

Construction and Validation of a Secure-base Leadership Model in Educational Organizations: A Mixed-methods Exploratory Study

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Abstract

There is no doubt about the importance of leadership and attachment styles on individual behavior and organizational outcomes. However, researchers have neglected to apply and integrate attachment concepts in management and organizational studies for years. One of the basic concepts in attachment theory is the secure base. In 2010, Coombe considered the application of this concept in leadership, which resulted in representing the theory of secure base leadership. The present study aimed at constructing and validating a secure base leadership model. The research method is a mixed exploratory method composed of qualitative and quantitative measures including thematic analysis and survey, respectively. The participants of the qualitative section were 14 faculty members, specialists, and experts in the field of

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educational management and psychology selected using the purposive sampling method and snowball technique. Besides, the participants of the quantitative part included 441 administrative staff and teachers in Tehran were by cluster sampling. Open, axial, and selective coding was used to analyze interview data in the former part, while in the latter, structural equations were used. The results of the qualitative analysis indicated that secure base leadership includes three main aspects, namely security (accepting people (acceptance), support, providing security, mutual trust, independence, fairness, staying calm (controlling and adjusting emotions)), exploration (risk-taking, increasing individual capacities, being responsive and sensible, intellectual stimulation), and deep intellectual bond (positive attitude, high emotional capacity, transparency in relationships, compatibility, being a good listener). Also, the quantitative part of the research results showed validity and reliability as well as a good fit of the proposed model.

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Introduction

There is a growing belief that says the organizational structure of older institutions simply cannot adapt to the learning of the required skills in the 21st century. Therefore, new methods are based on mutual cooperation, professional learning communities and networking and group efforts. Nevertheless, to establish this thinking, the proper use



of effective leadership styles seems to be necessary. From this point of view, the importance of management and leadership in educational organizations and their role in the success and improvement of organizations becomes more obvious day by day. As educational researchers and policy makers believe, leadership is the main pillar of organizational improvement. With this approach, various researchers recognize new leadership styles as an answer to face the diverse challenges of the varying world. They consider leadership as a strong pillar and guide to overcome these challenges and to obtain the desired educational system. In other words, leadership can act as an effective strategy in improving and developing the educational system (Seegers, 2016). In order to overcome such challenges, managers need to apply new leadership styles that incorporate a variety of flexible skills and practices to meet the challenges of the new demands. By taking advantage of these leadership styles, managers can expand their influence and effectiveness in their organizations (Göksoy, 2015; Harris, and Jones, 2021). Accordingly, Secure Base Leadership is one of the emerging theories in the field of leadership style. This approach focuses on the principle that the leader should try to maintain the security of the organization and prevent the occurrence of risks, manage risks and create security in the organization. In other words, secure base leadership is of great importance in order to maintain security and reduce risks in the organization.

Secure base leadership is a new concept which was first introduced by Coombe (2010). The way a leader builds trust and influence over others by providing a sense of security, protection, and care, and by creating an inspiring source of daring, exploration, risk-taking and seeking challenges in employees, is defined as the secure base leadership (Coombe, 2010). According to Coombe (2010), the sense of security,

protection and care in employees mean three different characteristics that are discussed in relation to the security of employees and the organization. The feeling of security means having confidence and peace regarding personal and organizational security. This concept does not include an unpleasant feeling such as worry and fear, but rather means having confidence and trust that personal and organizational security is maintained now and in the future. The feeling of protection means the measures taken to maintain security and prevent possible dangers from occurring. These measures include the use of various technologies such as CCTV cameras and security systems, the use of security policies and procedures, and the training of employees in the field of security. The sense of care means observing and implementing the measures that are taken to maintain the safety and health of employees. These measures include things such as providing protective equipment and tools for employees, providing health and medical services, and providing advice and guidance on maintaining the health and safety of employees. On the other hand, in the definition provided by Coombe (2010), the sense of challenge acceptance in employees means having the desire and willing to face challenges and try to improve and develop themselves and the organization. This sense is known as one of the effective factors in creating growth and progress in organizations and can be considered as a competitive advantage for the organization in the labor market. To create a sense of challenge acceptance in employees, leaders can encourage employees to be innovative and creative in solving organizational problems by creating a suitable organizational culture and presenting specific and challenging goals, as well as providing necessary facilities, promoting a sense of challenge acceptance in employees.



Secure base leadership plays the role of a secure base in the organization, which has features such as creating security through valuing, acceptability and appreciation, providing exploration through emphasizing growth, developing potential and addressing tasks and situations through a positive method. As a positive theory in leadership, since concepts and values such as valuing, accepting and appreciating employees in a timely manner in order to create a safe working environment, respecting the inherent value of humans and emphasizing their growth and development in a positive way are noted and emphasized in secure base leadership, it seems that such behaviors probably lead to a common result, which is an increase in the feeling of respect, trust and mutual appreciation towards organizational leaders and other employees. In such a way that such a mentality becomes an important motivating factor during which the employees will try to show their mutual trust and respect to the secure-based leader by accepting and following the leader and doing better work activities, and in such an atmosphere, a feeling of confidence exists that the work team will not embarrass or reject any person for commenting (Kessel, Kratzer and Schultz, 2012; Trujillo, Møller, Jensen, Kissell and Larsen, 2021). Research shows that the difference between a successful and a failed leader is the presence or absence of a secure base in their personal lives. Having a secure base in life reduces anxiety and fear, increases satisfaction (Bae, 2016; Paetzold, Rholes, and Andrus, 2017; Scannell and Gifford, 2017; Simpson and Rholes, 2017), and increases trust and risk-taking in the organization and elevates employee happiness (Khalijian, Shams, Pardakhtchi, and Mirkamali, 2023). In organizations, a secure base can include bosses, co-workers, subordinates, the organization itself, work, or even the product (Kessel, Kratzer and Schultz, 2012; Liu, Chen and Lee, 2021).

Issues such as lack of meritocracy, the prevailing atmosphere of silence, little attention to improving employee welfare, little flexibility in work, lack of attention to employees' talents and not utilizing these talents in practice, lack of acceptance and support of employees by their managers, lack of attention to the needs of employees, and consequently, low motivation of staff in improving their performance and quality of their work in the current educational environments has led education staff, especially teachers among other jobs, to be continuously exposed to job pressures and stresses because of the demands of their jobs (Bernard, 2016; Malinen and Savolainen, 2016; Shirbagi and Naderi, 2023). This causes educational organizations to face challenges such as reduced satisfaction (Arifin, 2015; Roch and Sai, 2017), reduced commitment (Raman, Cheah, Don, Daun, and Khalid, 2015; Okçu and Uçar, 2016), reduced quality of life (Yisunthet and Chen, 2017) and reduced employee performance and organizational health and effectiveness (Yozgat, Yurtkoru, and Bilginoglu, 2013). One of the important and effective factors in occurrences of these challenges is the behavior and leadership style of managers and educational officials (Geda; 2015; Moorosi and Bantwini, 2016; Urick, 2016; Karahroodi, Shams, ShamiZanjani, and Abolghasemi, 2020).

As a secure base, the leader has great effects on employees' performance and organizational results. This leadership style is presented based on a research study (Coombe, 2010) with regard to the organizational atmosphere in the organizations of western societies, which is not consistent with that of Eastern ones, especially in Iran. One of these differences is in the role of the family as the first and most important secure base during a person's life. In eastern societies, a person experiences the role of family and its support from childhood to adulthood and always understands the family as a secure base, but



in western societies, the definition of family and its base is different. In addition to the family, a noticeable difference can be felt between the culture and the organizational atmosphere in the organizations of Western societies, which are mostly decentralized and constantly emphasize the happiness of the organization's environment and the collaborative activities of the employees and the centralized and individualistic organizational culture and atmosphere of Eastern societies such as Iran. In addition, the intra-organizational problems of Iran's education and training organization in areas such as the methods of employment, attraction, training and retention of the working manpower, the inefficiency of the selection system of managers, especially at the level of education and training departments (both headquarters, provincial and regional), lack of dynamism in the management of schools, especially in the field of attracting the participation of parents and teachers for better school management, the inefficiency of the control system, monitoring and scientific evaluation of programs, plans, methods and practices, lack of motivation for teachers to actively train in the classrooms, the lack of love and humane and intimate relationships between school management staff, teachers and students and as a result, the lack of vitality in the school, cause the necessity of this research which aims to identify and explain the dimensions of secure base leadership in the education organization, prove it as much as possible to the policy makers and senior managers of the education system. Therefore, considering such a research gap in the field of secure based leadership in Iran, the need to identify the dimensions of this leadership style based on the characteristics of the Iranian society in the field of education, which itself is an important base in the education and training of active members of the society is strongly felt. Therefore, this study seeks to answer these questions, what is the model of secure

based leadership style in the education organization? And does this model of leadership style have proper validity and reliability?

The rest of the article is organized as follows. The next section examines the existing theoretical foundations related to the concept of the secure base and secure base leadership, as well as the key concepts of this leadership style. In the research literature section, some domestic and foreign studies conducted in the field of secure base leadership style are discussed. In the methodology section, the method of conducting the study in two phases, qualitative and quantitative, will be presented. In the following, explanations will be provided regarding the data collection tool as well as the statistical population of the qualitative and quantitative parts of the research. In the findings section, the obtained results would be analyzed in two separate qualitative and quantitative parts. Finally, the current study ends in the conclusion section by presenting discussions on the qualitative and quantitative findings of the research, as well as providing practical suggestions about secure base leadership in Iran's education and training organization.

Theoretical Basics

Secure Base

The term secure base has its roots in John Bowlby and Marie Ainsworth's research on attachment theory. The main concept of attachment theory is that all human beings have a natural desire to be close to a person who gives them a sense of care and reaching comfort in this way. At the end of their research, Bowlby concluded that the bond between the child and the mother and the relationship between the two gives babies a sense of strength and improvability (Bowlby, 2005).



J. W. Anderson, continuing Bowlby's research, concluded that children are constantly looking for a base, and in the meantime, most of them look for their mothers as a secure base. Toddlers just started to walk were playing in a certain place, but most of the time they went to their mother and calmed down. It is very interesting that different children showed different behaviors. Some of them were very close to their mothers and were afraid to take risks, but some other children were playing in distant areas and did not pay much attention to their mothers. However, what was common among all these children was that whenever they were depressed or scared, they would go to their mothers and their mothers would also show two types of behavior: on one hand, their accepting and pleasant behaviors indicated providing security for children, and on the other hand, mothers gave their children the opportunity to take risks, and this enabled children to discover their own solutions and maintain their independence. Ainsworth proved that attachment reduces anxiety. What she calls the secure base effect enables the child to let go out of attachments and explore the environment, and the child can explore the environment with encouragement and confidence (Hetland et al., 2008).

Although humans are considered the strongest secure bases, this concept applies to any form that stops the primary system of danger warnings in the mind and provides energy and creativity for the challenge. From this point of view, places, goals and objects can be considered as a secure base like the country, religion or God, an event, group or even a pet. Any creature that can strengthen a person's sense of inner security and inspire creativity through making a relationship can be considered a secure base. The stronger the secure base, the more resistant to difficult and unfavorable conditions. Since the need for a secure base is rooted in the human brain, it can be said that the concept

of a secure base is common in all cultures and between generations. On the other hand, since the concept of secure base is multidimensional, its contradiction increases layer by layer. A secure base supports people and encourages them to take risks. In addition, the secure base both waits and interferes in the affairs. People need both other people and goals as a secure base. A leader can be a secure base for other people only if he has several secure bases. The figure below shows the functioning of the secure base (Chen, 2015).

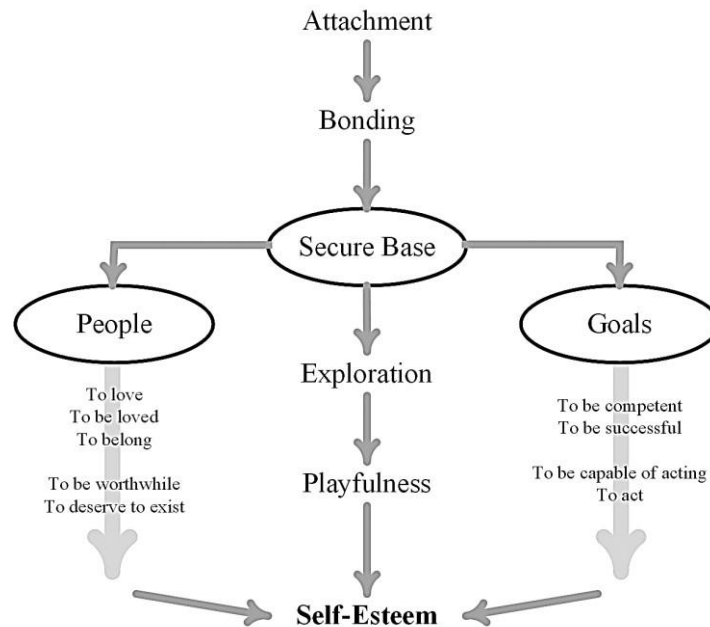


Figure 1. The function of secure base

Secure Leadership

Great leaders around the world, by building trust, creating change and emphasizing that group participation can provide the conditions for progress and innovation, constantly try to bring the extraordinary capabilities of themselves, employees and organizations to the fore.



Such people easily achieve stable performance because they use their secure base and are considered a secure base for other people. Above performance means challenging self and others in order to achieve something beyond normal expectations, this is where you have to move away from your safe zone and do the impossible (Pepping et al., 2017).

In fact, a person moves towards the ultimate risk and possibility. Although secure base leadership is a very deep and complex concept, it does not take long to learn it. In fact, the keys to learning and developing secure base leadership lie within the individual himself, his life story, experiences and the method of institutionalizing success and failure in his life. Since the necessity of a secure base leader is to be a secure base and have its characteristics and features, therefore, before defining this type of leadership, the definition of a secure base is discussed (Antunes, 2017).

Secure base leadership plays the role of a secure base in the organization, which has features such as creating security through valuing, acceptability and appreciation, providing exploration by emphasizing growth, developing potential and addressing tasks and situations through a positive method. Among these factors, Coombe (2010) lists two basic elements as the foundation of secure base leadership and its main elements, which include security (through valuing, acceptability and appreciation), and exploration (through emphasizing on growth, development and potential). The factors security and exploration in secure base leadership have been emphasized considerably from a theoretical point of view, and they are consistent with the concepts of Ainsworth and Bowlby of security and exploration factors. Therefore, secure base leadership always provides the possibility of effective activity and cooperation in the

organization's environment through human relations combined with trust. As a result, it facilitates the role of leadership by the manager and ensures the effective and continuous activity of the organization and the efficient performance of the employees. Secure base leadership is important in educational organizations whose main capital is human power (Coombe, 2010).

Key Concepts in Secure Leadership

Security/risk conflict. The communication system is associated with safety and comfort, while the exploration system is associated with learning and exploration. As Ainsworth points out: communication and discovery support each other (Ainsworth, 1989). This protection is because it is necessary for discovery to occur that a person knows that he is fully protected in times of danger or anxiety. Security is shown through attention and danger through boldness. A secure base tries to provide security, certainty and comfort for exploration and risk-taking, and at the same time it stops the brain's focus on fear, threat and even survival and encourages humans towards curiosity and risk-taking. Therefore, the secure base in a way blossoms the inherent potential in the individual. If the leader only provides security, he will only be known as a source of comfort. However, if it does not instill the spirit of discovery, challenge and risk-taking in a person, it has actually limited his freedom. In other words, if a person is encouraged to take risks without providing security and assurance, you have undoubtedly asked him to gain some kind of assurance without any support for taking risks. In this situation, the person becomes vulnerable and becomes defensive against the danger. A secure



childhood base that balances safety and risk, plays a key role and tremendous impact. The secure base takes one out of the comfort zone. In other words, if a boss is interested in an employee but does not challenge him and does not encourage him to take risks, he is not considered a secure base in any way. Bowlby is of the opinion that a secure base should not have predetermined actions but should only intervene when necessary. Bowlby states that "this issue is a time-wasting policy". Accordingly, a secure base should always be ready and available. A secure base is someone who listens well to the other party, understands the signs (verbal or non-verbal) and tries to pay attention to their needs instead of imposing his opinions on people. In addition, a secure base never defends its position, but always tries to challenge people's thinking with the wise use of questions and make them think creatively and critically. Secure bases do not think for others and do not save them either; also, they never do what the person can do by himself, but they give the person the possibility to do the work themselves and then help him to understand the meaning of the experience (Top et al., 2015).

Commitment to people and goals. Another basic concept in secure base is a "combination of commitment to people and goals". The reason for commitment to the people is very clear; people need interpersonal relationships to feel intimacy, presence, and love. The reason for "commitment to goals" is also almost clear. To commit to goals, we must first define our goal and then be committed to the steps to achieve it. If a person has people as a secure base but does not pursue any goal, he may feel secure, but he feels so confident that he will no longer take risks to increase his abilities. In this situation, the person feels that other people love him, but he feels defeated. Also, if he pursues goals as a secure base but is not committed to people, he may achieve

material success in his work, but he will be completely deprived of love for people and commitment to them. Some external successes are considered personal failures due to the heavy costs caused by high stress and the loss of individual capabilities. A secure base leader tries to prevent these failures. People who only pursue goals as a secure base can simply be "Independent Loner". Many leaders carry wounds from the past without even realizing it, which severely affects their leadership negatively (Kohlrrieser et al., 2012). Maintaining a balance between commitment to people and commitment to goals is very important in having a healthy performance, high self-esteem and optimal work performance. When a person is not committed to goals or people, he is afraid of rejection, he is afraid of success, and he is also afraid of failure. For this reason, it does not reach its real capabilities. No matter how strong a person is mentally and psychologically, fear still prevents a person from reaching his goals because it makes him feel unworthy. A secure base helps a person focus on potential success, protects them from insecurities, and instills a sense of courage. Secure bases not only play an important role in learning people's skills, but also affect the perception of human existence. A secure base affects people's belief. In fact, they form the secure base of people's thinking, thinking can shape people's concentration, and the concentration itself is also the shaper of results. Although people's personal beliefs are rooted and established, they can be influenced or, more precisely, these beliefs can be shaped. It is the individual who chooses to positively or negatively influence other people's beliefs. Secure base leadership emphasizes both the relational nature of leadership (people) and the operational aspect of doing work optimally. By focusing on people, the leader can encourage them and use their participation to achieve something beyond the expectations. A person's personal life defines his leadership status. In fact, the leader's personal life is the source of



inspiration and limitations in his leadership style. In short, the leader's humanity is reflected in his leadership. The integration of people and goals as a secure base allows one to trust each other, to be creative, to take risks, to explore and innovate, and to be cheerful and lively in one's work. When we ask people to describe being a member of a high-performance team, they sometimes say that working in such teams is very difficult but enjoyable. In other words, these people were closely related to goals and people. If people feel insecure because of the leader's behavior, they will never be able to explore and learn. A leader who is a secure base for his people allows them to form new mental models and achieve more "self-confidence, independence, efficiency, self-efficacy and self-esteem" (Cynthia et al., 2014).

Bonding. The concept of bonding in secure base leadership is defined as one of the key concepts as follows: creating a kind of friendship and belonging that creates more physical, emotional, mental or spiritual energy for a person or people compared to when they are alone. A secure base leader communicates with his followers. This relationship eventually turns into a sense of "trust", that is, people will trust that the leader has nothing but their interests in mind, and if they make a mistake or fail in their work, the leader will support them, because the leader knows how much challenge is suitable for them. A secure base leader encourages his people to move forward, accepts bigger challenges with an open mind and meets them carefully and proudly. In today's highly competitive world, communication with people is the biggest challenge facing secure base leaders and is a suitable test to measure their capabilities. A secure base leader considers failure as a natural process and instead of focusing on discomfort, he focuses on benefits and successes because he has created a sense of trust between members, this allows them to face their fears and express their feelings

of hopelessness. At the end of this process, people reach the stage of forgiveness and gratitude and are ready to deal with new challenges and relationships (Kohlrieser et al., 2012).

Literature Review

In this section, the review and evaluation of some domestic and foreign studies conducted in the field of the subject under study are discussed:

Ghalavandi and Ahmadian (2017) investigated the relationship between secure base leadership and work ethics. Their results showed a positive and significant relationship between secure base and the dimensions of interest in work, healthy relationships and cooperation in the workplace.

Nasiri and Sepahvand (2016) examined the secure base situation in Bu Ali Sina University from the perspective of the employees. The results showed that the use of secure base style in Bu Ali Sina University is higher than average from the employees' point of view.

Nasiri and Sepahvand (2016) conducted a correlation analysis between organizational identity and secure base style with employees' job performance. The results showed a positive and significant relationship between organizational identity and secure base style with the job performance of Bu Ali Sina University employees. Among the dimensions of organizational identity, the component strategic knowledge had the greatest effect in predicting job performance, and among the dimensions of secure base style, the components acceptability and use of intrinsic motivation respectively had the greatest effect in predicting the job performance of employees, in Bu Ali Sina University, Hamedan.



Mohajeran, Khalili and Ashrafi (2016) investigated the relationship between secure base leadership and organizational commitment with the mediation of job satisfaction using structural equation modeling. The results showed significant relationships between secure base leadership, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Also, job satisfaction plays a mediating role in the relationship between secure base leadership and organizational commitment.

Wu and Parker (2017) investigated the role of leader support in facilitating active employee behavior in terms of attachment theory. The results showed that leaders' secure support (support in the form of leader's availability, encouragement, and non-interference in affairs) significantly predicts the positive and active behavior of employees. Leaders who have a secure attachment style take the lead in supporting employees for active and positive behavior and increase the ability of employees to perform active behavior.

Shams and Khalijian (2014) examined the relationship between secure base leadership and leadership effectiveness and job satisfaction. Their results showed a positive and significant relationship between the components of secure base leadership with leadership effectiveness and job satisfaction.

Coombe (2010) found that secure base leadership as a positive theory in leadership directly affects leadership effectiveness, job satisfaction and psychological security and leader-follower relationship.

Methodology

The present study was conducted on a hybrid basis according to exploratory mixed research design and carried out in two consecutive qualitative-quantitative phases. In the first phase (qualitative), by

reviewing and evaluating the studies conducted in the field of the topic raised in the current research, as well as in-depth interviews with experts in the field of leadership styles, especially the secure base leadership style, the necessary data was collected and using the grounded theory along with Glazer's approach (Stern, 2016), the conceptual model was coded, classified and presented. Grounded theory is an inductive and exploratory research method that allows researchers in various subject areas to develop their own theory instead of relying on existing theories. This theory is developed systematically and based on real data. This method is used in cases where our knowledge in those fields is limited. In this method, the steps of analyzing the collected qualitative data are carried out in three stages: open coding, axial coding and selective coding: 1) Open coding is an analytical process through which the concepts and characteristics and dimensions are identified are discovered from within. In the open coding phase, the researcher identifies the concepts and expands them according to their characteristics and dimensions. At this stage, from the primary raw data, the researcher makes the preliminary categories related to the phenomenon under investigation by dividing the data into categories of information about the phenomenon under study, asking questions about the data, comparing cases, events and other states of phenomena are used to obtain similarities and differences. 2) Axial coding: the researcher makes one of the categories the focus of the process under investigation and discovery (main dimension) and then relates other categories (components) to it. In this regard, here, the main dimensions and related components have been identified. 3) Selective coding: it is the process of regularly selecting the core category and relating it to other categories, validating the relationships and filling the gaps with categories that need to be modified and expanded. Data analysis in this section was done using MAXQDA



2020 software. At this stage, in order to evaluate the validity of the model, the focus group was used, and in order to evaluate the reliability of the model, the Kappa coefficient was used.

The second phase (quantitative phase) of the study was quantitative and by the method of structural equation modeling, for this purpose, the data collected from the researcher-made questionnaire based on the proposed model (resulting from the qualitative phase of the study) was evaluated. In the current research, at the level of descriptive statistics, frequency, frequency percentage related to demographic variables (gender, etc.) as well as mean, standard deviation related to research variables were used. In the inferential statistics section of the present study, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test was used to test the assumptions for normality, and the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the data. It should be noted that due to the fact that the accuracy of the results obtained from the Smart PLS software is not sensitive to the number or normality of the data and it has higher accuracy and quality compared to other structural equation modeling software packages. In order to evaluate validity, convergent validity and divergent validity were used, and in order to evaluate reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability were employed.

This study, in terms of purpose, is among applied researches that are conducted in the field. The method of the present research is mixed in terms of data collection method, which has been implemented qualitatively and quantitatively. Also, the design of this exploratory research is sequential and of the instrumental type. Therefore, first the qualitative section was done to identify the components of secure base leadership and then the quantitative section was performed to statistically review the findings of the qualitative section. This research

has been done in the qualitative part by thematic analysis method and in the quantitative part, a descriptive-survey method has been used. The statistical population for the qualitative part is discussed in the next subsection, followed by the discussion on the data collection tool that is used in this study.

Statistical population

The statistical population of this research includes two communities, in the qualitative part of the research, faculty members and experts and professionals in the field of educational management and psychology were selected as potential participants for the design and formulation of the model. In order to select these people, factors such as experience, position, education, relevance to the subject, interest and having enough time for interview, etc. were taken into consideration. In order to extract the codes, interviews were conducted using the theoretical sampling method until the theoretical saturation is reached. Theoretical saturation is achieved when additional data do not help to complete and specify a theoretical category and the samples then look similar, in other words, the point of theoretical saturation is the repetition of data in research and this repetition of data and the results obtained from it in the methodology, shows the reliability of the research method. The sampling method in this qualitative design was theoretical sampling, namely, the purposeful selection of key informants based on the specific information they have about the research topic. Theoretical sampling requires data collection based on categories to develop theory. The sampling of experts in this research continued until the process of discovery and analysis reached the point of theoretical saturation. In this study, after conducting the interview process with 14 experts, the researcher reached theoretical saturation

and encountered duplicate data; thus, the interview process was stopped.

In the quantitative part, the statistical population included all the administrative staff of the Education and Training Organization and teachers in Tehran (n=115,277), and using Cochran's equation, the number of investigated people is equal to 383 people. The sampling method at this stage was multi-stage cluster sampling. For this purpose, the educational areas of Tehran city were divided into five areas: north, south, center, east and west, and then one educational district was selected from each area, and in the next stage, a number of schools of different courses were randomly selected from among the schools of the selected educational areas and questionnaires were distributed. The demographic characteristics of the statistical sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Demographic characteristics of the statistical sample

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Age	30-40 years	103	26.89
	40-50 years	1085	48.30
	Above 50	95	24.80
Gender	Male	128	33.42
	Female	255	66.58
Education	Master	268	69.97
	PhD and above	115	30.03
Experience	5-10 years	90	23.50
	10-20 years	157	44.99
	Above 20 years	136	35.51

Data collection tool

Key informants and experts in the field of educational management and psychology have been interviewed in-depth with the aim of discovering dimensions and features of secure base leadership in the qualitative part. The interview protocol includes 8 general questions about the time that these people experienced secure base leadership. Most interview questions determined their experience of other people acting as their secure base. These questions were asked based on the results of the document analysis of the qualitative part of the research. In the research process, efforts were made to maintain the principles of research ethics, informed consent of participants was obtained and the confidentiality, anonymity, fidelity and freedom of opinion of the participants during and after the interview was ensured. Due to the personal nature of the interview questions at the beginning of the interview, the purpose of the research was stated and emphasized that the interviews will only be used for research purposes and the identities of individuals will not be specified in any way in research reports.

In the quantitative part of the research, a questionnaire with 56 questions was designed to determine the validity and reliability of the secure base leadership model available in schools according to the markers obtained from the study of documents and the in-depth interviews. This questionnaire measured three main dimensions including security, exploration and intellectual bond and 16 features. After designing the questionnaire, in order to evaluate the validity of the questionnaire and the questions asked, in a preliminary investigation, it was sent to the professors, experts and managers. Based on receiving corrective feedback and correcting the wording of the questionnaire according to their opinion, the validity of the



questionnaire, the compatibility of the subject with the questions and the usability and appropriateness of the questions were ensured. Considering this, it was found that the questionnaire questions have the power to explain and test the designed measurement tool. Also, to check the reliability, the questionnaire was distributed among 45 people from the statistical sample and based on the answers they gave to the questionnaire, the reliability was also approved.

Findings

Findings of Qualitative Part

Qualitative results with an inductive approach, were obtained based on interviews and open, axial and selective coding. Here, axial coding means to reach sub-components and the selective coding means to reach the main components of the research. In the open coding stage, which is the first step of describing the coding process, all the interviews have been individually converted into codes in the form of each sentence.

Presentation of Model

During the coding process, 16 axial codes were extracted in the form of 56 open codes. After identifying the primary codes, similar secondary codes were placed together and formed the classes, and for each class, a suitable title was considered that could cover all the secondary codes of a set. Finally, 16 secondary codes were categorized in the form of 3 selective codes. Table 2 shows the process of open, axial and selective coding for the central category of the research.

Table 2.

Open, axial and selective coding process

Open coding and selective coding			Axial coding
Primary code	Secondary code	Category	Core Category
Granting self-worth and respect to the individual	Acceptance	Security	Secure base Leadership
Preserving human values			
Acceptance and respect for people			
Supporting people both personally and organizationally	Support		
Support in times of danger			
Create mental security	Provide security		
High morale			
Create a happy work environment			
Believe in and trust People	Mutual trust		
Establish comfortable and intimate relations with others			
Being reliable and fair	Independence		
Developing and maintaining independence of individuals			
Providing the opportunity of trial and error for each person			
Justice and the rights of others	Equity		
Compassion in the workplace			
Having a sense of altruism			
Avoid being judgmental			
Stays calm and reacting appropriately in inappropriate situations	Graceful behavior	Staying calm	
while interacting with others			



Open coding and selective coding			Axial coding
Primary code	Secondary code	Category	Core Category
Recognizing critical situations Ability to take risks	Risk-taking		
Emphasizing on individuals' merits Developing internal motivation for success Providing the opportunity for individuals to experience and learn Giving responsibility to individuals based on their abilities Respecting individuals' failures as a learning experience Encouraging and highlights one's positive attributes Encouraging individuals to strive for growth	Strengthening personal capacity	Exploration	
Having social responsibility Sensitivity to events and conditions Being responsive when needed Carefully solving issues	Sensitivity and accountability		
Welcoming individuals' ideas Paying attention to individuals and their initiatives and successes Being active	Intellectual stimulation		
Being hopeful in critical situations Having foresight Having a positive view of oneself Having a positive view of others	Positive attitude	Intellectual bond	
Hopefulness Learning from the mistakes of others Balancing of emotion and logic in action	Emotional capacity		

Open coding and selective coding			Axial coding
Primary code	Secondary code	Category	Core Category
Accepting different and conflicting opinions Trying to break the resistance of individuals to change Collaborative teamwork especially in sensitive situations			
Being fervent and having strong social relations Paying attention to ethical standards Establishing sincere relations with subordinates within normal boundaries Ease of sharing feelings	Transparency in relationships		
High tolerance Ability to adapt to different situations Properly-timed encouragement and punishment to help one's growth and emotions Ability to recognize the necessary situations to intervene and provide protection	Compatibility		
Transparency of responsibility and tasks of individuals			
Listening Giving hope to individuals	Being a good listener		

After checking the text of 14 interviews, 81 open codes were obtained, since in this study, after 12 interviews, the researcher had reached theoretical saturation and conducted the 13th and 14th interviews to ensure theoretical saturation, out of 74 extracted open code, 15 ones



were duplicated, and by removing them, 56 unique open codes were obtained for the present study. Next, as a result of the axial coding of interviews conducted with individuals, 16 axial codes were obtained from 56 refined open codes. Finally, 3 optional codes and a core category under the title of secure base leadership were obtained. Figure 2 shows the secure base leadership model developed by MAXQDA software.

Findings

Qualitative results were obtained using the interviews and open, axial and selective coding based on inductive approach. Axial coding here means obtaining the secondary components and selective coding means obtaining the primary components of the research. In the open coding stage, which is the first step in the coding process, all sentences in interviews are converted into codes and 32 basic concepts are extracted in the form of 8156 open codes. After identifying the primary codes, the similar secondary codes were put together to form the categories, and for each category a suitable title was considered that could cover all the secondary codes of a set. Finally, 16 secondary codes were classified into 3 categories. Table 1 shows the open, selective and theoretical coding process for the central subject of the research. Figure 2 shows the model of secure base leadership with MAXQDA software.

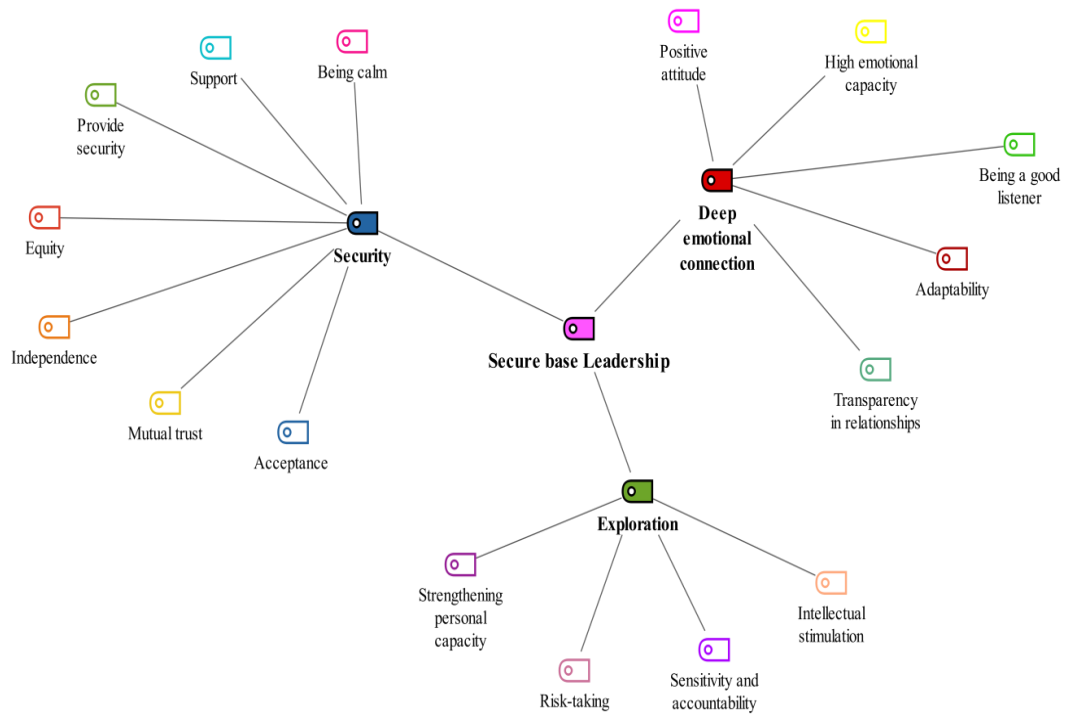


Figure 2. Exploratory model in the qualitative part

The presented model for the secure base leadership consists of 3 selected codes (dimensions) including security, exploration and deep emotional connections. In the following, each of these codes would be examined.

Security. The security dimension consists of seven components, including acceptance, support, providing security, mutual trust, independence, fairness, and maintaining peace. The secure base leadership style, as one of the management styles, emphasizes on creating security and trust among the members of the organization. Therefore, the security component is used to implement this leadership style in the organization. One of the pillars of security is creating a sense of worth and respect for the individual, which is



considered as one of the main components of the secure base leadership style. In this style, the leader strengthens trust and positive relationships by creating this feeling in the members of the organization, and as a result, the members do their work with a sense of satisfaction and security. Another component that is considered in the secure base leadership style is supporting people both personally and organizationally. In this style, by providing support to the members of the organization when facing risks, the leader removes the fear and worries of possible conflicts and provides them with psychological security. In the secure base leadership style, the leader encourages the members of the organization to be more efficient and perform better by having a high morale and creating a happy work environment. Also, by believing in people, the leader encourages the members of the organization to actively participate in the organizational processes and facilitates the creation of motivation for them. In this leadership style, the leader supports positive communication between the members of the organization by establishing comfortable and intimate communication with others, and these communications can lead to better efficiency and performance in the organization. In this style, maintaining justice and the rights of others and having a sense of altruism are also very important. By observing these components, the leader encourages the members of the organization to interact and cooperate positively with others, and as a result, a dynamic and united society is created in the organization. In the secure base leadership style, the leader, having a sense of altruism and compassion in the work environment, encourages the members of the organization to create positive and friendly relationships, and these relationships can result in increased trust and interaction in the organization. Another component that is very important in the secure base leadership style is creating a calm

and stable environment. By maintaining calmness and dealing appropriately in inappropriate situations, the leader encourages the members of the organization to be flexible and adapt to different situations, and as a result, the organization becomes more adaptable to various developments and changes. In this style, respecting the individual independence of people is also very important. By providing an opportunity for error and testing to the individual, the leader encourages the members of the organization to interact independently and make better decisions at different times, and as a result, people continue their activities with a sense of confidence and security. In general, by using security components and following the basics of secure base leadership style, a safe and stable work environment can be provided in the organization, which will improve the efficiency and performance of the organization members and, as a result, the organization's progress.

Exploration. The exploration dimension consists of four components including risk-taking, strengthening personal capacities, sensitivity and responsiveness, and intellectual stimulation. Leaders must be able to recognize and anticipate critical situations such as security threats, natural disasters or organizational problems. They should design and implement appropriate emergency plans to manage the organization well in the event of a crisis. Leaders must have the ability to deal with risks and make decisions in complex situations. They must analyze the risks and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of various actions and, if necessary, make decisions that help maintain the security and progress of the organization. Leaders should identify people's abilities and talents and encourage them to develop and exploit their abilities. They should design and implement individual training and development programs for organization members to



ensure improvement and progress in their work and performance. Leaders should guide the members of the organization towards success by presenting attractive and meaningful goals and create the motivation and energy necessary to achieve the goals in them. They should encourage members of the organization to strive for improvement and development and support creative and innovative work. Leaders should provide opportunities for learning and experience to members of the organization. They should enjoy sharing their knowledge and experiences with organizational members and support individual training and development opportunities. Leaders must trust the members of their organization and assign them appropriate responsibilities so that they can perform their duties well and take advantage of their abilities. Leaders should look at people's failures as an opportunity for new learning. They should support the members of the organization and encourage them to continue to strive and grow. Leaders should encourage people's abilities and achievements and encourage them to continue to strive and improve. They should highlight the individual positive points and praise their efforts. Leaders must communicate with organization members and listen to their opinions and concerns. These communications can be done directly through meetings or indirectly through communication systems such as email or SMS. These communications help leaders understand and respond to the needs and concerns of organizational members. Leaders must create a safe and mutually supportive environment for organization members. This includes creating a space for members to share their opinions and ideas without fear of criticism or disparagement. Leaders should demand and expect organization members to treat each other with respect and to act constructively and collaboratively in discussions and decisions. Leaders must inform organization members about security goals and strategies. They

should explain to members why perimeter security is important to the organization and how everyone can work together to create and maintain such conditions. This information gives confidence and motivation to the members and obliges them to perform their security duties. Leaders should make organization members participate in security-related trainings and courses. These trainings can include technical training, awareness of security threats and methods to deal with them. These trainings help members to acquire the necessary skills for creating and maintaining security and actively participate in the organization's security processes. Using these exploration methods and components, leaders can implement a secure base leadership style in the organization and help members succeed in creating and maintaining this leadership style.

Deep Emotional Connections. The dimension of emotional connections consists of five components: positive attitude, high emotional capacity, transparency in relationships, adaptability and being a good listener. The component of deep emotional connections in the secure base leadership style are considered as one of the most important and essential components in creating a security culture in the organization. This component is based on establishing sincere and stable relationships between the leader and the members of the organization. The leader strengthens the trust and solidarity in the organization by establishing deep emotional connections with the members of the organization. By creating this type of relationship, the members of the organization feel that the leader cares about them and trusts them. This component makes the members of the organization trust their leader and get psychological support in critical situations. This type of relationship makes the members of the organization adhere to their leader and support his decisions. Also, by establishing



deep emotional connections, the leader can facilitate the creation of an open and intimate space in the organization by sharing their feelings with the organization members. By providing opportunities to express feelings and opinions, the leader can make the members of the organization care and help each other. Another benefit of deep emotional connections in the secure base leadership style is increased cooperation and coordination among organization members. By establishing cordial relations, the members of the organization can easily cooperate with each other and achieve success in sensitive situations with their coordination and cooperation. Also, deep emotional connections make the members of the organization respect their leader and respect his decisions and follow them. This makes the members of the organization commit to their leader and help promote the goals of the organization by following his decisions. In general, by establishing deep emotional connections in the secure base leadership style, leaders can strengthen the security culture in their organization and strengthen trust and solidarity by creating sincere and stable relationships with organization members. This makes the members of the organization stick to their work with more confidence and motivation and achieve success with cooperation and coordination. Also, by establishing deep emotional connections, leaders can make organizational members more effective and committed to breaking resistance to change and facilitate the creation of an open and intimate atmosphere in the organization.

By establishing deep emotional connections, leaders can easily connect the members of the organization and by creating an open and intimate atmosphere, encourage the members of the organization to accompany and cooperate more in organizational work. This makes the members of the organization trust their leader and be psychologically supported

in critical situations. Also, deep emotional connections make the members of the organization respect their leader and respect and follow his decisions. This makes the members of the organization commit to their leader and help promote the goals of the organization by following his decisions. In addition, by establishing deep emotional connections, leaders can make organizational members more effective and committed to breaking through resistance to change. In this case, the organization members will adhere to the changes with more confidence and motivation due to the deep connection with the leader. To establish deep emotional connections, leaders must be able to deal with organizational members as people with personal and human feelings and needs and have a deep understanding of them. For this purpose, leaders must accept and pay attention to the needs of organization members and help them to establish deep emotional connections with their leaders by creating spaces for dialogue and sharing feelings. In this leadership style, leaders should create a safe and intimate atmosphere for organization members by providing opportunities to express feelings and opinions. This makes the members of the organization easily share their feelings and needs with their leaders, and this is a golden opportunity for the leaders to get to know the members of the organization better and improve their relations with them. In general, deep emotional connections are recognized as one of the most important components of secure base leadership style in creating a security culture in the organization. By establishing these types of links, leaders can connect the members of the organization and strengthen trust and solidarity by establishing sincere and stable relationships with them.

Evaluating Validity and Reliability of the Model



In order to evaluate the validity and reliability of the secure base leadership model in the education organization, after interviews with experts and carrying out the coding process with the grounded theory method based on Glaser's approach, a total of 1 core category, 3 selective codes, 16 axial codes and 56 open codes were selected.

To ensure the validity of the research, we used the peer review method to determine the validity of our research. For this purpose, a focus group consisting of 14 experts who were initially interviewed was formed and the extracted codes were provided to them and they were asked to express their opinion about the extracted codes. The result of the review and evaluation of the focus group and their discussion about the extracted codes was that the presented model has an acceptable validity.

In this study, the agreement reliability method between two coders was used to check the reliability of the interviews. The agreement between the coders is the agreement of two or more coders regarding the codes used for a part of the interview text. In order to calculate the reliability of the interview with the within-subject agreement method of two coders, a doctoral student was asked to participate in the research as a research associate (coder). The necessary training and techniques for coding the interviews were transferred to them. Then, we coded the number of four interviews and the percentage of intra-subject agreement (Kappa coefficient) was calculated to be 0.84, indicating desired and acceptable reliability.

Findings of the quantitative part

Here, the conceptual model was tested using Smart PLS software and in two general stages including "checking the fit of the model" and "answering the questions". Checking the fit of the model itself has

three stages: in the first stage, the measurement model was examined through validity and reliability analyses. In the second step, the structural model was checked by estimating the path between the variables. In the third step, the overall fit of the model was examined. Finally, if the model had a good overall fit in the above three stages, then the research questions could be answered.

Step 1: Evaluation of the measurement model

Factor loading coefficients. First, the research model was tested based on the factor loading coefficients. If the factor loading is less than 0.3, the relationship is considered weak and is ignored. A factor loading between 0.3 and 0.6 is acceptable, and if it is greater than 0.6, it is very desirable. The structural equation model of the research model in the standard factor loading estimation mode is drawn in Figure 3. The results of the test showed that all factor loadings of the indicators are above 0.4 and the factor loadings of the indicators are favorable.

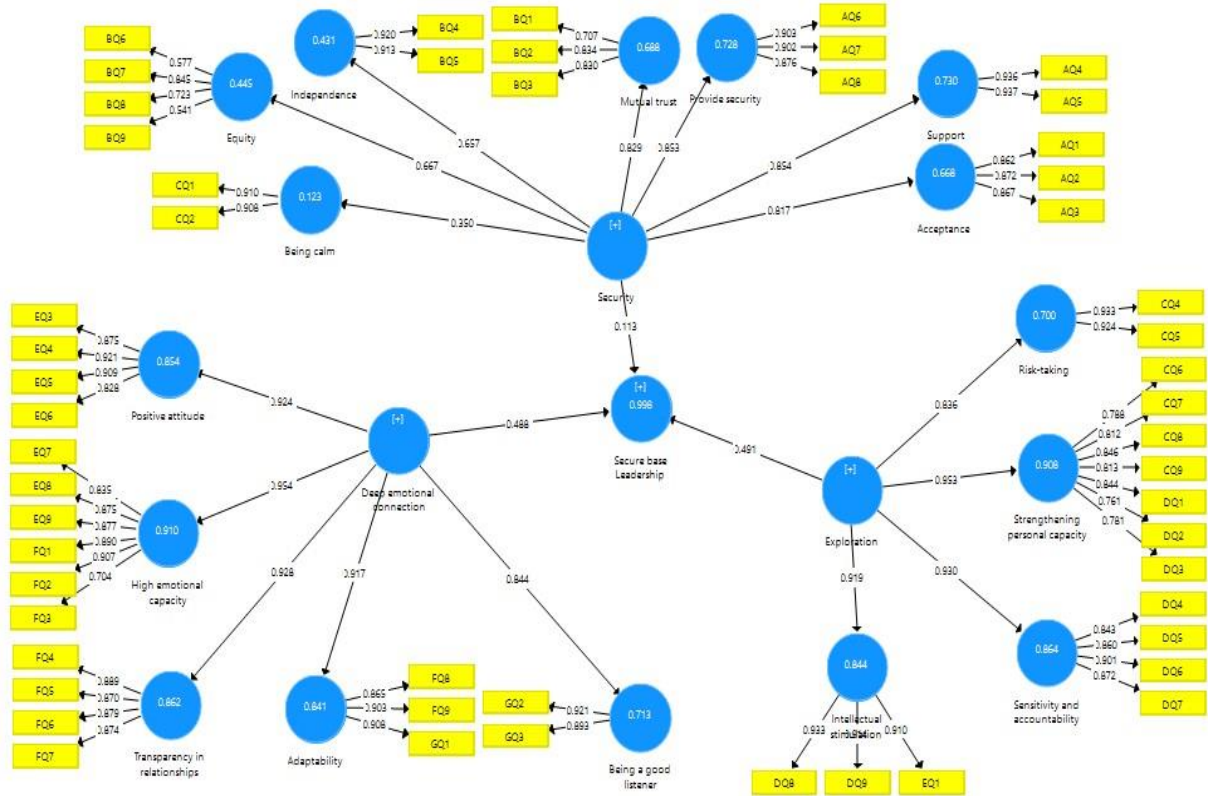


Figure 3. The structural equation pattern of the research model in the mode of standard factor load estimation

Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Here, using Smart PLS software, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the research variables and is reported in Table 3. As mentioned, the closer this coefficient is to one, the more suitable it is.

Composite reliability. The Composite reliability of each research variable is as described in Table 3. As can be seen in the table, all variables have a Composite reliability of 0.7 and above, and therefore, in terms of Composite reliability, the model is approved.

Convergent validity. In order to check the convergent validity of the model, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was used. The critical value of this criterion is 0.5, namely, the value of AVE above 0.5 shows acceptable convergent validity. The values of this criterion for the research model are as described in Table 3. As it can be seen, the AVE value of all variables is above 0.5, indicating the convergent validity of the model.

Table 3.

Values of Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability and AVE

Latent variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Independence	0.808	0.913	0.839
Mutual trust	0.702	0.834	0.628
Equity	0.604	0.771	0.466
Intellectual stimulation	0.908	0.942	0.845
Individual capacity strengthening	0.91	0.929	0.651
Sensitivity and accountability	0.892	0.925	0.755
Preserving human values	0.79	0.905	0.827
Support	0.86	0.935	0.877
Risk taking	0.84	0.926	0.862
Compatibility	0.871	0.921	0.796
Transparency in relationships	0.901	0.931	0.771
Being a good listener	0.785	0.902	0.822
Emotional capacity	0.922	0.94	0.724
Providing security	0.874	0.923	0.799
Positive attitude	0.906	0.935	0.782
Acceptance	0.836	0.901	0.752



Divergent validity. In order to check the divergent validity of the model, the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion was used. This criterion specifies the degree of relationship of a variable with its indicators in comparison of the relationship of that variable with other variables so that acceptable divergent validity indicates that a variable interacts more with its indicators than with other variables. Fornell and Larcker state that divergent validity is acceptable when the AVE for each variable is greater than the shared variance between those variable and other variables. In the Smart PLS software, this is checked by a matrix, the cells of this matrix contain the values of the correlation coefficients between the variables and the square root of the AVE values of each variable. In Table 4, this matrix related to the variables is shown. The model has an acceptable divergent validity if the numbers included in the main diameter of the matrix are above the values below it. As can be seen in Table 4, all the numbers of the main diameter are greater than those of their underlying columns, which means that the model has acceptable divergent (discriminant) validity.

Table 4.
Divergent Validity of the Model

	Independence	Mutual trust	Equity	Intellectual stimulation	Individual capacity strengthening	Sensitivity and accountability	Preserving human values	Support	Risk taking	Compatibility	Transparency in relationships	Being a good listener	Emotional capacity	Providing security	Positive attitude	Acceptance
Independence	0.916															
Mutual trust	0.621	0.792														
Equity	0.655	0.597	0.682													
Intellectual stimulation	0.247	0.23	0.408	0.919												
Individual capacity strengthening	0.146	0.175	0.402	0.796	0.807											
Sensitivity and accountability	0.256	0.193	0.407	0.862	0.83	0.869										
Preserving human values	0.169	0.187	0.437	0.744	0.735	0.76	0.909									
Support	0.382	0.583	0.358	0.222	0.188	0.243	0.134	0.937								
Risk taking	0.213	0.222	0.388	0.702	0.806	0.675	0.792	0.235	0.928							
Compatibility	0.154	0.121	0.365	0.729	0.749	0.735	0.683	0.135	0.673	0.892						
Transparency in relationships	0.184	0.09	0.359	0.741	0.769	0.748	0.685	0.134	0.654	0.861	0.878					
Being a good listener	0.105	0.104	0.304	0.722	0.655	0.724	0.646	0.137	0.512	0.738	0.714	0.907				
Emotional capacity	0.221	0.17	0.385	0.8	0.763	0.807	0.711	0.183	0.698	0.823	0.852	0.776	0.851			
Providing security	0.363	0.644	0.328	0.184	0.158	0.19	0.125	0.856	0.223	0.119	0.095	0.099	0.154	0.894		
Positive attitude	0.203	0.202	0.391	0.823	0.784	0.819	0.713	0.197	0.668	0.809	0.798	0.776	0.843	0.168	0.884	
Acceptance	0.36	0.577	0.308	0.194	0.142	0.185	0.122	0.799	0.183	0.11	0.078	0.106	0.144	0.739	0.203	0.867

The second step: structural model evaluation

The structural model or external model shows the relationships between the latent variables of the model. In fact, in this section, the



questions (indices) are not paid attention to and only the latent variables are examined along with the relationships between them. In evaluating the structural model, several criteria are used, each of which is discussed below.

T-values. The most basic measure of the relationship between variables in the model is the t-values, which if it is greater than 1.96, the correctness of the relationship between the variables is shown and as a result, the relationship(s) at the confidence level of 95% are confirmed. Figure 4 shows the test results of the conceptual model of the research in the significance state of the t coefficients. The values calculated on the arrows indicate the t-values. The T-value results reported in the above figure are all greater than 1.96, so it can be concluded that at the significance level of 95%, all questions and latent variables are considered for the structural equation model and there is no need to remove any of questions and latent variables from the model.

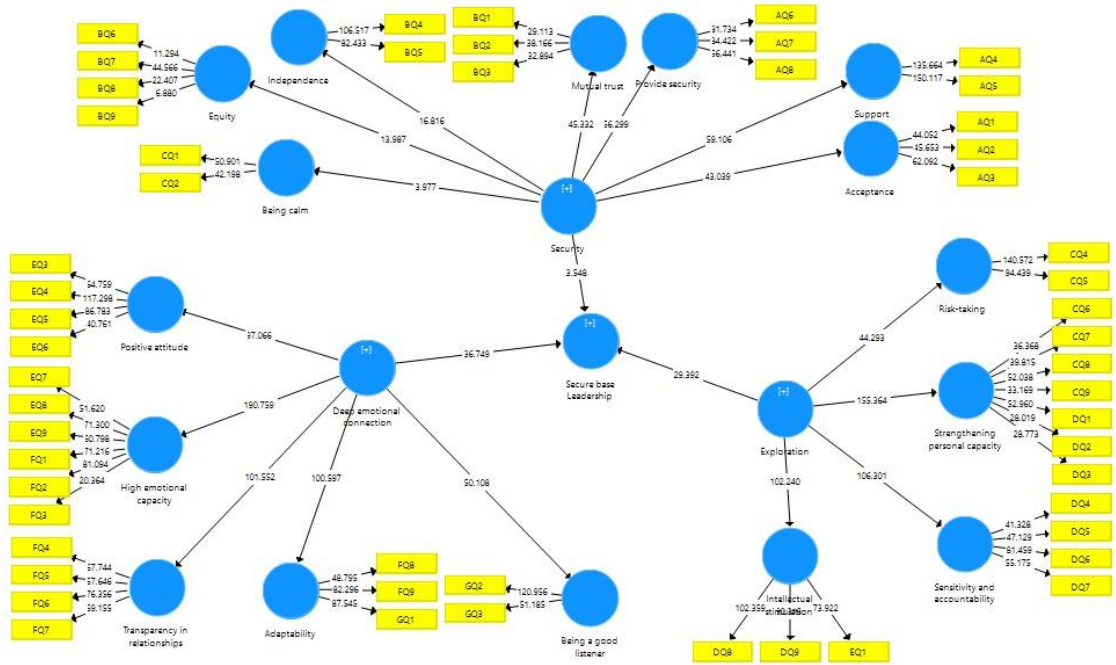


Figure 4. The structural equation model of the research model in the case of significant coefficients of the t statistic

The third step: evaluation of the overall model

The overall model includes both measurement and structural model parts, and by confirming its fit, the fit checking in a model is complete. For the overall fit of the model, only one criterion is used as Goodness of Fit (GoF). Considering that this index is partially dependent on commonality, then this index can be conceptually used when the measurement model is reflective (Abolfazli and Salamat Azar, 2015). This criterion was invented by Tenenhaus et al., (2004) and is calculated according to the following equation:

$$GoF = \sqrt{(Communalities \times R^2)}$$



The three values including 0.01, 0.25 and 0.36 are introduced as weak, medium and strong values for GoF. This means that if the value of 0.01 and close to it is calculated for the GoF of a model, it can be concluded that the overall fit of that model is weak and the relationships between the model structures should be corrected. For the values of 0.25 and 0.36, the overall fit of the model is at an acceptable level.

The value of GoF for the model was calculated to be 0.766, which shows the overall strong and very appropriate fit of the model.

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this study was to provide a model of secure base leadership in the education organization in Iran. The results of the qualitative section showed that secure base leadership consists of three main dimensions of security, exploration and intellectual bond. The security dimension consists of acceptance, support, providing security, mutual trust, independence, fairness and keeping of mind. The exploration involves risk-taking, increasing individual capacity, being responsive and sensible and intellectual stimulation. Intellectual bond also includes positive attitude, emotional capacity, compatibility and being a good listener. Among these characteristics, support and mutual trust from the security dimension, increasing individual capacity, being responsive and sensible from the exploration dimension, and, adaptation and positive attitudes from the intellectual bond dimension were mostly highlighted in the interviews. Then, using confirmatory factor analysis technique, reliability, divergent validity and convergent validity of the model were examined. The results showed that the model has acceptable validity and reliability and also the goodness-of-fit indices confirmed the validity of the model. In literature review, it was found that the results of this study are directly related to the

findings of studies such as (Coombe, 2010; Shams and Khalijian, 2014) and also indirectly related to the findings of studies such as (Griffin and Hu, 2013; Skeepers and Mbohwa, 2015; Zhou and Pan, 2015; Tong, Rasiah, Tong, and Lai, 2015; Saĝnak, 2017).

It can be concluded from the results that understanding the relationship between dimensions of leadership and employee safety are very important for theoretical and practical reasons. Due to the influence of leaders in the organization, they can play an important role in the security of the organization's employees and leaders who strive to create a positive atmosphere provide better security for the organization and employees (Hoffmeister, Gibbons, Johnson, Cigularov, Chen and Roscrance, 2014). In fact, the security dimension points to characteristics in a leader that lead to a kind of mental security in people to work. A leader must believe that employees today have different needs. Financial rewards are no longer the only motivating factor, but the needs of today's human beings are beyond that. One of the basic needs of employees today is a sense of security. Employees, without considering organizational status, want to feel important and to believe that they have control over their entire lives and can make influencing decisions around them without fear. In other words, the feeling of security arises from the objective and acquired experiences of individuals from their surrounding conditions. The features of security dimension in secure base leadership ensures employees that their needs are taken care of and that they are not threatened by anyone or anything. This sense of security provides a safe and reliable environment to foster creativity and more active participation of individuals in affairs and more effective performance.

On the other hand, as organizations entered the information age and confronted dramatic changes and developments, organizational



leaders realized that they should look at learning as a valuable phenomenon. They realized that to succeed in leading the organization to a better future, they should develop an organization and recruit people who continuously and effectively seek to learn new skills. This can only be achieved by activating a sense of exploration in individuals. With the realization of the security dimension, the sense of exploration in people is activated. If a leader only creates security for people in the organization, it only brings prosperity to employees. This behavior puts the organization at risk of stagnation and reduced effectiveness because people would not see the need to take risks anymore and challenge themselves and learn new skills. On the other hand, if employees are involved only in challenging activities without ensuring security, it is instilled in them that the work is the priority and not themselves. At the same time, stress and mental conflict of employees due to their reduced performance prevents them from successfully reaching their goals at work. A leader is secure base if in addition to providing security, encourages employees to explore and learn in the environment, because only then will the leader be able to upgrade the capabilities and capacities of its employees and achieve better performance. This type of leader acts based on the needs and capabilities of employees. In other words, a secure base leader creates a balance between risk and security for subordinates, which will have a positive effect on creativity, learning, satisfaction, and commitment of the employees. Organizational research also confirm the effect of leadership styles on learning in the organization (Babnik, Širca, and Dermol, 2014; Imamoglu, Ince, Keskin, Karakose, and Gozukara, 2015; Nyukorong, 2016).

The intellectual bond dimension was introduced in Coombe's (2010) theory as positive communication. However, we believe that what

happens in secure base leadership is more than just communication in order to transfer information from one person to another. According to researchers, a secure base leader creates a deep emotional bond with subordinates, but this does not mean establishing unusual intimacy with them. In this regard, we agree more with Bowlby's opinion about the bond that a mother, as a secure base, establishes with her child. The mother child relationship is not just about passing information to the child, but also provides an emotional context to help the child deal with situations that make him or her restless. This is similar to the bond that a secure base leader establishes with subordinates. We believe that a secure base leader, as a secure base for his or her subordinates and organization, is able to approach subordinates when they are faced with turbulent and threatening situations, and by establishing emotional and compassionate communication, protects and cares for the person and enables them to reestablish their desired safe conditions. During this bond, a constructive reaction is observed beyond what is expected of the subordinates because establishing an intellectual bond enables the subordinate to share the required information with the leader easily and without special considerations due to fear or hierarchical differences and helps to resolve the issue.

The goal here is a kind of supportive and sincere purposeful relationship. These leaders can cope with the situation which means that they are prepared to face any situation and are not subdued and passive. Establishing this kind of special intellectual bond leads to building mutual trust and psychological security necessary to perform activities and improve performance. This is a key dimension in secure base leadership, which means that in both dimensions of security and exploration, intellectual bond is created to provide security and a sense of exploration. This type of communication, which is associated with



the intellectual bond, is actually what is missing in many theories of organizational communication.

As a result, the secure-based leadership model presented in this research for Iran's education organization is in accordance with the collectivist culture and values of Iranian society; A society where human feelings and relationships have a special place. The development of this model in the education organization, which is the main institution of education in this society, is derived from the culture and climate of familiarity in which the employees grew up. Because the two main dimensions of this model, i.e. security and deep emotional connection, and the components and indicators of each of them, indicate that in the collectivist society of Iran, intimate relationships that also bring security, in schools and in the relationship between managers and their employees are very important. Therefore, if this close relationship is formed between the principal and the school teachers, the teachers will help the principal with more willingness and interest in solving the school's problems, and they will also perform their educational duties more dynamically and will participate in the in-service training courses with more motivation and desire, and they will help their growth and development, which is exploration. Because this type of leadership evokes the style of leadership that existed in their families, a family in which there is security due to the close relationship between the members, and each of them encourages each other to grow and progress, i.e. exploration. Therefore, it can be pointed out that by identifying and establishing this type of leadership style in eastern collectivist societies, especially in Iran, an important part of the issues and problems that exist in schools and in the field of education will be solved.

According to the research results in this study, the following suggestions are presented: the manager are recommended to control and monitor the performance of employees, not based on finding their weaknesses and mistakes to reprimand and blame them, but based on finding weaknesses in their training to identify and rectify them with softness and kindness. Also, Managers should encourage employees to work, with encouragement and support of their positive steps and progress in work. They are also suggested to avoid blaming employees as much as possible in order to create a supportive atmosphere. Managers should try to value silence when communicating with employees and listen more to what they have to say. In addition, employees should not feel unequal in terms of social status when communicating with their managers. Besides, managers should reduce employees' workload when they face personal crises in their lives (e.g., divorce, death of loved ones, etc.) and by supporting them in these difficult times, give them a sense of security and the possibility of overcoming the current crisis. They can periodically define challenging goals and involve employees in defining them. Managers should not make employees scared of taking risks. Reminding them that failure results in no negative consequences for employees will make them focus on challenging goals. Leaders need to believe that risk-taking has costs and be prepared to bear them. Another recommendation to managers is to provide the opportunity to increase the knowledge of an employee regarding a challenging and risky activity before engaging them in said activity. Managers should rely on the abilities of teachers and count on their help in challenging situations. They are also suggested to provide greater freedom of action for staff and teachers, allowing them to participate more in school activities. Managers should allocate daily or weekly scheduled times to hear about employees' problems and dissatisfaction with their



work environment and job responsibilities. As another recommendation for managers, they can encourage employees to express their opinions about work with others, even if their opinions are against those of others. Managers should not be upset by employees' curiosity and questions about the goals and results of the organization because a manager must believe that in this case, employees will be guided to communicate with each other and create an understanding of the organization and prevent negative thinking the its environment. Finally, managers are recommended to avoid unreasonable expectations from their employees.

In carrying out present study, we faced with some limitations such as limited theoretical literature as well as the weakness of the research background in relation to secure-based leadership; time-consuming project due to have multiple research method; time-consuming coordination with professors, teachers and experts and frequent visits to get an interview opportunity and their little desire to record the interviews due to the personal nature of the interview questions; limited access to get the answers of the male teachers and staff of the schools due to have mere permission to the girls' schools; and, existence of a conservative culture among teachers and the possible tendency of people to show a suitable face of their manager.

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