



## Ranking of Municipality Efficiency by Stimulating job Performance of Employees and Managers of Municipalities of North Khuzestan Province through Cultural Intelligence by DEA Linear Programming Model

Ali Mahmoudi<sup>1</sup>, Morteza Shafiei<sup>2\*</sup>, Hamid Mahmoudian Ataabadi<sup>3</sup>, Saeed Razeghi<sup>4</sup>

1. PhD student, Department of Cultural Management and Planning, Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, Shiraz, Iran.
2. Associate Professor, Department of Management, Shiraz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Shiraz, Iran.
3. Associate Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, Shiraz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Shiraz, Iran.
4. Assistant Professor, Department of Management, Shiraz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Shiraz Branch, Iran.

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Cultural Intelligence, Job Performance, DEA Linear Programming Model.

**Purpose:** The objective of this study was to rank municipality efficiency by stimulating job performance of employees and managers of municipalities of north Khuzestan Province through cultural intelligence based on data envelopment analysis (DEA) linear programming model.

**Methodology:** The present study was applied in terms of objective and descriptive survey in terms of data collection method. The statistical population of this study included experts and managers of municipalities of north Khuzestan Province. The statistical sample was selected by convenience sampling. Data collection tools were cultural intelligence questionnaire by Ang et al. (2004), occupational performance questionnaire by Alirezai et al. (2012).

**Findings:** Finally, it was concluded that, in order of priority, Dezful, Lali, Shush, Izeh, and Masjed Soleiman were the most efficient municipalities.

**Conclusion:** According to the present study, it was found that the cultural intelligence of employees and managers has a positive effect on their job performance

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\* Corresponding Author Email: m.shafiei2022@gmail.com

## 1. Introduction

In the current situation in which diversity and globalization have grown increasingly, cultural intelligence is considered as an important capability for managers, employees and organizations. The huge volume of migrants from villages to cities in order to access the facilities and services available to citizens in recent years has put service providers in a new position to interact with people who not only do not know enough about them but also they are not familiar with their cultural elements. In this situation, it is a special priority to communicate and interact constructively and efficiently in job fields (Hosseinzadeh et al., 2019). Obviously, effective communication of employees with each other and with their managers in an organization can lead to the improvement of performance. The interaction with and satisfaction of those who refer to the organization as the main clients of the municipality as one of the institutions of the civil society is mentioned in the constitution in the framework of governance in the social, cultural, social, local and urban fields of the development and partnership structure of the country (Abdi et al., 2019). And it is one of the necessities of the social system, which necessarily appears with the structures that are possible only through the intervention of the people, and in fact, the municipality as a local and non-governmental organization is to manage local affairs and provide the necessary services for the purpose of management and physical, economic and social development in the city and its surroundings. Its task is to meet the common needs of the citizens, who cannot meet alone (Nabavipour, 2020).

This organization (municipality) will be successful in achieving its goals and maintaining the balance between present and future needs when it considers the satisfaction of the citizens. The satisfaction of citizens will make them actively participate in the performance of their responsibilities and citizen participation will be considered as the main axis of decision-making. Citizens' satisfaction is the main factor of continuous improvement in the work process that is done in order to increase efficiency and improve the quality of comprehensive urban management (Motamedi & Rasouli, 2019).

In today's world, cultural intelligence is a necessary tool for managers and employees who face colleagues, customers, partners, competitors, government officials and other business actors. Cultural intelligence refers to the ability to function effectively in intercultural relationships, especially in workplaces (Michailova, 2018). The importance of the factor of cultural intelligence in the municipal organization is in the diversity of the clients of this organization; who not only have different conditions, needs and abilities from other people, but some of them also belong to different ethnic and religious cultures (Caputo et al, 2019). Due to the changing and unpredictable nature of the global economy, more conflicts arise due to misunderstandings or lack of understanding due to cultural differences. In the workplace, managers have to interact with people from different cultures (Davidov et al., 2020).

These organizations need people who can interact with people from different cultural backgrounds. They need managers who can recognize cultural differences and can interact properly with other cultures (Fitschen, 2019). Managers usually face problems in terms of communication, language, interaction with host people, religion, etc. in an unfamiliar environment (Hu & Wang, 2020). Managers should be culturally competent to effectively manage a diverse workforce (Hu, Liu, Zhang, & Wang, 2020). Cultural intelligence is a set of skills and characteristics that allow a person to effectively communicate with a new cultural environment (Varela, 2018). Therefore, cultural intelligence is an ability that can increase a person's ability to interact with people outside their culture (Taghipour, 2021).

People who are culturally intelligent are able to interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds (Aghajani, 2021). One of the first strategies and priorities of successful organizations in today's world is to satisfy clients. Organizations that ignore the needs and desires of their clients are removed from the competition scene (Alirezaei, Mesah & Akrami, 2013). Satisfying citizens and clients increases public trust and loyalty, national consensus, public participation, and national authority, which are considered as the indicators of measuring the efficiency and development of the administrative and political system in the current world (Jafari et al., 2017). Each organization to be aware of the utility of its activities and performance results in complex and dynamic environments, especially the city where complex and interconnected issues

and events are raised and there is not only one factor and dimension that can be understood by addressing it and solved, requires the establishment of appropriate control and performance evaluation systems (Guang & Charoensukmongkol, 2020). To the best of our knowledge, the performance and efficiency of any organization directly depends on the job performance of the employees and managers of that group (Sultana, Abdullah & Mok, 2021), and it is obvious that the success, progress and achievement of goals in organizations also depend on the job performance of the managers of that system (employees and managers) (Khan, 2021). In fact, job performance is a set of behaviors that people show in relation to their jobs (Okolocha & Akam, 2021). In other words, it is the of output, consequence or yield that is achieved by the employment of a person in his job (Harzer, Bezoglova & Weber, 2021). The municipalities of North Khuzestan Province include the cities of Andimshek, Dezful, Masjid Suleiman, Shushtar, Shush, Izeh, Gotvand, Lali, Andika and Dasht Azadegan, which have a lot of ethnic and cultural diversity. Obviously, given that in Khuzestan Province, tribes, clans and groups with different dialects or languages, such as Arab, Lor, Bakhtiari, Fars, etc., live in urban communities with different cultural customs and rituals, when referring to administrative organizations such as service provider organizations like the municipality, they will face different challenges. One of these challenges is to establish effective and satisfying communication with the client, and if satisfaction is created and the person feels that the employee is completely fluent in his dialect, knows his literature and discourse well, and respects it, they are respected and fully recognized by the organization (Safaipour, 2016). Of course, administrative issues are raised and discussed in a completely friendly atmosphere. On the other hand, one of the realities and requirements of today's organizations is their ability to increase social participation in order to involve people in civil and development programs of cities from various social, economic, and cultural dimensions (Afsar et al., 2020). It is found that wherever the presence and participation of people is strong, the efficiency and effectiveness of programs and policies will be more, so one of the elements of the success of municipalities in the field of improving the quality of services and promoting people's participation can be creating the necessary interaction in various ways with all classes and ethnic groups living in cities with different subcultures, customs and dialects (Hakimi Nia, 2019).

Therefore, the present study attempted to rank the efficiency of municipalities based on stimulating job performance of employees and managers of municipalities in north Khuzestan Province through cultural intelligence based on DEA linear programming model. In a study, Jafari, et al. (2017) have investigated the effect of cultural intelligence on job performance and intercultural adaptation. The above study was conducted to identify and investigate the effect of cultural intelligence on job performance and cross-cultural adaptation of Ahvaz Petroleum College employees. The descriptive research method was correlation type. The statistical population of the research included 250 employees of the Ahvaz Petroleum Faculty. 150 employees were randomly selected as the research sample according to Morgan's table. The data collection tools were three questionnaires of cultural intelligence, job performance and intercultural adaptation. The results of the research hypotheses test have shown that cultural intelligence had a direct positive effect on job performance and intercultural adaptation.

In a study by Eskandari (2016), the effect of managers' cultural intelligence on the organizational health of their organizations has been investigated in the field of public organizations in Malayer. To investigate organizational health, a new model as the result of the two models of Fisher et al., with the components of leadership, flexibility, teamwork, competence development, communication skills, rewards, commitment and perspective, has been used. In order to measure cultural intelligence, Ang et al.'s model with four metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral dimensions has been used. The above study was applied and descriptive-correlation in terms of data collection. The tool used for measuring the variables was a questionnaire whose face and content validity and reliability were confirmed by Cronbach's alpha coefficient. According to the results, a correlation has been established between the independent variables and the dependent variable, and all the hypotheses of the above study have been confirmed.

In a study by Guderzond Chegini and Yousefi (2014), the relationship between cultural intelligence and teamwork of employees in the General Department of Tax Affairs of Gilan Province has been investigated.

The statistical population of this study included 844 employees of the General Department of Tax Affairs of Gilan Province, and among whom 237 employees were selected as a sample using Morgan's table and random sampling. A questionnaire was used for data collection, and correlation test and SPSS were used for data analysis. Friedman's test was also used to rank cultural intelligence dimensions. The study results showed a significant relationship at the level of 1% and a correlation of 564% between cultural intelligence and its metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioral dimensions with the teamwork of employees. The results of the Friedman test show that among the dimensions of cultural intelligence, motivational cultural intelligence, behavioral cultural intelligence, metacognitive cultural intelligence, and cognitive cultural intelligence have more priority to influence the group performance of employees.

In a study by Darvish, et al (2013), the relationship between cultural intelligence and job performance in nurses of Iqbal Hospital in Tehran has been investigated. The above study was a correlational descriptive study in which 85 working nurses participated with at least one year of work experience, who were randomly selected from the surgical and emergency, CCU, ICU, gynecological, neonatal and medical departments. For data collection, localized cultural intelligence questionnaire and job performance questionnaire were used. The validity of the questionnaires has been confirmed through content and face validity and the reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. For data analysis, Pearson correlation, multiple regression and ANOVA were used by SPSS17. Gender had a significant relationship with the level of cultural intelligence and cultural intelligence was the same in different age groups and levels of education. The performance was also different in nurses with different levels of education. But gender and different age groups had no significant relationship with it. The results showed the correlation between cultural intelligence and performance in nurses through the correlation between behavioral cultural intelligence and performance in nurses. Also, the motivational and behavioral dimensions of cultural intelligence can predict nurses' performance. Gender had a significant effect on nurses' cultural intelligence, and levels of education had a significant effect on nurses' performance.

In a study, Kee (2014) investigated cultural intelligence scale among Indian employees. For this purpose, data have been collected in three studies (the first study with 198 data, the second study with 277 data, the third study with 257 data). Psychometric tests included Cronbach's alpha coefficient, CFA, second-order CFA, validity and face validity (CIS with real happiness, cross-cultural adaptation, and job performance). The CIS has reported acceptable values for reliability and validity. The above study has highlighted significant differences in men and women regarding the behavioral dimension of cultural intelligence of employees. In addition, the above study emphasized that CIS is a standard criterion for evaluating competent employees whose job role requires interaction with multicultural and cross-cultural customers.

In a study, Guang and Charoensukmongkol (2020) investigated the effects of cultural intelligence of Chinese immigrants on supervisor support, supervisor influence, and subordinates' commitment to the supervisor. This study used survey data from 169 Chinese couples and Thai subordinates employed in Chinese subsidiaries located in Thailand. The results showed that Thai subordinates evaluate Chinese immigrants as having high cultural intelligence and consider them more desired in terms of supervisor support. In addition, supervisor support has proven the positive effect of Chinese immigrants' cultural intelligence on leadership effectiveness and subordinates' commitment to the supervisor.

## 2. Methodology

The present study method is applied in terms of objective and descriptive survey in terms of data collection method. The statistical population of this study included experts and managers of municipalities in north Khuzestan Province. The statistical sample was selected by convenience sampling. The data was collected based on face-to-face visits to the municipalities of north Khuzestan Province and the distribution of cultural intelligence questionnaire and job performance questionnaire. Then, the obtained values of cultural intelligence of each municipality were analyzed as the input of job performance and the output of the CSR in the DEA.

Data collection tools in the present study are:

**A. Cultural Intelligence Questionnaire by Ang et al. (2004)**

The cultural intelligence questionnaire was designed by Ang et al. (2004) (Ghaffari & Khani, 2013). This questionnaire has 20 items and 4 factors on a five-point Likert scale from very little (1) to very high (5). This questionnaire measures cultural intelligence with questions such as When I interact with people of a different culture, am I aware of their cultural knowledge? The questionnaire has 4 cognitive, metacognitive, motivational and behavioral dimensions. In a study by Ghaffari and Khani (2013), the validity of the questionnaire has been confirmed by professors and experts in this field. Also, in a study by Ghaffari and Khani (2013), the reliability of the questionnaire was obtained from Cronbach's alpha above 0.70.

**B. Job performance questionnaire by Alirezai et al. (2013)**

The job performance questionnaire was created by Alirezai et al. (2013), which consists of 24 items that are used to measure job performance of employees. It has two functional and contextual dimensions. Functional performance is measured through 10 questions adapted from Byrne et al.'s (2005) questionnaire and contextual performance through 14 questions adapted from Conway's (1999) questionnaire. The scoring of the questionnaire is on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 for "very low", "low", "moderate", "high" and "very high". In a study by Azami, face and content validity was confirmed. For this purpose, after extracting the components from reliable scientific references, and opinions of professors in the field of research. Therefore, 10 professors approved the research questionnaires in cases such as theoretical and conceptual framework, measuring compliance with the objective, and writing items. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to confirm the reliability of the questionnaire, which was 0.81 for the questionnaire.

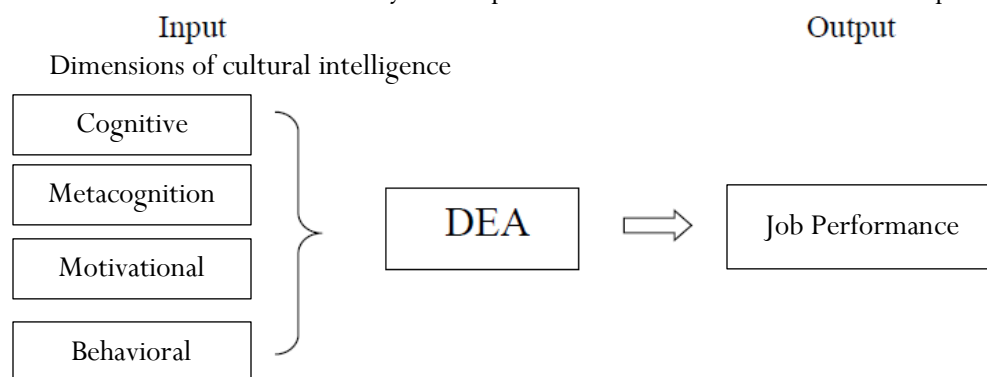


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the research

### 3. Findings

2 respondents (2%) were women and 88 respondents (98%) were men. 1 respondent (1%) was 30 years old and below, 10 respondents (11%) were 30-35 years old, 40 respondents (44%) were 35-40 years old, and 31 respondents (35%) were 40-45 years old and 8 respondents (9%) were 45 and older. Therefore, it can be said that most of the participants in the present study were 35-40 years old. 65 respondents (72%) have bachelor's degree, 15 respondents (17%) have master's degree, and 10 respondents (11%) have doctorate degree. Therefore, it can be said that most of the participants in the present study had bachelor's degree. 1 respondent (1%) had less than 5 years of work experience, 8 respondents (9%) had 5-10 years of years of work experience, 51 respondents (56 percent) had 10-15 years of years of work experience, 26 respondents (29%) had 15-20 years of years of work experience, 4 respondents (5%) had 20 years and above. Therefore, it can be said that most of the participants in the present study had 10-15 years of work experience.

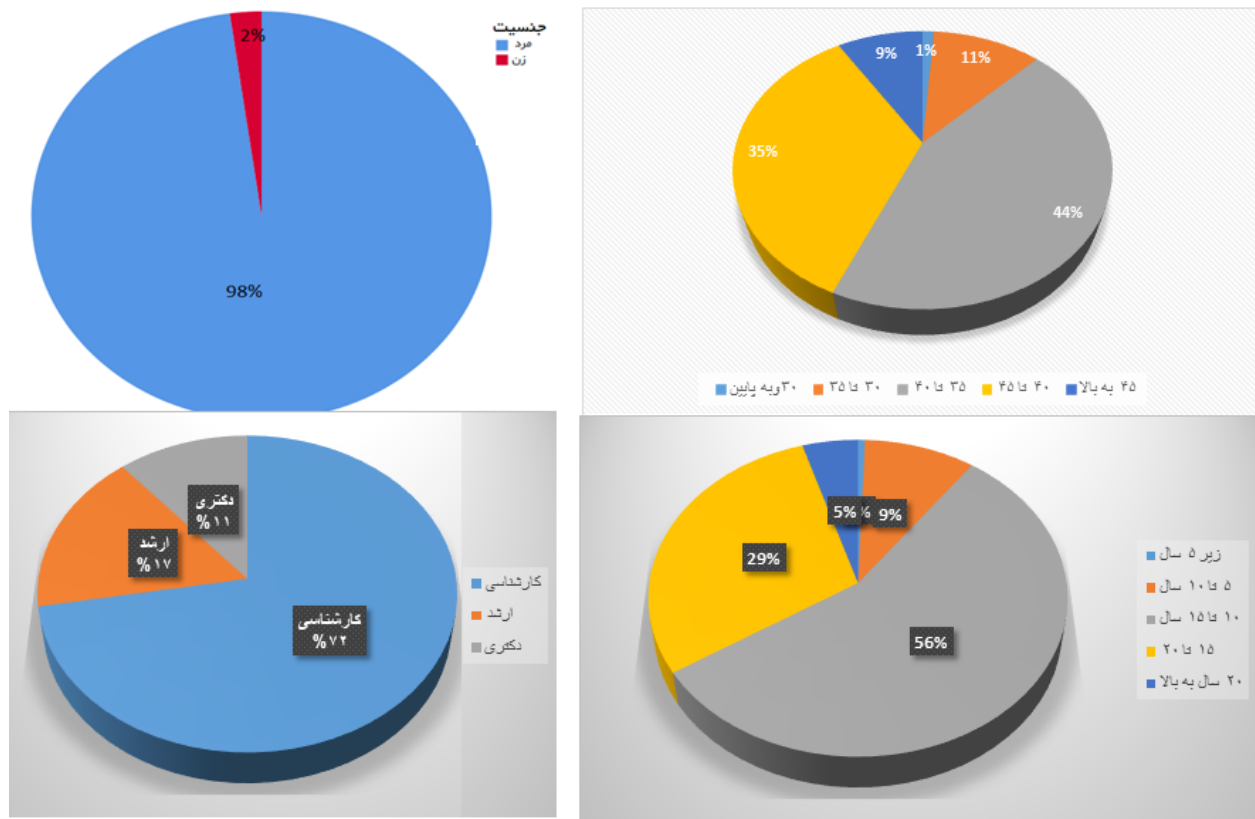


Figure 2. Demographic information of the respondents

Table 1. Descriptive indicators for research variables

research variables	M	SD	variance	skewness	kurtosis
cognitive	17.4	2.04	4.16	0.549	0.507
meta-cognitive	11.6	2.18	4.75	0.510	0.532
motivational	14.5	2.12	4.49	0.535	0.518
behavioral	14.5	2.09	4.37	0.524	0.508
functional performance	28	2.10	4.41	0.516	0.536
contextual performance	40	2.84	8.06	0.544	0.514

The mean and standard deviation of each of the research variables are observed in the second and third columns, and the last two columns include skewness and kurtosis, the values of these indicators being higher than 0.5 confirm the normality of the observations. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

research variables	No.	k-s	Sig
cognitive	90	2.35	0.056
meta-cognitive	90	1.89	0.062
motivational	90	2.94	0.052
behavioral	90	2.67	0.058
functional performance	90	2.86	0.061
contextual performance	90	1.94	0.058

As shown in this table, for the research variables, the significance level of the variables is higher than the alpha level (i.e., higher than 0.05), so the data distribution is normal (parametric). Therefore, tests related to the parametric distribution of data should be used.

Based on one sample t-test, it is easy to measure the state of cultural intelligence in the organization. Also, based on one sample t-test, it is possible to determine the significance of the difference between the current and desired status for each component of cultural intelligence.

Table 3. One sample t-test based on the components of cultural intelligence

variable	current situation	ideal situation	significance level
cognitive	17.4	18	0.004
meta-cognitive	11.6	12	0.003
motivational	14.5	15	0.004
behavioral	14.5	15	0.004

As shown, a significant difference was between the current situation and the desired situation for each of the components of cultural intelligence, and the cultural intelligence in the current situation is lower than the desired situation.

Based on one sample t-test, it is easy to measure job performance in the organization. Also, based on one sample t-test, it is possible to determine the significance of the difference between the current and desired conditions for each component of job performance.

Table 4. One sample t-test based on job performance components

variable	current situation	ideal situation	significance level
contextual performance	28	30*	0.003
functional performance	40	42	0.003

As shown, a significant difference was between the current situation and the desired situation for each of job performance components, and job performance in the current situation is lower than the desired situation.

Table 5 shows the Pearson correlation matrix between the components of cultural intelligence and job performance.

Table 5. Pearson correlation matrix

concept	cognitive	meta-cognitive	motivational	behavioral	functional performance	contextual performance
cognitive	1					
meta-cognitive	0.581	1				
motivational	0.621	0.592	1			
behavioral	0.625	0.632	0.438	1		
functional performance	0.581	0.616	0.632	0.619	1	
contextual performance	0.599	0.632	0.617	0.623	0.571	1

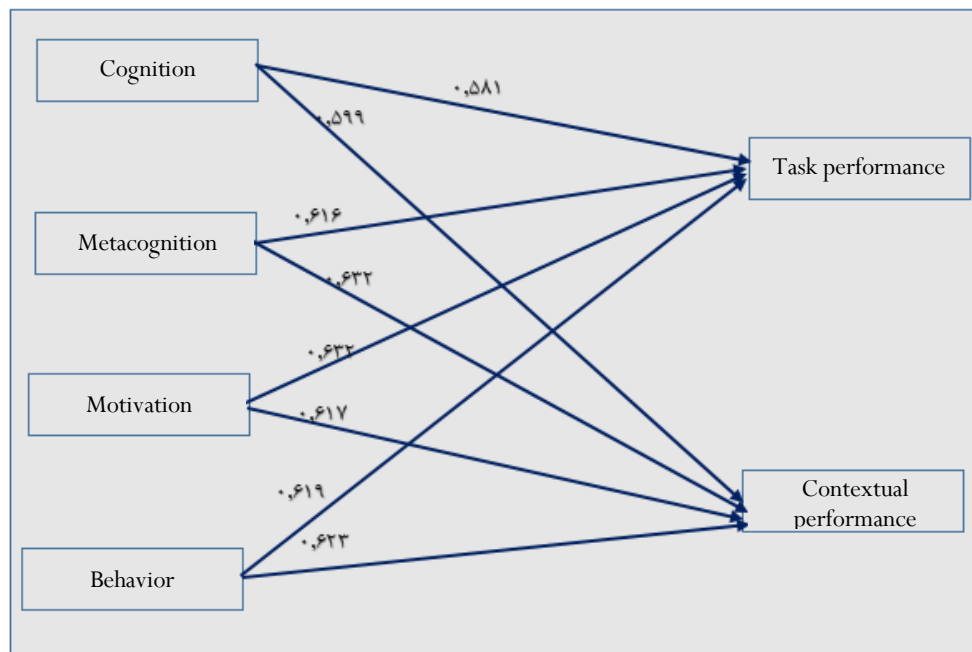


Figure 3. Effect of dimensions of cultural intelligence on those of job performance

The simple efficiency calculated for  $k$  is maximized based on arbitrary weights and  $k$  tendency. If the efficiency of another one, such as  $j$ , is calculated by the selected weights of the unit  $k$  according to  $k$  tendency, it is shown by  $E_{kj}$  and called the cross efficiency. In short, it can be said that for all ones, it is possible to calculate the simple and cross efficiency, and the result of which is providing cross-efficiency matrix. The efficiency of  $j$  is obtained from the weights of  $k$  and the following equation.

$$E_{kj} = \frac{\sum_{r=1}^s u_r^k y_{rj}}{\sum_{i=1}^m v_i^k x_{ij}}$$

To obtain the efficiency score, the average of the columns of the cross-efficiency matrix is calculated by removing the elements on the diagonal that are all one. In this way,  $e_k$ , which is the efficiency score, is calculated as follows.

$$e_k = \frac{\sum_{j \neq k} E_{jk}}{n-1}$$

Tables 6 and 7 show the results of the cross-efficiency matrix and efficiency ranking by this method, respectively.



Table 6. Cross efficiency matrix for efficiency ranking

municipality	Shush	Dezful	Lali	Izeh	Masjed Soleiman
Shush	1	0.6141	0.5974	0.5594	0.5912
Dezful	0.5345	1	0.5894	0.5914	0.5861
Lali	0.5918	0.6194	1	0.5796	0.5765
Izeh	0.5574	0.5695	0.5871	1	0.5940
Masjed Soleiman	0.6289	0.5890	0.5790	0.5971	1
ek	0.8326	0.8465	0.8449	0.8119	0.8026

Table 7. Efficiency ranking of by cross-efficiency ranking method

municipality	final rank
Shush	3
Dezful	1
Lali	2
Izeh	4
Masjed Soleiman	5

As shown in Table 7, in order of priority, Dezful, Lali, Shush, Izeh and Masjed Soleiman are the most efficient.

#### 4. Conclusion

According to the present study, it was found that cultural intelligence of employees and managers has a positive effect on job performance, and Dezful, Lali, Shush, Izeh and Masjid Suleiman are the most efficient municipalities. Based on the analysis presented in the present study, it was found that cultural intelligence has an effect on job performance of employees. In a study by Jafari, et al (2017), the effect of cultural intelligence on job performance and cross-cultural adaptation was investigated, and it was concluded that cultural intelligence had a direct positive effect on job performance and cross-cultural adaptation, which is consistent with the present study. In a study by Eskandari and Samadi (2016) entitled effect of cultural intelligence of managers on the organizational health of their organizations in the field of public organizations of Malayer, it was concluded that cultural intelligence of managers leads to the organizational health of the organization, which can have a positive effect on job performance of employees, which is consistent with the present study. In a study by Darvish, et al. (2013) entitle the relationship between cultural intelligence and job performance of nurses of Iqbal Hospital in Tehran, it was found that the relationship between cultural intelligence and performance of nurses has been shown through the correlation between cultural intelligence and behavioral performance of nurses, and the motivational and behavioral dimensions of cultural intelligence can predict the performance of nurses, which is consistent with the present study. In a study by Darvish, et al. (2013) entitled the effect of cultural intelligence on cabin crew burnout in airplanes, it was concluded that a negative relationship was between cultural intelligence of cabin crew and their burnout. The negative impact of cultural intelligence on burnout has been very strong, especially for cabin crew with more work experience than those with less work experience, which is consistent with the present study. In a study by Park (2019) entitled the effect of organizational learning culture, cultural intelligence and transformational leadership on job performance, it was concluded that cultural intelligence had a positive effect on job performance of employees, which is consistent with the present study. In a study by Jyoti and Kour (2017), the relationship between cultural intelligence and job performance has been investigated, and it has been concluded that cultural intelligence had a positive effect on the job performance of employees, which is consistent with the present study. In a study by Barakat, et al. (2019) entitled analysis of the effect of cultural intelligence on job

satisfaction and performance, it was concluded that cultural intelligence has a positive effect on job performance of employees, which is consistent with the present study.

The following are suggested according to this study.

In order to increase cognitive cultural intelligence in long-term educational programs, knowledge and cognition can be created in employees, which will strengthen multiperspectivity and solve problems in intercultural interactions with an open perspective. The training can be in the form of reading books about other cultures or in the form of language training, consulting and case studies, reviewing and criticizing cultural scenarios and presenting appropriate solutions.

Integrating cultural knowledge into organizational policies and procedures by creating learning communities in which employees can interact with and learn more about others from different cultures.

In order to increase behavioral cultural intelligence, role-playing programs and simulated situations can be used, through which, employees face situations that require to show appropriate behaviors.

In order to motivate employees, officials can extrinsically motivate employees. Studies have proven that employees are motivated to behave in a certain way or learn new skills if they believe that these behaviors and skills will help them in the future. Therefore, the officials should communicate in the thoughts and minds of the employees between the creation and improvement of cultural intelligence and success in their future career paths by emphasizing the benefits of learning from different cultures.

Another solution for employees to pay attention to cultural intelligence and strive to improve it is to include this intelligence for employee performance evaluations.

In order to manage problems and challenges that may arise as a result of cultural differences in intercultural interactions, it is suggested to employees to learn useful and effective conflict analysis strategies.

Also, the following are suggested to future researchers.

1. It is suggested that other researchers investigate the relationship between cultural intelligence and other variables such as employees' personality and customer satisfaction.
2. It is suggested to conduct further studies on the relationship between cultural intelligence and performance in other organizations that operate at the international level.
3. In this study, the components of cultural intelligence are taken from the model of Ang et al. It is suggested to test the components that are in other models, including the model presented by Thomas.
4. Investigating effective factors in creating and improving cultural intelligence

One of the weaknesses that unfortunately exists in our country is that scientific research is not highly valued. For this reason, organizations or university researchers do not cooperate in providing information or filling out questionnaires. In this study, as in many other studies, the researcher has faced this problem. In this regard, it is suggested that the officials and executives of the high levels of society should have the necessary culture using appropriate educational programs in this field, clarify the value and importance of scientific research for organizations and their employees and foster a culture of participation and cooperation in this field.

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