession planning	0.018	46.109	0.000

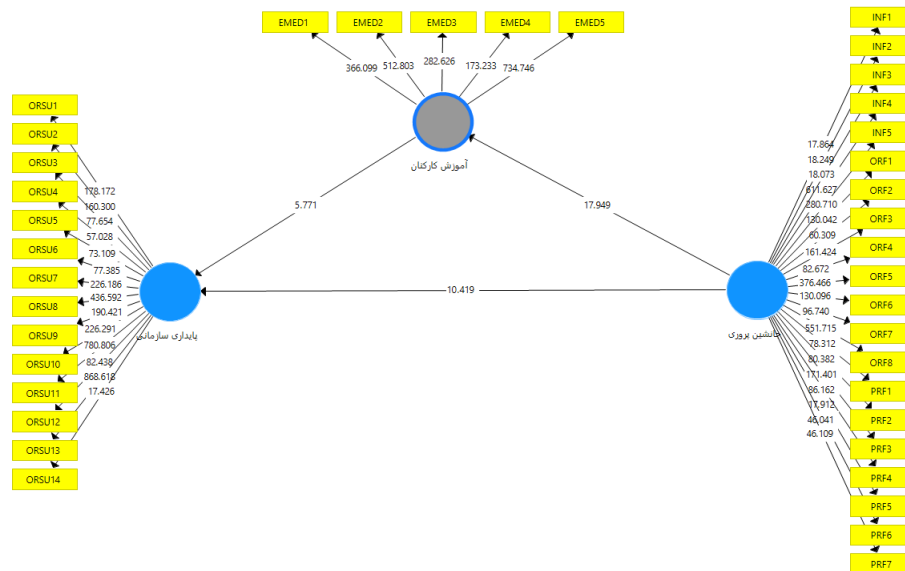
Continued Table 7 with t-statistic value

Items	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
EMED1 <- Employee Training	0.003	375.482	0.000
EMED2 <- Employee Training	0.002	545.353	0.000
EMED3 <- Employee Training	0.003	305.335	0.000
EMED4 <- Employee Training	0.006	172.368	0.000
EMED5 <- Employee Training	0.001	714.527	0.000
INF1 <- Individual factors	0.014	62.625	0.000
INF2 <- Individual factors	0.013	65.347	0.000
INF3 <- Individual factors	0.006	171.622	0.000
INF4 <- Individual factors	0.007	131.432	0.000
INF5 <- Individual factors	0.007	144.171	0.000
ORF1 <- Organizational factors	0.005	186.290	0.000
ORF2 <- Organizational factors	0.021	38.799	0.000
ORF3 <- Organizational factors	0.004	241.973	0.000
ORF4 <- Organizational factors	0.009	113.839	0.000
ORF5 <- Organizational factors	0.003	325.303	0.000
ORF6 <- Organizational factors	0.006	159.072	0.000
ORF7 <- Organizational factors	0.007	138.117	0.000
ORF8 <- Organizational factors	0.002	620.877	0.000
ORSU1 <- Organizational sustainability	0.005	188.185	0.000
ORSU10 <- Organizational sustainability	0.004	238.750	0.000
ORSU11 <- Organizational sustainability	0.001	786.508	0.000
ORSU12 <- Organizational sustainability	0.011	79.588	0.000
ORSU13 <- Organizational sustainability	0.001	823.108	0.000
ORSU14 <- Organizational sustainability	0.039	18.000	0.000

ORSU2 <- Organizational sustainability	0.006	169.170	0.000
ORSU3 <- Organizational sustainability	0.012	77.878	0.000
ORSU4 <- Organizational sustainability	0.016	53.243	0.000
ORSU5 <- Organizational sustainability	0.013	68.903	0.000
ORSU6 <- Organizational sustainability	0.012	76.331	0.000
ORSU7 <- Organizational sustainability	0.004	245.828	0.000
ORSU8 <- Organizational sustainability	0.002	391.948	0.000
ORSU9 <- Organizational sustainability	0.005	183.247	0.000
PRF1 <- Process factors	0.007	131.855	0.000
PRF2 <- Process factors	0.004	216.031	0.000
PRF3 <- Process factors	0.008	125.674	0.000
PRF4 <- Process factors	0.011	86.555	0.000
PRF5 <- Process factors	0.020	46.418	0.000
PRF6 <- Process factors	0.006	155.987	0.000
PRF7 <- Process factors	0.020	44.802	0.000

The significance of the t-statistic values in Table 7 showed that the t-statistic values for all items were reported to be greater than the minimum value of 1.64. Also, their significance level is below 0.5. This means that the relationship between the items and their respective latent variable is accepted at a confidence level of 99%.

Figure 3. Measurement model in the case of estimating standard coefficients with the t-statistic (main variable)



Convergent Validity and Reliability with Cronbach's Alpha, CR and AVE

To calculate Cronbach's Alpha, first the variance of the scores of each subset of the questionnaire questions and the total variance must be calculated. Also, the average variance extracted (AVE) is used for convergent validity. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability: The Cronbach's Alpha method is used to calculate the internal consistency of measurement tools, including questionnaires or tests that measure different characteristics. In such tools, the answer to each question can take different numerical values. $CR > 0.7$ $CR > AVE$ $AVE > 0.5$

Table 8. Convergent Validity and Composite Reliability of Research Variables

Average variance extracted AVE	Composite Reliability CR	Cronbach's alpha	Latent variables	
0.959	0.992	0.989	Employee training	Main variables
0.783	0.986	0.985	Succession development	
0.865	0.989	0.987	Organizational sustainability	
0.959	0.992	0.989	Employee training	Dimensions
0.916	0.989	0.986	Organizational factors	
0.908	0.986	0.983	Process factors	
0.860	0.968	0.959	Individual factors	
0.865	0.989	0.987	Organizational sustainability	

According to the above results, Cronbach's alpha in the variables is greater than 0.7, so all variables are confirmed in terms of reliability. Also, the average variance extracted (AVE) is almost greater than 0.5, so the convergent validity is also confirmed. The composite Reliability (CR) is also greater than AVE.

R Square

The coefficient of determination shows the amount of explanation of the variance of the dependent variable by the independent variables. One of the problems with the coefficient of determination is that it overestimates the success rate of the model and considers less the number of independent variables and sample size, so some researchers prefer to use another index called the R Square Adjusted (Sarokhani, 2003). The results of the R Square for the dependent variables are given in Table 10:

Table 10. R Square

Adjusted coefficient of determination	R Square	Variable	
0.732	0.733	Employee Training	Main variables
0.793	0.793	Organizational Sustainability	
0.789	0.790	Employee Training	Dimensions
0.787	0.787	Organizational Sustainability	

The R Square Adjusted for the variables according to Table 10 is equal to 0.73 for the main variable basis and 0.78 for the dependent variable under the sub-components, which indicates that more than 72 percent of the changes in the dependent variable are influenced by the independent variables of the present study.

Table 12. Predictive power of the variables model

Q ² (=1-SSE/SSO)	SSE	SSO	Variable	
0.834	230.929	1,390.000	Employee Training	Main variables
0.798	785.427	3,892.000	Organizational Sustainability	
0.887	157.706	1,390.000	Employee Training	Dimensions
0.792	808.202	3,892.000	Organizational Sustainability	

The results of Table 12 showed that the predictive power of the model for the variables is above 0.79, which is in the upper range of the strong limit.

Hypothesis Test Results

The results of the research hypothesis test are in accordance with the following table:

Table 13. Summary of research hypothesis results

Status Hypothesis Confirmation	Effect size Indirect	Direct effect size (Cohen's f)	Level of significance	t-value	Path coefficient	Dependent variable	Mediating variable	Independent variable
Confirmation	----	0.479	0.000	0.419	0.644	Organizational sustainability	----	Succession management
Confirmation	----	0.701	0.000	17.949	0.966	Employee training	----	Succession management
Confirmation	----	0.511	0.000	6.968	0.441	Organizational sustainability	----	Employee training
Confirmation	0.648	----	0.000	13.656	----	Organizational sustainability	Employee training	Succession management

5. Discussion
6. Conclusion

Succession management has an effect on organizational stability in Greater Tehran Power Distribution Company.

According to the results obtained from the model, the effect of succession management on organizational stability is equal to $t=10.419$, and the $Pvalue \leq 0.000$ for this variable is confirmed at a 95% confidence level (because in the t-statistic matrix, numbers higher than

1.96 at the 0.05 level and higher than 2.58 at the 0.01 level are significant), so the null hypothesis that succession management has no effect on organizational stability is rejected and the research hypothesis that succession management has an effect on organizational stability is confirmed. Also, the effect size in the present hypothesis is equal to 0.479, which indicates a high effect size, and the data in the present hypothesis are highly consistent. The path coefficient for this hypothesis is 0.644, which is positive.

Succession management has an effect on employee training in Greater Tehran Power Distribution Company.

According to the results obtained from the model, the effect of succession planning on employee training is equal to $t=17.949$, and the $Pvalue \leq 0.012$ for this variable is confirmed at a 95% confidence level (because in the t-statistic matrix, numbers higher than 1.96 at the 0.05 level and higher than 2.58 at the 0.01 level are significant), so the null hypothesis that succession planning has no effect on employee training is rejected and the research hypothesis that succession planning has an effect on employee training is confirmed. Also, the effect size in the present hypothesis is equal to 0.701, which indicates a high effect size, and the data in the present hypothesis are highly consistent. The path coefficient for this hypothesis is 0.966, which is positive.

Employee training has an effect on organizational sustainability in the Greater Tehran Electric Power Distribution Company.

According to the results obtained from the model, the effect of employee training on organizational sustainability is equal to $t=6.968$, and the $Pvalue \leq 0.012$ for this variable is confirmed at a 95% confidence level (because in the t-statistic matrix, numbers higher than 1.96 at the 0.05 level and higher than 2.58 at the 0.01 level are significant), so the null hypothesis that employee training has no effect on organizational sustainability is rejected and the research hypothesis that employee training has an effect on organizational sustainability is confirmed. Also, the effect size in the present hypothesis is equal to 0.511, which indicates a high effect size, and the data in the present hypothesis are highly consistent. The path coefficient for this hypothesis is 0.441, which is positive.

Succession planning has an effect on organizational sustainability with respect to the mediating role of employee training in the Greater Tehran Electric Power Distribution Company.

According to the results obtained from the model, the mediation of employee training in the relationship between succession planning and organizational sustainability is equal to $t=13.656$, and the $Pvalue \leq 0.000$ for this variable is confirmed at a 95% confidence level (because in the t-statistic matrix, numbers higher than 1.96 at the 0.05 level and higher than 2.58 at the 0.01 level are significant), so the null hypothesis that employee training does not mediate the relationship between succession planning and organizational sustainability is rejected, and the research hypothesis that employee training mediates the relationship between succession planning and organizational sustainability is confirmed. Therefore, employee training mediates the relationship between succession planning and organizational sustainability. Also, the effect size in the present hypothesis is equal to 0.648, which indicates a high effect size, and the data in the present hypothesis are highly consistent.

Suggestions

1. Based on the results obtained, it is recommended to provide specialized training to newly hired employees.
2. Also, specialized training sessions and retraining sessions should be organized for old employees.
3. It seems that the Greater Tehran Power Distribution Company does not have a written plan for replacement training, so this will seriously jeopardize the strategic future of this company. Therefore, it is suggested that after specialized training, a plan for replacement training should be developed.
4. Obviously, training does not mean holding general classes, and specialized classes should be held according to the specialized needs of each employee.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The author declares that he has no competing financial interests or known personal relationships that would influence the report presented in this article.

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