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Determining Cognitive and Psychological Factors Affecting the Performance of Special Learning Facilitators Club for Professional Training and Development among the Employees of Hormozgan Provincial Education Department

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The objective of the current investigation was to elucidate the cognitive and psychological determinants that influence the professional efficacy of the Special Learning Facilitators Club affiliated with the Professional Training and Development sector of the Hormozgan Provincial Education Department.

Methods: The methodological approach employed in this study was exploratory in nature, characterized by qualitative inquiry, and utilized the content analysis technique which encompasses three principal phases: text reduction or segmentation, text discovery, text exploration, and subsequent analysis. The research sample encompassed a range of literature, including books, theses, and articles that have been published and made accessible in esteemed domestic and international databases and journals pertinent to the Special Learning Facilitators Club associated with the Professional Training and Development of the Hormozgan Provincial Education Department. Consequently, the research sample comprised 18 Persian texts and 12 English texts published from 2021 to 2024 AD, all relevant to the cognitive and psychological factors impacting the Learning Facilitators Club, which were selected intentionally based on the criterion of theoretical saturation.

Results: In the ultimate analysis of the thematic network, a total of 13 organizing themes (including creative thinking, critical thinking, mental imagery, problem-solving, multidimensional thinking, flexible mental models, exploration and inquiry, reflective thinking, self-awareness regarding behavioral, psychological, and insightful dimensions, the capacity for self-analysis, correction, and enhancement, the ability to foster a conducive intellectual and psychological environment, mental and psychological well-being, and emotional-intellectual competencies) along with 25 fundamental themes were identified.

Conclusions: Thus, it is imperative for the educational organization to facilitate the requisite tools and resources to enhance and cultivate the cognitive and psychological competencies of learning.

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Introduction

In the contemporary landscape, the sustenance and advancement of organizations are intrinsically linked to their human capital, necessitating that organizations continuously attract, retain, and adeptly manage a substantial and proficient human resource base in light of their economic and social endeavors (Carvache-Franco et al., 2022). Within every organizational framework, human resources hold a pivotal position and are regarded as the principal asset, with educational organizations placing an especially high premium on this aspect, as they not only serve as a catalyst for the proliferation and advancement of knowledge and technology requisite for societal progression but also embody a mechanism through which the workforce that will shape the future life cycle of society attains a stage of maturation and development (Prestiana & Sugito, 2021). Indeed, the sustainability and continuity of any educational system are significantly contingent upon the capabilities, skills, awareness, knowledge, and diverse proficiencies of its human resources; consequently, the better prepared and more qualified the educators, administrators, and staff within that educational framework are, the greater their contribution to the enhancement of organizational efficacy (Hoque & Atheef, 2024; Marzoghi et al., 2022). Hence, in the context of global competition, the urgency for adaptable, competent, and talented human resources is more pronounced than ever, and the educational and training organization can only realize its success and strategic objectives when it effectively facilitates the professional training and development of its human resources (Mehri et al., 2013). The domain of education is recognized as one of the most intricate endeavors in the management of any organization, particularly in the realm of human resource management, where after the recruitment system, the focus shifts to the enhancement and optimal employment of human resources (Etebarian Khorasgani et al., 2022). Furthermore, professional development represents a paramount concern within the field of human resource management, culminating in the emergence of a requisite level of professional competence among employees, which is characterized by the incremental acquisition of experience and the perpetual evaluation of training (Appleman, 2023). Consequently, the training and professional development of personnel constitute a principal objective of the education and training organization, with a prevailing belief that the productivity of this organization is contingent upon the professional growth of its workforce, as such training and development engender deeper insights, heightened knowledge and understanding, and augmented capabilities and skills among the human resources

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of the education and training organization, ultimately leading to the attainment of the organization's goals with enhanced efficiency and effectiveness (Qian et al., 2023). Accordingly, the identification of specific content areas is crucial for the enhancement of the professional development program aimed at the human resources of the education and training organization (Paolucci et al., 2021).

Moreover, as of the present day, the predominant paradigm within educational institutions is predicated upon the principles of facilitation and active participation in the training and professional development of personnel, thereby necessitating the cultivation of individuals who function as learning facilitators within these organizations (Martin et al., 2022). This initiative aims to create avenues that enhance the potential for learning and engagement among employees, assist them in recognizing and addressing their professional challenges while acquiring new knowledge and insights, encourage contemplation of diverse facets of a given issue, and facilitate sound decision-making through analytical reasoning. Furthermore, this approach seeks to ameliorate organizational relationships and augment the overall productivity of the institution, thereby ensuring enhanced effectiveness in the execution of tasks and responsibilities (Liu et al., 2023). Indeed, one of the methodologies that could effectively address the deficiencies inherent in conventional learning environments is the facilitative process within training and education (Yousefghanbari et al., 2023). Consequently, it is imperative that learning facilitators possess the requisite behavioral, technical, and communicative competencies essential for facilitation, enabling them to endeavor toward the continuous growth and enhancement of both employees and the organization to the fullest extent (Karimi & Karimi, 2013). Proficient learning facilitators, endowed with substantial psychological attributes, regard each participant in the instructional cohort as a valuable individual, replete with a diverse array of experiences, perspectives, abilities, and aspirations, all of which necessitate acknowledgment and respect for their inherent capabilities (Wingen et al., 2022). Additionally, learning facilitators must exhibit elevated cognitive faculties to facilitate the discovery of knowledge, foster creativity, engage in problem-solving, exhibit cognitive flexibility, and acquire novel skills (Scherer & Rolka, 2024).

In light of the fact that all deliberate human actions necessitate the engagement of cognitive faculties, the enhancement of cognitive abilities within the context of training and professional

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development assumes significant importance (Satorres et al., 2022). Cognitive ability pertains to the mechanisms of information processing, the identification of patterns, and the analysis of problems, and can be augmented by concentrating on various domains (Sanjuán et al., 2020). To articulate further, cognitive abilities refer to the neural process's integral to the acquisition, processing, retention, and application of information, which have evolved in response to the demands of resolving ecological challenges and navigating intricate social contexts (Decker et al., 2021). Cognitive abilities thus represent the interface between behavioral manifestations and neural architecture, encompassing a broad spectrum of competencies (McGrew et al., 2023). Therefore, cognitive skills, or cognitive abilities, delineate the mechanisms by which an individual's brain engages in remembering, reasoning, sustaining attention, resolving problems, thinking, reading, and learning. Consequently, cognitive abilities not only generate new knowledge through intricate mental processes but also facilitate individuals in applying their acquired knowledge within their quotidian experiences (Procopio et al., 2022).

Psychological determinants can significantly contribute to the propensity of individuals to proactively pursue educational opportunities and resources, as well as to exhibit enhanced effort and perseverance in academic contexts. Indeed, when the psychological requirements of learning facilitators are adequately addressed, there is a corresponding elevation in their motivation for professional development, an enhancement in the caliber of their training for other personnel, a positive transformation in their communicative interactions, and a facilitation of their professional growth through the establishment of efficacious relationships with colleagues (Dinnen et al., 2024). By fostering improved communication and augmenting positive emotional states in these individuals, they acquire adaptive strategies to effectively manage stress and anxiety, and through the provision of training in a tranquil and reassuring manner, they enhance the efficacy of the facilitation process concerning the professional advancement of employees (Farwa et al., 2024).

Consequently, facilitators possessing high psychological competence experience job satisfaction and a sense of professional responsibility, which in turn motivates them to engage in continuous learning to refine their practice and prepare for the educational demands of contemporary contexts. They endeavor to enhance the training process for employees by acquiring new competencies and disseminating and transferring novel knowledge (Wang & Hall, 2021). It is pertinent to acknowledge that in the examination of existing research literature; no studies were identified that

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specifically investigated the cognitive and psychological factors influencing the performance of learning facilitators within educational and training organizations. Furthermore, a review of the extant research indicates that the majority has concentrated on the characteristics of leadership or the determinants of professional development, with studies pertaining to professional development predominantly focusing on teachers, while no investigations have concentrated on educational and training staff. Therefore, a selection of studies that bear some relevance to the current inquiry is delineated below: Akbari et al. (2024) introduced innovative processes as a facilitating factor for organizational learning within the framework of succession planning in their study. Sahranavard Nashtifan et al. (2023) concluded in their research that the professional development model for managers encompasses the enhancement of cognitive-leadership-management skills and the cultivation of professional ethics as central themes; professional development planning, organizational talent, educational opportunities, and self-directed learning as causal conditions; networking, mentoring, resource allocation, and career path management as strategic components; the categories of organizational values and culture, the collective of managers, and working conditions as contextual factors; and organizational variables, the climate for learning-improvement-development, and obstacles along with managerial conflict as intervening conditions.

Karimi (2023) elucidated in a scholarly investigation that the framework of professional development initiatives for personnel within an organization encompasses three individual dimensions, which include the facets of employee spontaneity, engagement in professional development, autonomy in learning, commitment to professional and religious-social foundations, personality characteristics, professional competencies, communicative skills pertinent to the workplace, and the adornment of employees with ethical virtues. Moreover, the program dimension comprises elements such as knowledge management, curricula within the organizational context, the realism of developmental programs, and their foundation on strategic plans such as succession planning. Additionally, the organizational dimension consists of components such as the monitoring and evaluation of professional development initiatives, effective management of human resources, and institutional support. The findings from the research conducted by Kamarei et al. (2021) regarding the professional development model for

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school administrators in technical and vocational institutions revealed ten dimensions (knowledge dimension, attitude dimension, intellectual and cognitive abilities dimension, managerial capabilities dimension, functional managerial skills dimension, interpersonal skills dimension, managerial excellence and improvement skills dimension, transformational leadership skills dimension, professional and occupational skills dimension, psychological and personality characteristics dimension), along with 39 components and 320 indicators pertinent to the desired model.

Furthermore, Deng and Turner (2024) delineated in their study the attributes of facilitators that contribute to effective facilitation, emphasizing competencies in knowledge, skills, and abilities relevant to the field, along with commitment and initiative, interpersonal skills, pro-social orientation, developmental focus, research and exploration capabilities, and proficiency in delivering high-quality training. Dumasari et al. (2024) undertook a study aimed at formulating a technical guide for learning facilitators to enhance educational outcomes, concluding that elevating competencies, acquiring new knowledge, and updating facilitators' understanding of educational regulations and technologies are critical factors influencing the efficacy of training for learning facilitators. The outcomes of the research conducted by Arulsamy et al. (2023) indicate that professional development serves to empower individuals, bolster morale, enhance feelings of security, foster participation, cultivate essential abilities requisite for the effective execution of specific job responsibilities, envision future prospects, reinforce an active career perspective, augment feelings of loyalty and commitment, and facilitate broader career advancement opportunities for employees.

Although there exists a myriad of criteria for learning facilitators within the context of training and professional development of human resources, the educational and training organizations in each nation, city, and region must judiciously select criteria that align with the societal needs of the contemporary era, taking into account diverse social and cultural conditions. To achieve this objective, learning facilitators are required to adhere to established methodologies, processes, and models that aid in planning and substantiating the future trajectory of education and training. Furthermore, considering the perpetual evolution of organizations, it is imperative to acknowledge that individuals are also in a state of constant transformation, and it is conceivable that a factor once deemed significant for facilitating learning within the educational and training system may

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no longer hold relevance in the current context. In addition, within the Hormozgan Provincial Education Organization, a predominant proportion of employees exhibit resistance to change and innovation, resulting in their inadequate preparedness to leverage new training opportunities for their professional development, thereby necessitating facilitation in this domain. Consequently, a notable outcome of the absence of contemporary studies in this area is the neglect of factors that influence the facilitation of education and the advancement of human resources in Hormozgan province. This neglect not only leads to the educational and training sector of the province encountering a deficit of qualified, competent, and skilled personnel capable of executing their responsibilities effectively, but it also presents numerous challenges to human resource management within this organization.

These challenges include the inability to adapt to globalization, the emergence of an attrition process, a scarcity of skilled and dedicated workforce, an ineffective decision-making hierarchy, a failure to acknowledge the contemporary needs of employees, inadequate planning, a lack of meritocratic principles, discrimination, suboptimal productivity of human resources, diminished motivation, a lack of employee engagement, and the resignation of experienced personnel. Hence, this research is regarded as a scholarly examination of the cognitive and psychological factors influencing the efficacy of special learning facilitators in the professional training and development of employees within the Modern Education Department. It may also serve as a precursor to a more rigorous, scientific, and operational focus by the Hormozgan Provincial Education Organization on cognitive and metacognitive factors in the education and training of learning facilitators within the organization, while thoroughly investigating these elements. Therefore, the objective of this research is to address the inquiry: What are the cognitive and psychological factors influencing the performance of the Special Learning Facilitators Club in the professional training and development of employees within the Hormozgan Provincial Education Department?

Material and Methods

This investigation is classified as exploratory research that possesses a qualitative orientation. The thematic analysis technique employed in this study is grounded in the framework established by

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Attride-Stirling (2001) which facilitates the identification of themes through a deductive approach, relying on a comprehensive, organizational, and foundational structure of themes informed by their positionality and classification within the thematic network.

The present research corpus comprises databases, esteemed international journals, and an array of research and empirical inquiries conducted within this domain. Consequently, employing a criterion-based purposive sampling methodology to discern research studies pertinent to cognitive and psychological factors influencing the special learning facilitators' club for the training and professional development of personnel in the Education and Training Department, the researcher initially executed a systematic review of theoretical underpinnings. To this end, a framework was established for the selection of studies, which informed the development of a keyword search pattern predicated on explicit, transparent, and predetermined criteria. The inclusion criteria for studies in the current investigation were:

-Research disseminated in the realm of facilitating learning and the professional development of employees within the educational system.

-Research published within the timeframe of 2020 to 2024.

-Research that provided sufficient data and information pertinent to the aims of the present inquiry.

Moreover, the exclusion criteria for studies from the current exploration were:

-Research that failed to disclose adequate information regarding the objectives of the present study.

-Research that was conducted under identical titles and objectives.

-Research that was devoid of an appropriate methodological framework.

Following the formulation of a resource search strategy and in accordance with the established inclusion and exclusion criteria for studies, the databases of Google Scholar, Science Direct, Wiley, SID, NOORMAGS, and MAGIRAN were selected to locate articles pertinent to the subject matter. Subsequently, the aforementioned databases were searched utilizing the keywords: cognitive and psychological characteristics of learning facilitators, cognitive and psychological factors influencing learning facilitation, training cognitive and psychological characteristics for educational personnel, development of cognitive and psychological traits within the educational workforce, indicators of learning facilitation for the professional advancement of staff, and all sources were amassed according to their relevance to the research topic, with irrelevant studies being systematically excluded from the review process. Ultimately, a total of 50 sources were

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identified and subsequently examined through a series of meticulous stages to ascertain articles pertinent to the research inquiry. Consequently, articles lacking relevance to the present research question were eliminated during this phase, thereby facilitating the identification of the most pertinent sources from which to derive answers to the research inquiry.

The review methodology encompassed an assessment of the articles' titles, abstracts, and substantive content; at each stage, these were evaluated for their relevance in accordance with the established inclusion and exclusion criteria. Ultimately, in accordance with the principle of theoretical saturation prevalent in qualitative research, 18 Persian citations and 12 English citations released between 2021 and 2024 were chosen as representative samples, all of which comprised esteemed scientific research articles registered on authoritative scientific research platforms and internet resources. Table 1 delineates the selected Persian and English sources utilized within the research domain:

Table 1. Selected Persian and English citations in the research area

Author	Title of the article/dissertation	Publication date	Journal/Conference/University Name
1. Gashmardi and Asadollahi	Developing a professional development model for student teachers at Farhangian University based on the learning model	2024	Teacher Professional Development Quarterly
2. Akbari et al.	A mixed study of factors facilitating organizational learning in the framework of succession planning	2024	Air Defense Management
3. Zamani et al.	Analysis of school principals' beliefs in the professional learning community of teachers	2024	Educational Innovations
4. Ismkhani	Factors affecting the professional development of school principals	2024	4th International Conference on Management, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences
5. Arbabi	Professional development and career growth opportunities for employees in order to increase skills	2023	New Approaches in Islamic Studies
6. Sahranarvand Nashtifan et al.	Designing a professional development model for principals with a data-based approach: a qualitative study in education	2023	Human Resource Education and Development
7. Hosseinian et al.	Identifying dimensions and components of the teacher professional development model: a meta-synthesis of professional development models	2023	Theory and Practice in Curriculum
8. Moradi et al.	Identifying components of professional development for secondary school teachers	2023	A New Approach to Educational Management
9. Karami et al.	Identifying global components of teacher professional development in order to provide an appropriate model	2022	Education Quarterly
10. Black	A study of the lived facilitation experience of trained facilitators of the philosophy education program for children and adolescents in Iran	2022	Master's Thesis, Shahid Chamran University, Ahvaz

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11. Shirazinejad et al.	Providing a model of factors affecting the professional development of Iranian school principals	2022	Educational Development, Jundishapur, Ahvaz
12. Taziki	The relationship between organizational learning and research literacy with professional development and organizational productivity of education staff and Development of District 6 of Mashhad	2022	Psychological and Educational Studies
13. Akheri et al.	Design and Validation of a Professional Development Model for Secondary School Principals: Case Study of School Principals in North Khorasan Province	2022	A New Approach to Educational Management
14. Ramezani Limai et al.	Providing a Conceptual Model for Improving the Effectiveness of In-Service Training for Administrative Staff at Islamic Azad University	2021	Human Resource Management Research
15. Hosseini et al.	Providing a Model for Professional Development of Managers	2021	Resource Management in the Police Force
16. Jalilevand et al.	Providing a Model for Professional Training of Employees (Case Study: Ajand Qeshm Company).	2021	Education and Development Quarterly
17. Abili et al.	Identifying the components of professional development of university and higher education institution teaching department managers (a meta-synthesis study)	2020	Marine Science Education Quarterly
18. Khairandish et al.	A comprehensive model of learning facilitators in a defense organization	2019	Innovation Management Quarterly in Defense Organizations
19. Scott et al.	Success facilitators for teachers' professional development	2024	Educational Sciences
20. Schirer and Rolka	Challenges in the professional development of learning facilitators in education	2024	Frontiers in Education
21. Martin et al.	Providing a framework for understanding the facilitation of professional development of educational leaders	2024	Australian Education Researchers
22. Arulsamy et al.	Staff training and development to enhance performance	2023	Samdarshi Center, India
23. Al Thani and Chaban	Factors affecting the role of facilitators in a professional learning program in higher education	2023	Research in Post-Compulsory Education
24. Wu et al.	Factors affecting the effectiveness of staff professional training in modern conditions	2023	Integration of Education
25. Bronz et al.	Increasing professional development by educational facilitators	2023	Teacher Education and Training
26. Ventista and Brun	Teachers' professional learning and its impact on student learning outcomes: Findings of a systematic review	2023	Social Sciences and Humanities
27. Whitehead	Training and development: investing in staff	2022	Researcher Dialogue
28. Perry and Buff	Professional development facilitators' practices	2021	Professional Development in Education
29. Eravan et al.	Factors affecting the promotion of human resource management competence to facilitate learning in higher education	2021	Advancement in Sciences Social, Education and Humanities Research
30. Gauthier and dignity	High-impact learning for facilitator training and development	2021	International Journal of Teaching and Learning Scholarship

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Results

Upon conducting an analysis of the sources acquired through the comparative thematic analysis method established by Attride-Stirling (2001), two predominant themes encompassing cognitive abilities and psychological capabilities, along with 13 organizing themes and 25 final basic themes, were elucidated, as delineated in Table 2.

It is imperative to acknowledge that a multitude of skills, abilities, and competencies necessitate initial cultivation within the learning facilitators themselves, thereby enabling the transference of these proficiencies to the employees and facilitating their professional growth. Consequently, in the present study, certain elements pertaining to the professional development of employees have been extrapolated to encompass learning facilitators as well.

Table 2. Organizing and basic themes related to the overarching themes of cognitive and psychological abilities of learning facilitators, specifically for employee training and professional development

Organizing theme	Organizing themes	Basic themes identified with source number
Cognitive abilities	-Creative thinking -Critical thinking -Mental imagery -Problem solving -Multidimensional thinking -Flexible mental model -Exploration -Reflective thinking	-Creative Mindset: A prerequisite for achieving professional development of employees is having the mental capacity for creative thinking in their trainers and organizational learning facilitators. Taken from Source 1, Source 5, Source 10, Source 13, Source 15, Source 19, Source 25, Source 31, Source 29 -Value and respect for creative ideas: Valuing employees' creative ideas and approaches to increase information and knowledge or solve problems is a characteristic of successful facilitators. Taken from Source 12, Source 19, Source 25, Source 31, Source 29 -Critical Mindset: A prerequisite for achieving professional development of employees is having the mental capacity to accept criticism in learning facilitators who are responsible for the process of training employees. Taken from Source 1, Source 10, Source 19, Source 23 -Critical Mind: The ability to criticize employees' ideas and thoughts about peripheral issues and how to analyze and address them has an impact on facilitating learning in the organization. Taken from Source 13, Source 31 -Learning with mental images: Learning facilitators with mental imagery and a reflective mind can create professional development in employees faster. Taken from Source 1, Source 23, Source 27 -Learning with reflective thinking: Learning facilitators with a reflective mind can create professional development in employees faster. Taken from Source 4, Source 18, Source 27 -Deep problem solving: Learning facilitators must have the ability to solve problems deeply and not superficially to help employees achieve professional development. Taken from Taken from Source 1, Source 4, Source 13, Source 15 -Problem solving in interesting ways: To help employees achieve professional development, learning facilitators must have the ability to solve problems in interesting and new ways. Taken from Taken from Source 6, Source 11, Source 21, Source 30

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		-The learning facilitator must be committed to thinking-centered to motivate employees in the organization to achieve professional development. Taken from Source 10, Source 18, Source 25 -The learning facilitator must be committed to paying attention to different dimensions of thinking to motivate employees in the organization to achieve professional development. Taken from Source 10, Source 20, Source 27 -Positive attitude towards reflective thinking: The learning facilitator must have a positive attitude towards reflective thinking to create mental flexibility in employees. Taken from Source 10, Source 12, Source 21 -Reviewing thought patterns: The learning facilitator must have the skill of reviewing his/her mental patterns with high flexibility. Taken from Source 21 -Challenging ideas and opinions: The learning facilitator must be able to challenge the ideas and opinions of the learners. Taken from Source 1, Source 7, Source 15, Source 30 -Challenging ideas and opinions: The learning facilitator must be able to create enthusiasm and skills of exploration and inquiry in the learners. Taken from Source 6, Source 7, Source 29 -Reflective thinking: Reflective thinking in facilitators broadens the vision, the ability to change perspectives and thoughts and identify their strengths and weaknesses, and also helps in the professional development of the staff. Taken from Source 7, Source 26, Source 28
Psychological abilities	-The ability to gain self-awareness about one's behavioral, psychological, and perceptive aspects -The ability to strive for self-analysis, correction, and improvement -The ability to create a suitable intellectual and psychological -Mental and emotional health -Emotional abilities	-Behavioral self-awareness ability: Gaining self-awareness about one's own behavioral aspects is one of the tasks of learning facilitators. Taken from source 9, source 11, source 20 -Psychological self-awareness ability: Gaining self-awareness about one's own psychological and insight aspects is one of the tasks of learning facilitators. Taken from source 9, source 11, source 24 -Behavioral modification ability: Trying to analyze, modify, and improve one's own behaviors is one of the tasks of learning facilitators. Taken from source 9, source 20, source 22 -Personality modification ability: Trying to analyze, modify, and improve negative aspects of one's own personality is one of the tasks of learning facilitators. Taken from source 9, source 22, source 24 -Creating a suitable intellectual environment: Learning facilitators must have the skill of creating a suitable intellectual environment based on accepting each other's thoughts and ideas. Taken from Source 3, Source 8, Source 12, Source 20 -Creating a suitable psychological environment: Learning facilitators must have the skills to create a suitable psychological environment based on creating a sense of trust and cooperation. Taken from Source 6, Source 8, Source 19, Source 22 -Mental health: The mental and psychological health of facilitators makes them successful in the education process. Taken from Source 14, Source 16, Source 28 -Social and communication health: Communication and social adaptability and the spirit of helping others in facilitators make them successful in the education process. Taken from Source 11, Source 29 -High emotional intelligence: Having emotional intelligence and emotional abilities are personality traits of successful facilitators. Taken from Source 8, Source 29 -Emotional competence: Having the ability to manage emotions is a personality trait of successful facilitators. Taken from Source 10, Source 24

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Finally, based on the content of the table 2, the theme format in Table 3 is outlined as follows.

Table 3. Theme format of cognitive and psychological abilities of learning facilitators for special training and professional development of employees

Inclusive themes	Organizing themes	Final Basic Themes
Cognitive abilities	1- Creative thinking 2- Critical thinking 3- Mental imagery 4- Problem solving 5- Multidimensional thinking 6- Flexible mental model 7- Exploration 8- Reflective thinking	- Creative mental ability - Value and respect for creative ideas - Critical mind - Critical mind - Learning with mental images - Learning with reflective mental thoughts - Deep problem solving - Problem solving in interesting ways - Central thinking - Attention to different dimensions of thinking - Positive attitude to reflective thoughts - Reviewing thought patterns - Challenging ideas and opinions - Challenging ideas and opinions - Reflective thinking
Psychological abilities	9- The ability to gain self-awareness about all behavioral, psychological and insight aspects of oneself 10- The ability to strive for self-analysis, correction and improvement 11- The ability to create a suitable intellectual and psychological environment 12- Mental and emotional health 13- Emotional-emotional abilities	- Ability to be self-aware of behavior - Ability to be self-aware of psychology - Ability to modify behavior - Ability to modify personality - Creating a suitable intellectual environment - Creating a suitable psychological environment - Mental health - Social and communication health - High emotional intelligence - Emotional empowerment

Discussion

Based on the empirical research findings, the conclusive analysis of the thematic network yielded 13 organizing themes and 25 fundamental themes, which were identified as the comprehensive themes pertaining to the cognitive and psychological competencies that influence the performance of the special learning facilitators' club aimed at the professional training and development of

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personnel within the Hormozgan Provincial Education Department. The outcomes of this investigation exhibit a degree of alignment with the findings articulated by Sahranavard Nashtifan et al. (2023), who focused on the identification of cognitive competencies as a central element in the professional development model for managers; and Karimi (2023), who affirmed the professional development program model for employees incorporating three individual dimensions—comprising the axes of spontaneity, interaction, independence in learning, commitment to the profession, religious-social foundations, personality traits, professional competencies, communication abilities, and the embodiment of human virtues—alongside a program dimension that includes axes such as knowledge management, workplace curricula within the organization, the realism of programs, and alignment with strategic plans such as succession planning, as well as an organizational dimension that encompasses aspects such as the monitoring and evaluation of professional development initiatives, effective human resource management in the organization, and institutional support.

These findings are further corroborated by the research conducted by Onrubia et al. (2024), which emphasizes the enhancement of teachers' socio-emotional dynamics, including the implementation of respect and courtesy, positive valuation, the fostering of unity, the establishment of a constructive emotional environment, and the facilitation of problem-solving for the professional advancement of facilitators; additionally, the study by Dumasari et al. (2024) aligns with the identification of competency components, familiarity with educational technologies, the acquisition of new knowledge, and the continual updating of facilitators' insights as significant determinants in the training of learning facilitators.

In elucidating the aforementioned findings, it can be posited that the role of the facilitator is to equip individuals to embrace responsibility and leadership. Consequently, learning facilitators engaged in the training and professional development of employees must possess attributes that facilitate their role and contribute to the success of themselves, the employees, and the overarching organization. Therefore, the components derived for each of the themes concerning cognitive and psychological competencies can be delineated as follows:

Cognitive abilities: The cognitive faculties of individuals are essential for the attainment of both personal and professional success. Indeed, alongside technical competencies, which serve as the bedrock for comprehending and implementing knowledge and experiential insights, the cognitive

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frameworks of individuals must exhibit creativity, critical analysis, problem-solving aptitude, mental visualization, multidimensional reasoning, adaptable mental constructs, and both exploratory and reflective thinking. Such attributes enable individuals to timely and accurately identify opportunities and challenges pertinent to their professions, analyze and appraise these situations, and implement modifications where warranted. Furthermore, cognitive abilities facilitate the formulation of a coherent set of objectives, strategic plans, and innovative concepts that are requisite for thriving in a competitive and dynamic landscape, such as that of the business and professional sectors. One prominent cognitive ability is creative thinking, which entails the examination and resolution of issues from alternative perspectives, eschewing traditional solutions and fostering innovative reasoning. This creative mechanism equips educational facilitators with a diverse array of competencies necessary to execute their responsibilities optimally, employing the most efficient methods to undertake their professional tasks with minimal exertion, and addressing challenges effectively. Ultimately, creativity engenders a greater receptiveness to diverse viewpoints and ideas, thereby enhancing the efficacy of individuals in the facilitation of learning aimed at the professional growth of employees. Critical thinking, another vital cognitive ability, manifests through the identification of salient issues, the exercise of choice, analytical reasoning, and recognition of interrelationships among phenomena, as well as demonstrating maturity in judgment, sound reasoning, accurate inference, evaluation, and logical conclusion-drawing. Consequently, critical thinking represents a systematic approach to reasoning accurately and striving to uncover reliable knowledge within the world, encompassing mental processes related to the recognition, analysis, and evaluation of information. This capability thus assists individuals in orchestrating their thoughts in a manner that is clearer, more precise, and defensible, yielding superior outcomes in their professional endeavors. Additionally, mental imagery has the potential to inspire individuals to aspire towards elevated objectives and surmount challenges by constructing vivid and motivational representations. In this regard, mental imagery enhances the likelihood of educational facilitators achieving their pedagogical objectives and contributes significantly to the professional advancement of personnel.

Problem-solving skills, as a crucial cognitive capacity, empower individuals to identify the root causes of issues and devise effective solutions. Although often categorized as a distinct and

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standalone skill, problem-solving operates synergistically with other competencies, resulting in enhanced efficacy. Therefore, the capability to resolve problems aids educational facilitators in mitigating or eliminating barriers that hinder employees or organizations from fulfilling their operational and strategic objectives, thereby accelerating the attainment of professional development for employees. Furthermore, the capacity for exploration within educational facilitators engenders intuitive comprehension, imaginative thought, creative cognition, and the execution of practical endeavors through action-oriented learning, thereby aiding employees in acquiring novel knowledge and competencies essential for professional advancement through experiential engagement. Additionally, reflective cognition that fosters conscious and equitable self-assessment in individuals catalyzes cognitive development. Indeed, reflective cognition compels learning facilitators to scrutinize their conduct, discourse, and even their cognitive processes, subsequently enhancing their instructional effectiveness and contributing to the professional growth of employees by addressing their deficiencies and augmenting their strengths.

Psychological competencies: Psychological phenomena, as a discipline that investigates human behavior and cognitive processes, exert significant influence on individual performance within occupational settings. In this context, self-awareness equips individuals to recognize their counterproductive thoughts and maladaptive behaviors, enabling them to supplant them with constructive and beneficial cognitions. Consequently, facilitators possessing this acumen demonstrate superior performance in their professional roles and exhibit enhanced capacity to manage pressure and stress effectively. Moreover, the emotional intelligence of educational facilitators cultivates an awareness of the behaviors and responses of others, facilitating a deeper understanding, and endowing the individual with the capacity to contemplate prior to acting and reacting to the behaviors exhibited by employees. As a result, a learning facilitator with sound mental health, adept at regulating their own behaviors while comprehending the conduct of employees, will exert a more substantial influence and contribute to the professional development of those they oversee.

Furthermore, a well-rounded personality, coupled with emotional and psychological equilibrium in a learning facilitator, enhances their value and credibility in the perception of employees, thereby amplifying the efficacy of facilitation training aimed at achieving professional advancement. Moreover, possessing a robust personality constitutes a vital qualification for

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facilitators in the staff professional training consortium, and prioritizing personal development among educational facilitators will facilitate the training and professional growth of employees.

Similar to other scholarly inquiries, this study encountered limitations that warrant careful consideration during the interpretation of results. Among these constraints was the focus of the present investigation, which specifically examined and evaluated the learning facilitator model tailored to the training and professional development of employees within the Hormozgan Provincial Education Department. The generalizability of these findings to employees of other organizations should be approached with caution. Additionally, one of the principal limitations inherent in content analysis is its static nature, which merely reproduces existing content without direct influence from the contextual dynamics of the human sample.

Consequently, it is recommended that this model be assessed among employees of diverse organizations to facilitate broader generalization of the findings. It is also advisable to incorporate dynamic qualitative methodologies, such as grounded theory, in conjunction with static approaches like content analysis. Lastly, it is proposed that the education and training organization establish a coherent and systematic partnership with research institutes and centers, thereby collaborating with these research entities in research and development efforts to enhance skillsets, improve knowledge management, and foster organizational innovation.

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Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Ethics statement

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by ethics committee of Islamic Azad University.

Author contributions

All authors contributed to the study conception and design, material preparation, data collection and analysis. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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