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Impact of Cultural Capital on Empowering Members of Rural Production Cooperatives in Amol County, Iran

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ABSTRCT

Rural production cooperatives, as an effective tool for rural development, have an important role in increasing the capabilities of rural farmers. In order to achieve the goals, in addition to human, social, and economic support, cultural development is also needed. In this regard, this study aimed at investigating the impact of cultural capital on the empowerment of rural production cooperative members. The study was conducted in Amol, Iran. A total of 6,150 members of 11 rural production cooperatives were selected as the statistical population of the study, and 300 of whom were selected as the study sample based on Cochran's formula. Data collection was done using a researcher-made questionnaire composed of two parts of cultural capital (embodied, objectified and institutionalized) and empowerment (psychological, social, and economic). The content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by experts' opinions. Also, based on the Average Variance Extracted (0.514> AVE< 0.663) and Composite Reliability (0.808> CR< 0.966), the questionnaire had a convergent validity and appropriate reliability. $SPSS_{16}$ and Smart PLS_2 software were used to analyze the data. Results of the research showed that cultural capital had a significant impact on the psychological, social, and economic empowerment level of the members of the rural production cooperatives. According to the results, it is recommended that, by careful planning, sufficient benefits be gained from the potential of cultural capital in the future development policies of rural production cooperatives, so that an effective, though small, step can be taken toward development of the aforementioned cooperatives.

Keywords: Development policies, Social and economic empowerment, Structural equation modeling.

INTRODUCTION

Rural development is one of the ways to achieve the country's development, which is not possible without the development of agriculture and farmers. Accordingly, Shahvali and Qaysari (2011) argue that the main barrier in development process is the lack of capable and efficient manpower, and lack of farm management competence, knowledge, and skills of farmers in optimal and timely use of inputs. The lack of attention to farmers' needs and capabilities will lead to unsuccessful development plans in villages and lack of control over poverty and farmers' problems (Minaei *et al*., 2008). Achieving the goals of the third millennium through agricultural sector and realizing the sustainable development of appropriate technical, financial, and human resources will need to take into account the decentralization with regard to the needs of villagers and farmers through the development of local organizations such as cooperatives (Wehab Working Group, 2002). Therefore, cooperatives are the key mechanisms supporting the empowerment of farmers and the basis of their joint activities

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and, therefore, meeting common needs and social problems of members to achieve sustainable development are essential (Qaysari and Rezaei Moghaddam, 2008). Step-by-step empowerment with a proper understanding and correct interpretation of its implementation in any society is the key to the well-being of that society (Sutawa, 2012). Eylon and Bamberger (2000) also argue that empowerment is defined as a motivational phenomenon that affects the concept of self-sufficiency and self-efficacy (the sense of personal domination). Also, Fairbairn *et al*. (2003) argue that the cooperative approach is one of the best mechanisms of public participation in economic and social activities, and employment and sustainable livelihoods for vulnerable and low-income groups in rural areas. Also, this approach is a very suitable solution for empowering villagers.

Rural production cooperatives also serve as an economic arrangement among farmers. Relying on members' power and cooperative decisions through the general board of directors have been established while preserving the unity of the three principles of ownership, governance, and facilitation of the production process, with the goal of reducing costs of production and income growth of farmers with individual motivations (Shahvali and Qaysari, 2011). Rural cooperatives, as small member-owned organizations, have the potential to facilitate socio-economic development in rural areas (Barati *et al*., 2017). Meanwhile, Liang *et al*. (2015) argue that agricultural cooperatives have been established to address the challenges and problems of farmers and villagers. In this regard, rural production cooperatives are able to eliminate the malformations caused by small, dispersed, and heterogeneous parts of agricultural land and many other shortcomings of the small farmers and play an important role in the development of villages (Seddiqi and Darwishinnia, 2002). Therefore, rural production cooperatives can play an effective role in creating employment, reducing inflation, developing community participation, and providing social and economic justice (Tahmasebi Ganjur and Labafi, 2005). As a result, Delgado (2007) acknowledges that rural production cooperatives enhance participation of villagers in rural development programs, contribute to equitable distribution of resources, and bring about equal access for villagers to economic and social opportunities. Also, Pishbin *et al*. (2015) believe that sustainability and innovation issues have a great importance in some organizations such as agricultural cooperatives. In addition, Bijman (2005) believes that the formation of rural production cooperatives also plays an important role in reducing poverty, increasing incomes, increasing the area under cultivation, and increasing farmers' production by raising the productivity per unit area in rural areas. Therefore, the increasing expansion of these organizations in today's world is indicative of the fact that cooperatives will have a greater potential for economic, social, and natural life of rural communities and thus provide sustainable development (Faryabi and Ahmadvand, 2016).

Cooperatives, as an institution created by people, need human, social, and economic support and, in particular, cultural capital support to enhance and strengthen on the path of development (Machinski *et al*., 2016; Royer and Smith, 2007; Lin and Ma, 2006). Nowadays, capital-based knowledge is replaced by knowledge-based capital and knowledge and awareness are a kind of cultural capital, and today, much importance is given to cultural capital. The term cultural capital, as a powerful factor in determining social relations, has attracted the attention of many scholars and sociologists in recent years (Zulfali Fam and Aghaee 2014). In Bourdieu's view (1984), culture is a relatively broad range of material and symbolic productions of cultural works that he refers to as cultural capital (Edrisi *et al*., 2012). Cultural capital is the recognition ability to use cultural goods for each individual, and includes the stable desires of

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the individual that are accumulated during the period of socialization (Fakouhi, 2002). Therefore, cultural capital, due to its important role in development, has positive functions in society and can also be effective on the capability of individuals. Therefore, one of the local communities in which cultural capital can affect people's capability and development is rural production cooperatives. The nature of the social relations existing in these community-based organizations is that members, through taking collective measures, despite achieving pre-written cooperative goals, unconsciously move toward achieving an unwritten purpose (Kalantari *et al*., 2011). Achieving the cultural capital as one of the non-written laws of rural production cooperatives will make cooperatives an effective step in improving development by enhancing the ability of their members.

In the field of cultural capital, a lot of research has been conducted and the results have been presented by various researchers. Lee and Chen (2017) have stated that a rich cultural capital can have a positive effect on the skills of individuals. The results of research by Börjesson *et al*. (2016) in Sweden showed that the embodied and institutionalized dimensions of the cultural capital became more important than the objectified dimension. In a study in Denmark, Mollegaard and Jaeger (2015) concluded that cultural capital had more positive effects on social success than social and economic capital. Findings from Fan's studies (2014) in China showed that all three types of economic, social, and especially cultural capital had significant effects on the education of individuals. The findings of Hosseini and Ahmadi's research (2017) suggested that the average social capital level was at a medium level. In addition, the embodied cultural capital has been evaluated at a high level in comparison to other dimensions. Ebrahimi *et al*. (2016) also concluded that all three dimensions of cultural capital (embodied, objectified, and institutionalized) had negative effect on social trust variable. The results of the research by Mirfardi *et al*. (2015) confirmed the existence of linear relationship and the effect of variables of cultural behaviors and practices and total components of cultural capital on the performance of agricultural and industrial cooperatives.

Various studies have also been conducted on empowerment, each of which has been evaluated at various perspectives. Accordingly, Späth and Scolobig (2017) investigated the rate of stakeholder empowerment through participatory planning practices in the countries of France and Norway. The results showed that stakeholder empowerment had been more in the consulting sector relative to the two criteria of information and cooperation. Soni *et al*. (2016), in an investigation on the factors influencing empowerment level of women in Bangladesh, concluded that age, education, and monthly income of individuals had a significant effect on women's empowerment level. In this research, three indicators of the social empowerment index, economic empowerment index, and political empowerment were used to measure the level of empowerment. Also, Hanaysha and Tahir (2016) considered the level of education as an effective factor in people's empowerment. Khan and Ali (2016) investigated the socio-economic empowerment of women in Pakistan in the Gilgat-Baltimore region. Findings indicated that the amount of income was effective in empowering individuals. In another study, Bushra and Wajiha (2015) identified factors such as poverty, economic participation, cultural and social issues, educational level, and economic opportunities in empowering women. Aghavirdy (2015) also identified communication and participation as important and influential factors in empowerment. In a study on agricultural cooperatives in Indonesia, Holplin (2010) concluded that membership in cooperatives led to the empowerment of members in the social and economic fields.

This study aimed to investigate the impact of cultural capital on the empowerment of

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members of rural production cooperative and was conducted in Amol, Mazandaran Province, Iran. The question now is how much cultural capital can be effective on the capability of rural production cooperatives members.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodology of this study will be discussed in terms of the study area, population, sampling and data collection, data analysis, and validity and reliability of the measurement. Regarding the literature in this field, the theoretical research model is presented in Figure 1. As it is discernible, cultural capital is imagined with three objectified, embodied, and institutionalized dimensions, which are effective in the rate of individuals empowerment by three psychological, social, and economic dimensions.

Study Area

Mazandaran Province is located in northern part of Iran and is the eighteenth province in terms of its size. Being situated between the mountains and the sea, and ample fertile lands and massive agricultural production, and the resilience of its people to endure the hardship brought about the region's political and economic independence throughout history. In Mazandaran, the culture of cooperation has been profoundly rooted among people, especially villagers. The most important activity of villagers in Mazandaran is agriculture. Consistent with good weather conditions, fertile soil and appropriate temperature, a variety of crops are cultivated.

Mazandaran Province has 19 counties including Amol (Figure 2). The county of Amol has three divisions, namely, central part, Larijan, and Dabudasht, and is divided into two parts of the northern plain lands and mountainous regions of the south (Tarzban *et al.*, 2012). Major activities of rural production cooperatives in Amol include better management of farms by group efforts, better and more efficient use of agricultural machinery, better and practical services to farmers, development of group and collective cooperation in villagers, and the creation of employment for rural youths. These cooperatives are active in the fields of agriculture, horticulture, livestock, poultry, fisheries and beekeeping (Tavassoli, 2012).

Population, Sampling and Data Collection

The statistical population of this research comprised 11 active rural production cooperatives with 6,150 members in Amol, Mazandaran, Iran. To determine the sample size, Cochran's formula was used based on t= 1.96, S= 1/52 (For the statement of: "I have positive attitude toward issues related

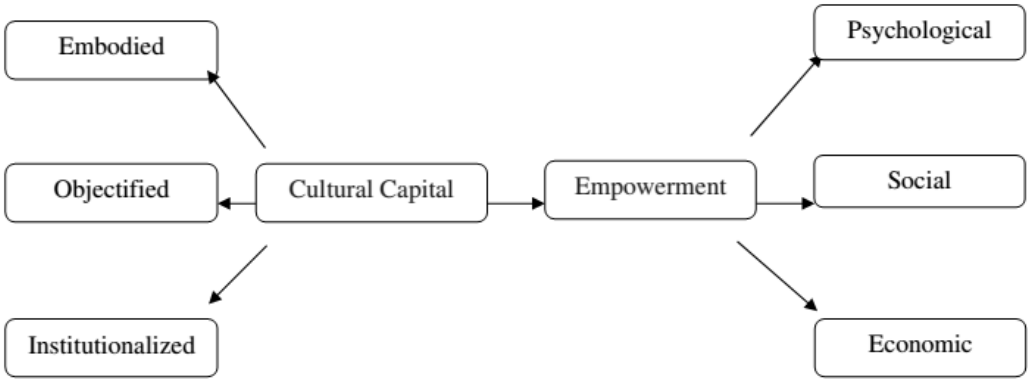

Figure 1. Theoretical research model.

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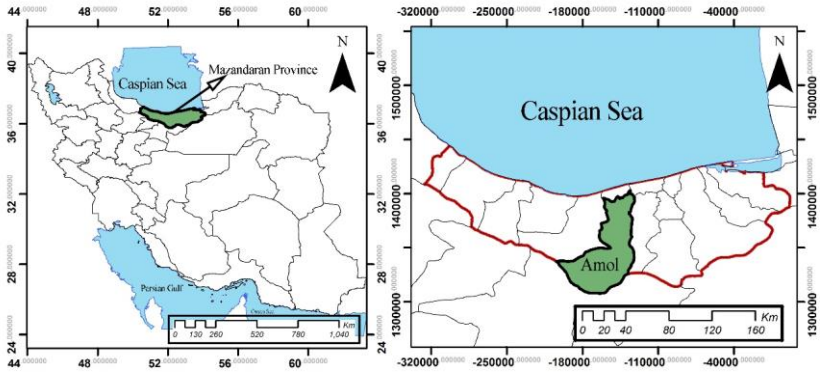

Figure 2. Geographical location of Amol.

to cooperatives and villages) and *d*= 0.17, the sample size consisted of 292 people, to which 8 people were added for more accurate results (n= 300). Regarding the heterogeneous distribution of members in cooperatives, stratified random sampling was used to obtain the samples. According to the size of the statistical population in each of the cooperatives, the number of samples was allocated proportionally to each of the categories (Table 1).

The data-gathering tool in this research was a researcher-made questionnaire that was used to extract variables and formulate them from various sources. In addition to personal characteristics, the questionnaire included two main parts i.e. cultural capital and empowerment. In the case of cultural capital, there were 16 questions in terms of the three embodied components (4 questions), objectified components (5 questions) and institutionalized components (7 questions). In the case of empowerment, there were 62 questions in the form of psychological components (23 questions), social components (15 questions), and economics components (8 questions). Each of the questions were evaluated by a Likert-type scale (5 for "I completely agree", 1 for "I completely disagree").

Data Analysis

This is an applied study. The methods of analysis used in this study involved a combination of descriptive and quantitative research. Descriptive statistics and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) were used for data analysis.

Table 1. Size of selected samples in statistical population.

Name of cooperative company	Number of cooperative members	Number of allocated sample
Sabzdasht Bazminan	593	39
Binj Malek Kate Posht	406	20
Rood Dasht Kansi	733	36
Zarkesht Firooz Kala	800	39
Sharif Bakhtiar Kati	450	22
Shohaday Marij Rood	380	18
Karirood Nezamabad	698	34
Chahargole Hashtal	540	26
Laledasht Lasem	577	28
Khooshesazan Zaghade	203	10
Shahid Rajaeie Ajvarkala	770	38
Total	6150	300

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After collecting and categorizing the data, the descriptive and inferential statistics were used and $SPSS_{16}$ software and Smart PLS_2 software were used to extract Structural Equation model. In this research, because of the two variables of cultural capital and empowerment, which were of reflective type of first rate and second order combination, each of their dimensions were evaluated reflectively by questions. Therefore, due to the combined variables in the structural model of the research, partial least square-based software such as PLS has the ability to perform such calculations (Lee, 2010). In addition, PLS is a very suitable method when researchers want to measure causal relationships (Henseler *et al*., 2009). The PLS, unlike Lisrel, can provide an appropriate approach for researchers due to less dependency of sample size, variables level, and normal distribution (Chin, 1988). Therefore, for the mentioned reasons in this study, Smart PLS_2 software was used to analyze the data.

Validity and Reliability of Measurement

Content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by experts' opinions. Also, based on the average variance extracted (0.514>AVE < 0.663) and composite reliability (0.808> CR< 0.966), the questionnaire had a convergent validity and appropriate reliability.

RESULTS

As the results of the research showed, the average age of respondents was 47.53 years, the youngest and the oldest were 26 and 70, respectively. Also, 83.7% of them were married and the rest were single. Based on the findings, 54.7% of the respondents with the highest frequency were in a family of 4 to 5 people, the highest household size was 9 people and the lowermost was one person. Among the respondents, 28% were illiterate or had elementary education. In other words, more than half of the respondents i.e. 55% had higher education than the high school diploma. According to the results, 72.7% provided livelihoods through labor, livestock, and agriculture. Also, the findings showed that 49% of the respondents had the highest frequency of 6-10 years membership and 21.3% had the lowest frequency of more than 10 years of membership in rural production cooperatives.

Based on the presented results of the relationship between the empowerment of the members of the rural production cooperatives and the individual characteristics of the studied respondents in Table 2, there was no significant relationship between empowerment and age, number of household members, education, and history of membership in the cooperative.

In order to investigate the linear relationship between the observed and latent variables and examine the convergent validity and reliability of the research instrument, the factor load of each statement was obtained (Table 3). Also, two methods of one-dimensionality and reliability of the reagents were used for measuring the reliability of the existing reflecting factors in the model. Two indicators of Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability were used to test the reliability of internal consistency and one-dimensionality. The optimal level of Cronbach's Alpha should be higher than 0.7 to evaluate target block as homogeneous and one-dimensional (Nunnally

Table 2. Spearman correlation coefficient between empowerment and individual characteristics.

Variable	Correlation coefficient (r)	The level of significance (Sig)
Age	-0.074	0.203
Number of household members	-0.071	0.215
Level of education	0.105	0.069
History of membership in the cooperative	-0.086	0.138

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Table 3. The summary of the obtained results of the fitting of the research measurement model.

Main factor	Latent variable	Observed variable	Symbol	Factor load
Empowerment	Psychological	I am an important and effective person for the village and cooperative where I live.	p1	0.684
		I have a specific and accredited program for my future.	p2	0.702
		I am a volunteer for works related to the village and cooperative.	p3	0.877
		I am serious about works related to village and cooperative.	p4	0.829
		I am responsible for works related to the village and cooperative.	p5	0.815
		I act as a leader in the cooperative.	p6	0.844
		I can start new decisions in the cooperative.	p7	0.613
		I help others in doing new works.	p8	0.767
		I am responsible for my behavior and works and I am responsive to my probable faults.	p9	0.776
		My being a villager is not an obstacle to my goals; on the contrary, I am an important person for my village development.	P10	0.767
		The existence of cooperative has increased my effectiveness and credibility in the village.	p11	0.719
		Cooperative members benefit from my decisions and ideas.	p12	0.695
		I express my financial comments in the cooperative.	p13	0.551
		Rural women play an important role in the development of cooperatives.	p14	0.501
		The promotion of information on the processing of agricultural products is effective in the development of cooperatives.	p15	0.662
		In my decisions, I look at the opinions of others.	p16	0.682
		I am very careful about carrying out the activities in the cooperative.	p17	0.581
		Knowledge and deep learning of cooperative material will definitely contribute to building the future of the cooperative and the village.	p18	0.666
		Truth, honesty, and intimacy can be substituted by manifestation, deception, and appearance.	p19	0.834
		Through the passion for learning and engagement, I will create more capacity for interactions with others.	p20	0.765
		I love my friends and try to cooperate with them in a constructive interaction.	p21	0.791
		If, in the future, I am entrusted with the responsibility of managing a cooperative, I will deal fairly with the members and my village people.	p22	0.820
		I have a positive attitude toward cooperative and village issues.	p23	0.769
		AVE= 0.537 *CR*= 0.963 Cronbach Alpha= 0.960		
	Social	I have a lot of self-confidence in expressing personal opinion among other members of the cooperative.	s1	0.905
		It is easy to raise problems of cooperatives with the CEO and the board of directors.	s2	0.897
		The use of educational and cultural services for cooperative members is possible.	s3	0.780
		I eagerly participate in identifying creative and innovative people in the cooperative.	s4	0.830
		I believe in the participation of rural women and girls in the social and cultural activities of cooperatives.	s5	0.687
		I can do all my job assignments successfully.	s6	0.891

Table 3 continued…

Continued of Table 3. The summary of the obtained results of the fitting of the research measurement model

Main factor	Latent variable	Observed variable	Symbol	Factor load
Empowerment	Social	I have a specific program for my work.	s7	0.912
		I am satisfied with my position in family and work life.	s8	0.726
		I know how to increase my productivity.	s9	0.742
		I seek advice from experts for my work.	s10	0.841
		In the field of home business, I have given a lot of advice to other members.	s11	0.862
		I tend to enhance the desire for membership in cooperatives among villagers.	s12	0.561
		I was very effective in presence of extension agents to expand new businesses.	s13	0.807
		I have a tendency to employ specialists in cooperative management.	s14	0.888
		I have a close cooperation with the village governor and members of the Islamic Council.	s15	0.743
		AVE= 0.658 *CR*= 0.966 Cronbach Alpha= 0.961		
	Economic	The existence of cooperatives has boosted local businesses.	e1	0.525
		I have the relevant marketing and economic information and statistics related to the processing of agricultural products.	e2	0.638
		I have the financial strength to create a new business in the village.	e3	0.662
		Cooperatives have had a good performance in increasing employment in different parts of the village.	e4	0.929
		Cooperatives have had a large share in the employment of rural unemployed people.	e5	0.922
		Increasing investment of cooperatives in production units has increased.	e6	0.919
		Cooperatives have played a large role in the diversity of income and employment resources of rural people.	e7	0.887
		Cooperatives have increased rural assets.	e8	0.701
		AVE= 0.619 *CR*= 0.926 Cronbach Alpha= 0.906		
Cultural capital	Embodied	I am familiar with the status of rural production cooperatives.	e1	0.660
		I am familiar with the goals and tasks of the cooperatives.	e2	0.672
		I have many interests in farming activities.	e3	0.806
		I have enough knowledge to use agricultural pesticides.	e4	0.722
		AVE= 0.514 *CR*= 0.808 Cronbach Alpha= 0.702		
	Objectified	I use the knowledge and awareness of other farmers.	o1	0.863
		I take part in cooperative elections.	o2	0.822
		I adhere to my commitments in the cooperative.	o3	0.669
		I am active in cooperative charity activities.	o4	0.759
		I want to visit various agricultural exhibitions.	o5	0.560
		AVE= 0.552 *CR*= 0.858 Cronbach Alpha= 0.790		

Table 3 continued…

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		I want to visit various agricultural exhibitions.	o5	0.560
		AVE= 0.552 *CR*= 0.858 Cronbach Alpha= 0.790		
Cultural capital	Institutionalized	The high level of education is very important for me.	i1	0.813
		I am interested in pursuing my education in agriculture.	i2	0.715
		For me, it is very important to have the skills in technical and vocational courses.	i3	0.687
		It is important for me to attend the training courses organized by the cooperative.	i4	0.890
		It is important for me to raise the level of knowledge and awareness about agriculture and management of rural production cooperatives.	i5	0.820
		The education of my household members in agriculture is important to me.	i6	0.831
		I have enough knowledge and experience to help other members.	i7	0.917
		AVE= 0.663 *CR*= 0.932 Cronbach Alpha= 0.913		

1967) and is acceptable for a composite reliability of 0.8 and more than 0.7 (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). Therefore, according to Table 3, all reflecting factors of the structural model of this study had a satisfactory internal consistency. Meanwhile, the obtained values for the *AVE* showed the convergent validity of the components, so that the minimum value of the *AVE*, or the average variance extracted in the convergent validity, should be 0.5 (Lee, 2017).

Figure 3 shows the final model of the effect of cultural capital on the empowerment of rural production cooperatives members. Based on the results, the institutionalized, objectified, and embodied dimensions had the greatest effects on the cultural capital of cooperative members, respectively. Statement e3 from the embodied dimension, o1 from the objectified dimension and i7 from the institutionalized dimension had the highest importance in the dimensions of cultural capital. The psychological, economic, and social dimensions had the greatest importance on the empowerment of cooperative members, respectively. Statements p3, e4 and s7 had the highest effect in terms of psychological, economic, and social capabilities, respectively.

Based on the results in Table 4, cultural capital had a significant impact on the empowerment of rural production cooperatives members and its dimensions. As the results show, the psychological and institutional dimensions had the highest importance in the empowerment as well as the cultural capital of the rural production cooperatives members, respectively.

Table 5 shows the results of testing the quality of the measurement model. This index measures the ability of the model to predict observed variables by their respective latent variable values. Based on the results, the value of *SSO* represents the Sum of Observed Squares for each latent block, *SSE* represents the Sum of the predicted Error Squares for each latent variable block, and the *SSE/SSO* represents

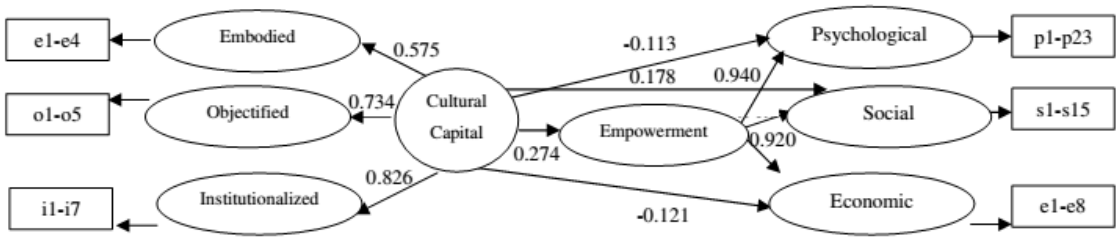

Figure 3. The final model of the effect of cultural capital on the empowerment of rural production cooperatives members.

Table 4. The path coefficient and *T* values of the research components.

Variable relationships	Path coefficient	*T* value
Empowerment- Psychological dimension	0.940	44.263
Empowerment- Social dimension	0.892	31.527
Empowerment- Economic dimension	0.920	38.855
Cultural capital- Embodied dimension	0.575	11.604
Cultural capital- Objectified dimension	0.734	15.994
Cultural capital- institutionalized dimension	0.826	33.465
Cultural capital- Empowerment	0.274	2.435
Cultural capital- Psychological dimension	-0.113	2.767
Cultural capital- Social dimension	0.178	5.608
Cultural capital- Economic dimension	-0.121	2.697

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Table 5. The CV-Communality of the latent variables of the structural research model.

Factor	*SSO*	*SSE*	*1-SSE/SSO*
Psychological	6900	3436.115	0.502
Social	4500	1761.169	0.609
Economic	2400	1149.003	0.521
Embodied	1200	952.162	0.207
Objectified	1500	985.874	0.343
Institutionalized	2100	937.507	0.554

the CV-Communality. If the CV-Communality is positive for the latent variables, the model has a good quality measurement, so, the obtained values confirm the quality of the model.

DISCUSSION

According to the nature and purpose of creating cooperatives, they are aimed at establishing and strengthening cooperative spirit, participation, meeting their livelihoods and professional needs, providing production facilities, improving income and living standards, increasing efficiency, raising awareness level and the growth of personality traits such as self-confidence, familiarity with technology, new sciences, up to dated knowledge, and employment. Therefore, it can be stated that the nature and activities of cooperatives (especially rural production cooperatives) rests on the direction of empowerment of the members in different dimensions (Zamani Miandashti *et al*., 2012). Firmansyah and Rozi (2014) considered the cooperatives capability to be largely based on the empowerment of their members. In addition, they believed that the success in empowering members of the cooperative depends on a variety of issues. Therefore, cultural capital, along with social and human capital, is one of the factors that affect the empowerment of local communities and the development of cooperatives in achieving their goals. In this regard, this study also investigated the effect of cultural capital dimensions on the empowerment of rural production cooperatives members in Amol, Mazandaran Province, Iran. Indeed, implementation of this research can be an answer to the question of how far cultural capital in rural production cooperatives can affect the level of cooperatives members' empowerment or how does the cultural capital existing among the rural production cooperatives members affect their empowerment.

The results of Spearman correlation coefficient between empowerment of rural production cooperatives members and individual characteristics of the respondents showed that there was no significant relationship between empowerment with age of the respondents. Unlike our results, Soni *et al*. (2016) believed that age had a positive and significant relationship with the level of empowerment. As the results showed, there was no significant relationship between the level of empowerment of rural cooperative members and the educational level. Research results of Sovari *et al*. (2013), Akhavan *et al*. (2012), Hanaysha and Tahir (2016), and Bushra and Wajiha (2015) are not consistent and in parallel with our findings. Also, the findings indicated that there was no significant relationship between the levels of empowerment of the rural production cooperatives members with the membership history in the cooperative. Deh Haghi *et al*. (2014) and Holplin (2010) also concluded that membership history in cooperatives had a positive effect on the empowerment of members in the cooperatives. As the results showed, there was no significant relationship between the numbers of household members with the empowerment of rural production cooperatives members. Research results

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from Sovari *et al*. (2013) confirmed the findings of the research and believed that the number of household members had no significant effect on the empowerment of individuals in cooperatives.

According to the results of structural equations and the relationships between the observed and latent variables, the psychological, economic, and social dimensions had the highest importance in terms of the empowerment of rural production cooperatives members, respectively. Meanwhile, Zamani Miandashti *et al*. (2012) considered the empowerment of cooperative members to be more in psychological and socio-cultural dimensions than empowerment in familial and economic dimensions. The findings of the relationship between the dimensions of cultural capital also indicated that institutionalized dimension in relation to other dimensions had a higher status and importance in cultural capital. In other words, respondents were more interested in academic progression, attending training courses, as well as technical and vocational training. Hosseini and Ahmadi (2017) considered the embodied dimension to be more effective than the objectified and institutionalized dimensions in the rate of cultural capital. Börjesson *et al*. (2016) also acknowledged that embodied and institutionalized dimensions were more important than the objectified dimension in the cultural capital of individuals. Findings indicated that cultural capital had a significant impact on the empowerment of rural production cooperatives members and their dimensions. Lee and Chen (2017) argued that high cultural capital could have a positive effect on the skill and capability of individuals. Cultural capital could be more effective on the social empowerment of cooperatives members.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this study contributes to the literature on cultural capital and empowerment of rural production cooperatives members. Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that cooperative managers should take steps to maintain psychological empowerment among members of cooperatives and increase their social empowerment. According to the findings of the research, the embodied dimension was less important than the other two dimensions in cultural capital. Therefore, it is recommended to look at the knowledge and skills of the members in different cultural sectors, specifically for promotion in this section. As the results showed, cultural capital had significant effect on the psychological, economic, and social empowerment. Therefore, considering the livelihoods of cooperatives members and rural life, it is concluded that training courses should be held through cooperatives so that members have the ability to create an appropriate job, even with low income, after attending this training course. Furthermore, the study results indicated that the directors and the board of directors of the cooperatives must try to do their required tasks like making the members familiar with the rules and their goals and tasks in the cooperative by using various methods including regular meetings, justification, and training workshops.

Achieving cultural capital through education of rural and agricultural issues, developing the spirit of group and collective communication, becoming more familiar with cooperatives, and increasing the knowledge and skills of cooperative members will enhance the ability of cooperatives members to participate in rural development. It is recommended that the role of cultural capital in the performance of rural production cooperatives and the role of social capital and education in empowering rural cooperatives, especially women, be taken into account in future researches.

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تأثیر سرمایهٔ فرهنگی در میزان توانمندسازی اعضای تعاونی‌های تولید روستایی در شهرستان آمل کشور ایران

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چکیده

تعاونی‌های تولید روستایی به عنوان ابزاری کارآمد و عامل بسترساز توسعه روستایی، رسالت مهمی از جمله بالا بردن توانمندی کشاورزان روستایی را برعهده دارد. برای رسیدن به اهداف در مسیر توسعه ،علاوه بر حمایت‌های انسانی، اجتماعی، اقتصادی، به سرمایهٔ فرهنگی نیز نیاز می‌باشد. در همین راستا، تحقیق حاضر با هدف بررسی تأثیر سرمایهٔ فرهنگی در میزان توانمندسازی اعضای تعاونی‌های تولید روستایی در شهرستان آمل کشور ایران انجام گرفته است. ۶۱۵۰ عضو ۱۱ تعاونی تولید روستایی به عنوان جامعهٔ آماری تحقیق بوده که ۳۰۰ نفر از آن‌ها بر اساس فرمول کوکران به عنوان حجم نمونه انتخاب شدند. جمع‌آوری اطلاعات با استفاده از پرسشنامهٔ محقق ساخته‌ای بود که از دو بخش سرمایه فرهنگی(تجسم‌یافته، عینیت‌یافته و نهادینه شده) و توانمندسازی (روانشناختی، اجتماعی و اقتصادی) تشکیل شده بود. روایی محتوایی پرسشنامه با استفاده از نظرات متخصصان مورد تأیید قرار گرفت. همچنین بر پایه مقدار میانگین واریانس استخراج شده (۰/۵۱۴ < AVE <۰/۶۶۳) و پایایی ترکیبی (۰/۸۰۸ < CR <۰/966)، پرسشنامه دارای روایی همگرا و پایایی مناسبی بود. برای تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌ها از نرم افزار $SPSS_{16}$ و $Smart\ PLS_2$ بهره گرفته شد. نتایج به دست آمده از تحقیق نشان داد که سرمایه فرهنگی تأثیر معنی‌داری بر روی میزان توانمندی روانشناختی، اجتماعی و اقتصادی اعضای تعاونی‌های تولید روستایی داشته است. با توجه به نتایج این تحقیق، توصیه می-

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گردد با برنامه‌ریزی دقیق از پتانسیل سرمایه فرهنگی در سیاست‌های توسعه‌ای آینده تعاونی‌های تولید روستایی بهرهٔ کافی گرفته شود تا بتوان گامی مؤثر هر چند کوچک در جهت رونق تعاونی‌های مذکور برداشت.

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