

## **CULTURE, THE GROUND FOR IRANIAN BUSINESSES DEVELOPMENT AND COMPETITIVENESS (CASE STUDY: TEXTILE INDUSTRY)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Competition and words derived thereof have been the subject of many policymakings and discussions related to development. Global experience indicated that the extent of countries' development depends on the competition power and productivity of their businesses, especially small and medium-sized businesses as the fundamental bases for the countries' development and progress. Nowadays, economic development is not solely a discussion about the economic categories and variables rather it is directly associated with the political context and social culture of a society and it is the social culture that determines the quality of economic activities in a society. The present study aimed at investigating the causes of the low share of Iranian small and medium-sized businesses from the market and their low competition power and productivity from the perspective of cultural factors. To do so, Edgar Schein's clinical method and Sarioolghalam's theory were utilized for investigating the relationship between productivity of small and medium-sized enterprises active in textile industry of Yazd Province and the culture of the staff therein. The results of Pearson correlation test indicated that the productivity of these businesses was directly associated with the culture of their employees and institutionalization of the fixed development principles as the cultural beliefs of these firms' staff members played an important role in their competitiveness.*

**Keywords:** Productivity, Development, Competitiveness, Culture and Personality of the Staff, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs).

### **INTRODUCTION**

Competitiveness of every country or region depends on the competitiveness of its businesses (Ahmadpour et al., 2008, p.16). In today's competitive world, all the states try to devise proper policies to set the suitable grounds and conditions for enhancing the competitiveness of the national economy and thereby to develop their country. During the recent years, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have been enumerated amongst the essential foundations of the countries' growth and development and their importance is increasing in the countries' economy. The rapid progress of developed and developing countries is an evidence to this claim. The World Bank, also, considers small and medium-sized business investments as one of the strongest factors in any country's GDP. (Kaymaram et al, 2005, p.8). Running any business requires ordinary knowledge of the competition and efforts to improve and enhance productivity are the primary premise of competitiveness. World Economic Forum knows

competitiveness as a collection of institutions, policies and factors that determine the level of productivity (Nili et al, 2012, pp.51-52 and 74). Productivity is key to maintaining competitiveness (Kalaw, 2015, p.1). It is worth mentioning that over 50% of the growth in GDP in developed countries is currently supplied through productivity enhancement (Valizadeh Zonouz, 2005, pp.14-15; Nasrollahnia et al, 2014, p.113).

One can expect productivity enhancement in other factors that are first identified as factors affecting productivity, including cultural factors (Bordbar, 2013, p.71). Culture is one of the fundamental elements of competitiveness and is directly related to the effectiveness and satisfaction of the staff and the company's productivity enhancement (Talali et al, 2003, p.24; Nasiripour et al, 2009, p.18). The remarkable success of successful organizations lies in the powerful intangible factors in the organizational culture, values, and beliefs of their staff (Bordbar et al, 2008, p.184; Hariri et al, 2012, p.2). Despite macro-level policymaking in the vision plan and five-year plans, the Iranian SMEs in Iran's economic context do not possess a high competitiveness power. Based on the reports by Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade (2013), these businesses account for 91.5% of the whole units having operation license in the country but they possess only 24.4% of the capitals' share and 41.2% of the total employment rate amongst the entire industrial units. Central Bank (2012), also, has announced that their share of the total industrial added value is only 36%. Moreover, Iran's ranking in the business environment has fallen compared to other countries, according to the World Bank (2018) report. The present study aimed at scrutinizing the role of culture and personality of staff as one of the important factors highly influencing the productivity and competitiveness of the businesses in Iran. To address this issue, among Iranian small and medium-sized businesses, as different industries and different climates might mislead the research process, an industry and a region were selected. Considering the fact that textile industry is among the top five categories of industrial groups in the country (Iran's statistical yearbook, 2015, p.323) and the greater use of human workforce in the textile industry than in other industries, and also the privileged position of this industry in the industrial history of Yazd province and its current status as one of the hubs of the country's textile industry., this study was conducted among small and medium-sized non-governmental businesses active in the province's textile and weaving industry.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Competitiveness is a fact that demonstrates the firm's ability to increase market share (Khodadad Kashi, 2009, p.27). Porter defines competitiveness as the synonymous with productivity and how an organization or nation uses its human resources, natural resources, and capital and defines a country's share of world markets for its products (Zand Hesami, 2015, p.32; Rahmanseresht and Safa'eiyan, 2011, pp.82-83). Productivity also includes essential strategies for achieving any sort of sustainable development and indicates the relationship between the use of production factors and produced goods. In Persian dictionary, productivity has been defined as profitability, usefulness and achievement (Owre'ei and Paymandar, 1999, p.3); in English it refers to the production power and being generative (Pourkazemi and Shakernava'ei, 2004, p.45). In human resource productivity theories, there is a general principle that human workforce generates productivity and creates any other

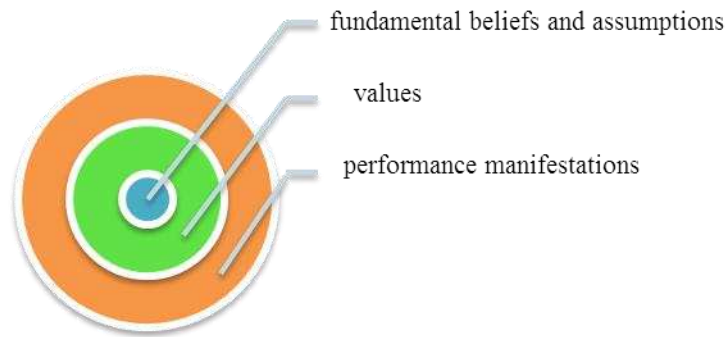


effective factor in an organization (Behikesh, 2006, p.246). European Productivity Agency (EPA) defined productivity as the degree to which each of the production factors are effectively used. That is to say, the relation of productivity concepts with human will, productivity thinking, and the transformation of productivity thinking into systematic and practical activities, the productivity movement is formed (Kamali, 2009, p.207). Iran's national productivity center realizes productivity as being comprised of efficiency and effectiveness. Effectiveness assesses the quality with which the goals should be actualized and efficiency shows the method of using resources for achieving the goals (Valizadeh Zonouz, 2005, p.6). In the theory of "productivity in terms of activity", productivity is the product of social-cultural interaction in the formation of which the environment and society plays a considerable role hence it has to be investigated in societal, organizational and cultural grounds. In this model, productivity is a cultural matter before it is merely a technical concept and must be seen in the society and culture itself. Technical methods can be effective in productivity's assessment when the cultural grounds are prepared and set (Hajikarimi, 2006, p.67). Porter also, underlined the effect of national culture on the companies' competitive advantage (Golpin, 2008, p.259). Also, Giddens views work in all cultures as the basis of society's economic system, which is strongly influenced by the social and cultural context of society (Foyuzat, 2008, p.283). From the viewpoint of a number of anthropologists, culture is a lifestyle or a human behavior. Culture for human society has the same meaning as personality for the individual. Patty Grow considered culture as a system of meanings based on which actions and behaviors are performed and exhibited. This system of meanings encompasses the terms, concepts, templates and categories that interpret the human position (Khadivi, 2006, p.27). The World Culture Report (1998) also considers culture the way people live, interact and collaborate. In sum, cultures express exclusive properties that are manifested in the symbols, productions and mentalities. For this reason, culture encompasses all human activities (Ashtariyan, 2011, pp.24&28).

Edgar Schein's clinical inquiry has offered a precise framework for analyzing the organizational culture and its management and leadership in confronting with the environmental changes and evolutions. He analyzed culture at three levels. At the first level, he placed the external or the clear level of the culture that embraces all the phenomena as seen, heard and sensed that are manifested in the form of emotions, words, use of objects and deeds and behaviors, ceremonies and formalities and functional embodiments (Schein, 2003, p.39). At the second level which is called the middle level or the espoused values, he pointed to every individual's perception as to what other thing should be other than what it is now. The valuated scales like beautiful and ugly, good and bad and dos and don'ts are examples of espoused values. In case of these values' logical consistency with the fundamental assumptions, their elaboration by operational philosophy can be useful as a source of determining identities, mission cores and existential philosophies of the group for such a goal as uniting and coordinating them (Schein, 2003, pp.41-44). The internal level or the shared essential presumptions fall on the third level which is known as the unclear level of culture; it is the foundation of all the organizational values, actions and behaviors. Shared basic assumptions guide the behaviors in practice and teach the group how to perceive, think and sense about the things and objects.



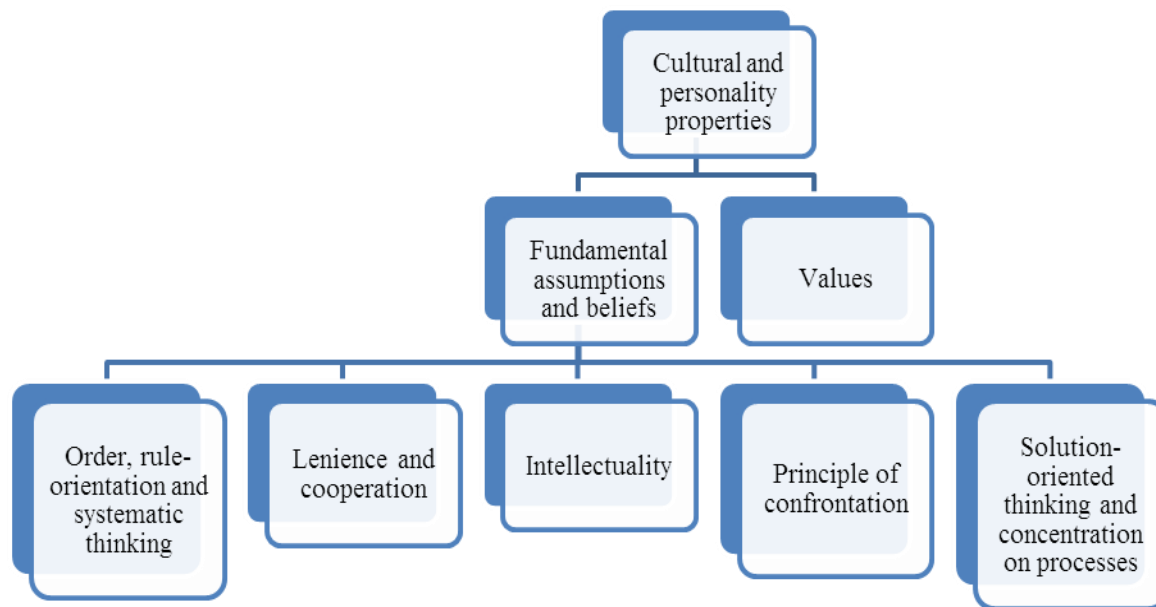
In Schein's theory, culture as a set of essential assumptions determines what we pay attention to, what things mean and how should we emotionally react to what is going on and what measures should be taken in various situations (Schein, 2003, pp.45-47 and 151-154). He realized any organizational change, evolution and development as being pendant over the acceptance of the new essential assumptions and changing of the prior essential assumptions (Schein, 2003, p.34); he believed that the companies are in need of cultural assumptions, value system and specific executive solutions in the course of strategy implementation for reaching development. Undoubtedly, one of the reasons for the companies' failure in implementing these strategies is the long distance between their current cultural presumptions from the favorable assumptions they need for executing these strategies in the organization (Schein, 2003, p.549).



**Levels of culture based on Schein's theory**

Sariolghalam, also, believed that development is composed of two macro-scale parts: first are the fixed principles and second are the various patterns. The development plans are universal and they do not change from a country to another rather their applied and practical grounds undergo changes but the development patterns feature nationalization capability in proportion to the countries' different conditions. Sariolghalam realized any sort and format of development as relying on an organized, science-oriented, rational society and in need of responsible and norm-abiding human beings possessing scientific minds and industrious personalities. Pointing to the experiences made in South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore, he reminded that the cultural principles of these countries satisfy the required cultural needs of economic development therein. He emphasized that the social, political and economic structures do not undergo metamorphosis as long as the structures leading to personality remain unchanged (Sariolghalam, 2013, p.20). In order to understand culture and individuals' personalities or, in fact, their fundamental assumptions and beliefs, Schein suggested that one should spend some time with them in their organizations; one should take their behaviors and words in an organization into account and subsequently discern their fundamental assumptions and beliefs through analyzing the reasons and basics of the individuals' exhibition of certain behaviors. However, the present study combined Schein's clinical inquiry in organizational culture and Sariolghalam's theory about the fixed development principles with the latter being considered herein as the essential assumptions of development-oriented culture. Efforts were made to investigate and analyze the extent to which the fundamental assumptions and beliefs of the employees are in accordance with the development-oriented

favorable culture following which their relationships with the productivity of the business entities as the clear level of the culture have been explored. To do so, the fixed development principles were codified in the form of a flowchart within the format of five dimensions, namely “rule-orientation and systematic thinking”, “lenience and cooperation”, “rationality”, “confrontation” and “solution-oriented (applied) thinking and concentration on processes”.



### *Order, Systematic Thinking and Rule-Orientation*

There is a need for clear-cut, vivid, well-defined and stable inputs and outputs when a thing is intended to be made. There is no need for any system when the goal of a business entity, institution, person, society and government is the preservation of the status quo. System is solely for growth, progress and development. System means procedure, rules, laws, processes and logics. Individual judgments, instincts, individual interventions, extra-procedural actions and axioms are against the system. An organization can be said to have a system when it is not needed to see its boss for resolving a dispute (Sariolghalam, 2015).

The individuals have learnt in the developed communities to distinguish the individual from the collective work. Collective work necessarily minimizes the self-orientation and autonomy, gives a gradual dimension to the formation of thoughts, reactions and decisions, consecrates the consensus achievement and decreases the individuals' sacrosanctity (Sariolghalam, 2013, p.95). Political, social and economic stability lies in being rule-oriented and a structure cannot be held up without rule-abiding persons (Sariolghalam, 2013, p.17).

### *Lenience and Cooperation*

The secret of the German and Japanese people's success is their socialization skills. They exercise utmost graciousness, mutual understanding and lenience amongst themselves. Since adolescence, Iranians have become accustomed to the concept of distrust and secrecy, and accept that individual or bond work can succeed. The art of listening, the art of perceiving, the art of exchange and communication, the art of learning and the art of thinking in a group are



amongst the tools of social formation. Personal taste-orientation, negative individualism, pride and haughtiness (self-absorption) are against lenience and cooperation and are counteractive to the development. Working together, being coordinated, accepting one another, welcoming the differences and veneration of one another, fulfilling one's own duties and shares of tasks, avoidance of weakening and destroying one another, feeling proud for the better others and giving minimal role to the instincts in the formation of the thoughts and behaviors are amongst the signs of the lenience and cooperation culture (Sariolghalam, 2013, pp.16, 18&49).

### *Intellectuality*

Intellectuality refers to the exploitation of thoughts and science in performing every task. Before industrial revolution in the west, the culture of "naturalism", "calculation" and "futurism" had been developed. The cure to the sentimentality, capriciousness, emotiveness, unpredictability and individualism is entering the arena of thought, science and intellectuality. To educate human beings within the format of rational structures, one would need logical, scientific, fair and rule-abiding persons as well as well-defined structures that welcome criticism and evolution. However, the second cannot be established without the former and the first takes a second position with a long distance to the former in the hierarchy of superiorities (Sariolghalam, 2013, pp.18 and 26).

Intellectuality is institutionalized when the thoughts and behaviors of the citizens and statesmen are laid on the foundation of collective science, study and interests. Imaginations, i.e. nonscientific perceptions based on fancies, are amongst the important grounds that should be reformed in the elites and general public's culture of the third world people. This cultural problem will keep on emerging as far as the decision-making and functions are not arranged based on prior recognition (Sariolghalam, 2013, pp.28&47-48).

### *Applied and Solution-Oriented Thinking and Concentration on Processes*

Instrumentality is a cultural evolution and the otherwise is a cultural harm depriving the society of its dynamicity. The developed society or the society interested in development should be constantly asking itself, thinking practically and devising solutions. The attention to the human process is patient, futuristic, planning and believing, and leads to reason and logic. Process makes minds adopt holistic approaches and facilitates precise mentalities towards the social phenomena (Ibid, p.48).

### *Principle of Confrontation*

The mind would be satisfied with what it thinks and infers if the human attitude and view is barred from confrontation with various evolutions in different frameworks. Therefore, development entails the diversity of view. Confrontation opens new horizons before the eyes and provides the humans with the right to choose. In case that confrontation is combined with philosophical consistency and scientific method, the ground would be set for its becoming smoother and undergoing more positive cultural changes. Dynamic culture is the one encouraging confrontation and providing human beings with gradual growth opportunities for achieving individuality. Thoughts and inferences can grant new meanings to life, nature and creation only in confrontation and exposure. The society lacking self-confidence fears



confrontation and, contrarily, the society challenging the confrontations exhibits its patience, precision, strategy, self-confidence and power (Ibid, p.49).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have been carried out about development, competitiveness and productivity. In “the culture of development and the third world”, Sariolghalam (1989) realized the developed communities as enjoying a high rate of congruence and adaptation between culture, economy and politics and found the third world as lacking the important cultural and social structures and prerequisites of economic activity and industrial development. Underlining the necessity of paying attention to the internal structures of the third world countries, he realized the experiences of these countries as being indicative of the reality that the economic failure and weakness of many of them initiates from planning stage and incorrect, illogical and unnatural recognition before coming about in the implementation stage. Iranian experts like Katouziyan (2011) realized the absence of a robust and unflawed legal framework as the reason for discontinuity of the evolutions in the long run and use the so-called “mattock [to be destroyed] houses” as the most expressive phrase for describing the short-term nature of the evolutions in the Iranian society. In his mind, falling short of long-term accumulation of business capitals and failing to bring about development in education, culture and science causes discontinuity of the evolutions in the long run. Ghaninejad (2010) underlined in a historical investigation that the main reason for the underdevelopment should not be sought in factors like capital shortage, dependency on foreigners, population growth, capitals’ inclination towards centralization and monopoly or performance of the multinational companies. He emphasized that other factors like the spirits and cultures of personal relations should be taken into consideration. Accordingly, Izadi (1990) realized Iranians’ dispositions as the fundamental factor that has given rise to the country’s underdevelopment and introduced the path the prophets have taken, i.e. obedience to the mankind’s natural laws and modification of the people’s digressed beliefs, as the best cure. Sariolghalam (2003) believed that one cannot expect country’s development as long as there are not rule-oriented, logical, knowledgeable and just human beings and also as long as there are not well-defined evolving structures welcoming criticism. He enumerated tribal dispositions, idealism, oral and emotional culture, despotic culture, non-recognition of cultural structures and societies’ realities as well as ignorance of science and scientific methods and thinking styles amongst the personality and cultural characteristics of the people in Iran and also amongst the serious barriers of development. In a general sense, most of the experts in development areas in Iran believe that the Iranians’ personality and cultural attributes are amongst the serious hindrances of the country’s development.

Mo’meni and Amini Milani (2011) believed that economic-social factors are amongst the most effective considerations for stepping on the sustainable development path and that the actualization of such a goal necessitates the existence of attitudes towards sustainable development in the development plans’ officials. From the perspective of economic development also, the cultural features and individuals’ attitudes play an important role. Nili et al. (2008) introduced competition as the most important factor of efficiency in the modern industrial communities. Strengthening and expanding people's socio-economic



competitiveness and participation (supplementary government and not the market-substituted government), offering sufficient information in every market and information freedom, elimination of price distortions and no direct intervention by the government in market mechanism, contribution to the creation and development of financial and insurance markets, elimination of the illegitimate economic patents and privileges (rent), corroboration of motivational systems (punishment and reward) and observance of meritocracy and fast access to the less expensive, transparent and precise judicial courts (reduction of exchange costs) are amongst the policies that cause improvement in the market's competitive mechanism. However, it appears that there are numerous impediments, especially in macro-level, on the market development path in such a way that the planning and economic affairs' vice chancellorship of Ministry of Commerce (2009) has come to the conclusion in its investigations that the involvement of numerous policy-making institutions in Iran and absence of agreement between the governmental organizations for defining SMEs are amongst the substantial barriers to the creation of real competition space. Ichi Ogawa (1995) believed that the effect of the organizational culture on the organizations' competitiveness should be taken into consideration along with the other effective factors. In his idea, the distinct feature of small-sized enterprises is the robust unification between the individuals and its formations and that the formations of every institution can function perfectly on the condition that the staff members have common goals, devotion spirits and a network for ready and easy establishment of communication. Zare'ei et al. (2011) designed competent organizational culture for the customer-oriented companies with an emphasis on two concepts of customer-orientation and organizational culture. They introduced customer-orientation, justice and professional ethics, competency and knowledge-oriented culture, participation and collaboration culture, emotional leadership and trust-building, quality-oriented culture and constant improvement, culture of attachment and belonging, organizational citizenship behavior and loyalty as the indicators of a competent organizational culture.

Ambastha & Momaya, (2004) showed that the main reason of competitiveness related problems of software firms in India is weaknesses in understanding about the concept of competitiveness and its implementation. In a study in Pakistan, Muneeb Ahmad et al. (2012) reached two sets of extra-organizational factors like the lack of access to financial resources, lack of political stability, bureaucracy, lack of access to the general infrastructures and inflation and intra-organizational factors like the lack of education, stress on staff, lack of motivation and weakness in general management and partnership as the barriers to the growth in the small-sized enterprises. The other studies have underlined other diverse factors as the barriers to the productivity, including the problems related to finding versatile and talented individuals for enhancing the companies' productivity and problems related to capital access as the structural barriers to the productivity enhancement (British entrepreneurship research center, 2015) as well as issues pertinent to human resources, innovation, network-building, processes' management, customers' demands and rivals' monitoring (Krishantha and Wisenthige and Cheng Guoping, 2016). Ibarraran SME policies can improve productivity in Latin America and the Caribbean, if they are properly targeted and they are able to foster training, innovation, certification and access to credit. In an investigation of the barriers to the competitiveness of the SMEs, Nategh (2006) remarked that acquiring market share and marketing are amongst





the most important methods and instruments that these companies are required to make efforts for them. He expressed that the high costs of market research and lacking sophisticated cadre are the most important problems of SMEs in the marketing area. Sara Rasmussen (2013) indicated the importance of good leadership for creating a stable organizational culture and the significance of managers' feeling of self-confidence before change and explained that leadership's ability for creating stability and meaning amongst the staff when making efforts for reducing concerns and contingent resistances during the imposed change is a very important factor. Kazemi (2002) considered innovation in supply and production, reduction of costs and having goals as important factors contributing to the performance improvement and productivity enhancement in the organizations and expressed that the elevation of alignment in individual, group and organizational objectives results in organizational productivity's enhancement. Furthermore, Phillip C. Wright et al. (2009), Alan Stainer (1995) and Jossy Mathew (2007) reached a conclusion in the investigation of the relationship of organizational culture with quality and productivity in the business spaces of China, Japan and India that there is a subtle bond between these two factors. In Iran, as well, Bordbar et al. (2008) concluded in an "investigation of the relationship between organizational culture and human resources' productivity in insurance industry" that there is a positive and significant correlation between organizational culture and productivity of the company managers as well as between aspects of creativity, support, coherence and integration, control, identity, reward system, adaptation with conflicting phenomena and communication patterns with productivity.

Shirvani and Samadi (1998) considered productivity culture as being composed of three components including discretion (belief and opinions at work), knowledge (knowing the methods of performing tasks) and effort (practical endeavors for getting works done). From their viewpoint, the organizational space is influenced by two factors of "occupational requirements" and "individuals' needs" and work motivation is increased as the most important factor influencing the organizational productivity's enhancement when the proper psychological space is brought about in the organization. Sa'atchi (2006) pointed to the slowness of the various organizations' movement in line with productivity enhancement as well as the slowness of the society's movement for achieving optimum national productivity and realized the inclination of the country's active workforce towards individual activities and their doubts about the effectiveness of group work as the most important reasons of such happenings and believed that enjoyment of certain personality characteristics like toleration to the others' notions, not being selfish, not being self-centered and being creative and innovative are the prerequisites of the group work. Therefore, it can be stated in a general investigation that there is a deep relationship between organizational culture and productivity and, in between, the effect of the extra-organizational and intra-organizational factors cannot be overlooked for a vast part of them are related to the performance of the staff members in the organizations.

## METHODOLOGY

The present study was a survey and quantitative research. Questionnaire has been used for data gathering and inferential statistical tests have been employed for testing the hypotheses.



The questionnaire has been designed and codified with the centrality of the fivefold dimension and the perspectives of the study participants have been evaluated within the format of the casted items based on Likert's scale. The list of the organization's axial values was also attached to the questionnaire and every individual selected based on his or her priorities five out of the 48 values embedded in this list. In order to assess the credibility and validity of the questionnaires, both the professional notions of the professors and academicians and the counseling and advices by the employers, staff members and specialists of the offices and the related industry's institutions were used; the questionnaire was revised in several stages and it was eventually confirmed. Also, in order to investigate the reliability of the questionnaires use was made of Cronbach's alpha coefficient which was found in a favorable limit. In order to collect the data, non-randomized sampling method was applied considering the low number of the companies required for the study; all the available samples were subjected to the evaluation for heightening the study's accuracy. The study sample size or the study sample volume included the nongovernmental small- and medium-sized enterprises active in textile industry and Yazd province's fabric-weaving until 2017. Based on the statistical yearbook of the statistical center of Iran, these companies reached 43 in number out of which, four companies refrained from taking part in the study (Yazd Province's statistical yearbook, 2014, p.255). The questionnaires were distributed amongst 350 staff members of these companies. Out of the total number of the distributed questionnaires, 275 staff members (more than 78%) completed and returned the questionnaires that were utilized for analyzing the study data. The score of each of the five dimensions was determined for each of the staff members of every company with the investigation and analysis of the data. Then, the fundamental beliefs and assumptions' scores were computed for the staff members of each company based on those scores. It is worth mentioning that random allocation was employed for distributing the questionnaire amongst the employees of the aforesaid companies.

The primary variables of the study included the productivity of the human workforce in the SMEs active in Yazd Province's textile industry and culture and personality of their employees. The human workforce productivity has been calculated based on the staff members' costs, i.e. how much added value is created per every Rial unit spent on staff member's service compensation:

$$\text{human workforce productivity} = \frac{\text{added value}}{\text{employees' service compensation}}$$

The added value can be computed as shown in the relation below:

Added value= {(incomes-costs) + (products' inventory in the end of year-products' inventory in the beginning of the year)}

Staff members' service compensation, as well, has been calculated as demonstrated in the relation below:

Staff members' service compensation= (salary + overtime premium + insurance+ New Year bonus + seniority payment + reward + earned leave)

Considering the companies' sensitivity to the statistics and information, especially in the financial and commercial areas, the study participant companies were asked to calculate and offer their annual financial statements based on the above-presented formula from 2011 to

2016. After collecting the required information, the productivity of each year was recorded in the form of a quantitative variable in SPSS (version 22). In order to assess the staff members' values, as well, the list of the axial values of an organization (Ghasmei, 2009, p.166) was extracted and the values were considered as a nominal variable comprised of 48 facets.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Considering the theory by Schein that viewed the fundamental beliefs and assumptions as the main core constituting the culture, the existence of diversity of attitudes and perspectives for administrating business entities amongst the staff members of the studied companies should be seminally ensured. Therefore, the first study hypothesis was that there is a significant difference between the staff members of the studied companies in terms of their fundamental beliefs and assumptions. To test this hypothesis, use was made of one-way variance analysis (ANOVA). The results indicated that there was a significant difference between the studied employees in terms of their cultural and personality characteristics. The confirmation of this hypothesis meant that the staff members in these business entities had diverse fundamental assumptions and beliefs and each of them had his or her own specific perspective and attitude for performing his or her role in the workplace (Table 1).

**Table 1: Variance analysis of the staff members' fundamental beliefs and assumptions in the textile companies**

	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean squares	F	Significance coefficient
Intergroup	9550	38	251	2	0.000*
Intragroup	24079	236	102/033		
Total	33630	274			



Schein realized values as the middle level of culture and underlined that they are to be used in the investigation of culture when they are coordinated and aligned with the fundamental beliefs and assumptions. Therefore, the second study hypothesis was that there is a significant relationship between the employees' selected values in the studied companies. To test this hypothesis, descriptive statistics method was utilized for arranging the values' frequency distribution table for each of the priorities and also for drawing their corresponding diagrams. In order to summarize the tables in every priority, only five values with the highest frequency have been offered (Table 2).

**Table 2: Frequency distribution of the employees' selected values in every priority**

Selected value	Frequency	Frequency percentage	Selected value	Frequency	Frequency percentage
1 <sup>st</sup> priority			2 <sup>nd</sup> priority		
Performing high quality work	40	15	Performing high quality work	33	12
Being sociable	34	12	Job security	27	10
Job security	29	11	Being responsible	26	9
Being responsible	27	10	Customer-orientation	22	8

Order	18	6	Giving value and credibility to one's own self	21	6
3 <sup>rd</sup> priority			4 <sup>th</sup> priority		
Order	28	10	Having skills	21	8
Having skills	27	10	Customer-orientation	16	6
Being responsible	20	7	Order	16	6
Customer-orientation	15	5	Loyalty	16	6
Promotion	15	5	Being responsible	15	5
5 <sup>th</sup> priority			Values with the highest frequency of selection		
Honesty and truthfulness	35	13	Being responsible	98	34
Order	23	9	Order	85	31
Having skills	18	7	Performing high quality work	73	27
Competition	11	4	Having skills	66	25
Being responsible	10	3	Job security	56	21

The data in Table (2) showed a high scattering in the values selected by the staff members as well as the least alignment between their values of choice. However, the value “being responsible” was seen in five priorities, the value “order” in four priorities and the values “having skills” and “customer-orientation” in three priorities of the five staff members’ priorities. The values “being responsible”, “order”, “performing high quality work”, “having skills” and “job security”, had the highest totals of the frequency of being chosen by the staff members, respectively. It could be inferred based on these selections that the staff members’ priorities were those values that can be followed by the corroboration of their skills and individual abilities and that the communication and group values and skills were not the staff members’ priorities.

According to the confirmation of the first hypothesis, the third study hypothesis was proposed as stated in the following words: the productivity of the studied companies is in a significant relationship with the fundamental beliefs and assumptions of their employers. To test this hypothesis, Pearson correlation test was utilized. The results indicated that there was a significant relationship between the productivity of the companies and the staff members’ beliefs and assumptions as well as between the productivity of the companies with each of the five dimensions of the staff members’ fundamental beliefs and assumptions (Table 3).

**Table 3: Investigating the correlation between the productivity of the companies with the staff members’ fundamental beliefs and assumptions**

Fundamental beliefs and assumption	Productivity	
	Correlation coefficient	Significance coefficient
Order, rule-orientation and systematic thinking	0.594	0.000*
Lenience and cooperation	0.507	0.001*
Intellectuality	0.624	0.000*

Principle of confrontation	0.600	0.000*
Solution-oriented thinking and concentration on processes	0.336	0.037*
Staff's fundamental beliefs and assumptions	0.912	0.000*

Besides the tests and analyses that were expressed for the investigation of the relationship between the companies' productivity and their employees' fundamental assumptions and beliefs, the companies' productivity, scores of each of the fivefold culture dimension as well as the scores of the fundamental beliefs and assumptions of these companies' employees were categorized in quartile forms. Then, each of the quartiles of the fundamental beliefs and assumptions was compared with each of the productivity quartiles and the companies with fundamental beliefs and assumptions quartiles matching with productivity quartiles were determined. The results have been presented in Tables (4) to (7). Based on the data in Table (4), the companies numbered 20, 13 and 26, had the lowest productivity in the first quartile, respectively. The three foresaid companies were also in the first quartile of their employees' fundamental beliefs and assumptions. This is reflective of the idea that these three companies had the lowest scores for the employees' fundamental beliefs and assumptions and the lowest scores for productivity. Thus, the companies in the first productivity quartile matched one hundred percent with the companies falling in the first quartile in terms of their employees' fundamental beliefs and assumptions.

**Table 4: The match between the companies' productivity and the employees' fundamental beliefs and assumption in the first quartile**

Quartile	Company number (lowest score on the right side)	Match
1 <sup>st</sup> quartile of productivity (0.59-1)	26 - 13- 20	
1 <sup>st</sup> quartile of systematic thinking (30.8-34)	12 - 26 - 34 - 13 - 1 - 14 - 16	26 - 13
1 <sup>st</sup> quartile of lenience and cooperation (14-14.8)	11 - 13 - 24 - 1 - 6 - 26 - 14 - 18 - 25	13 - 26
1 <sup>st</sup> quartile of intellectuality (11.8-13.5)	31 - 12 - 1 - 7 - 6 - 14 - 34 - 26	26
1 <sup>st</sup> quartile of principle of confrontation (18.3-20.2)	26 - 17 - 11 - 6 - 31 - 20 - 1 - 34 - 12	26 - 20
1 <sup>st</sup> quartile of applied thinking (26.8-31)	37 - 10 - 18 - 29 - 22 - 6 - 36 - 20	20
1 <sup>st</sup> quartile of fundamental assumptions (109-118)	13 - 16 - 34 - 14 - 12 - 26 - 1 - 6 - 20	13 - 26 - 20

The data in Table (5) showed that companies numbered 14, 34, 18, 29, 16, 36, 11, 6, 31, 10 and 7 correspondingly had the lowest to the highest productivity in the second quartile. Amongst the foresaid companies, only numbers 29, 36, 11, 31, 10 and 7 were in the second quartile of the fundamental assumptions and beliefs. Therefore, only six out of the 11





companies in the second productivity quartile matched with the second quartile of fundamental beliefs and assumptions with the match percentage being 54.55 in this quartile.

**Table 5: The match between the companies' productivity and the employees' fundamental beliefs and assumptions in the second quartile**

Quartile	Company number (lowest score on the right side)	Match
2 <sup>nd</sup> quartile of productivity (1-2)	7-10-31-6-11-36-16-29-18-34-14	
2 <sup>nd</sup> quartile of systematic thinking (34-36)	5-15-2-8-4-33-11-7-6-20	11-7-6
2 <sup>nd</sup> quartile of lenience and cooperation (14.8-15.9)	2-5-8-7-34-14-15-4-12-16	7-34-16
2 <sup>nd</sup> quartile of intellectuality (13.5-14)	23-38-22-17-37-29-2-13-20	29
2 <sup>nd</sup> quartile of principle of confrontation (20.2-22)	30-19-10-13-23-29-39-18-24-22	10-29-18
2 <sup>nd</sup> quartile of applied thinking (31-33)	3-12-33-30-9-26-23-39-31-28	31
2 <sup>nd</sup> quartile of fundamental assumptions (118-122)	22-37-24-7-10-31-11-36-29-18	7-10-31-11-36-29

The data in Table (6) showed that companies numbered 24, 27, 22, 23, 12, 35, 2, 5, 17, 1, 39 and 33 have been organized in an order of the lowest to the highest productivity in the third quartile. Amongst the foresaid companies, only company numbers 23, 35, 2, 5, 17, 39 and 33 have been classified in the third quartile of the employees' fundamental beliefs and assumptions. It means that the match between the third quartile of companies' productivity and the third quartile of employees' fundamental beliefs and assumptions was 58.34%.

**Table 6: The match between the companies' productivity and the employees' fundamental beliefs and assumptions in the third quartile**

Quartile	Company number (lowest score on the right side)	Match
3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile of productivity (2-4)	33-39-1-17-5-2-35-12-23-22-37-24	
3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile of systematic thinking (36-38)	37-23-29-36-21-25-35-10-27-24	23-35-37-24
3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile of lenience and cooperation (15.9-17.8)	28-31-39-36-29-35-37-27-20-19	39-35-37
3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile of intellectuality (14-14.5)	15-35-16-10-4-33-3-36-5-24	35-33-5-24
3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile of principle of confrontation (22-22.6)	4-28-35-16-5-37-3-21-36-14	35-5-37
3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile of applied thinking (33-35)	15-2-7-38-21-13-14-32-16-35-1	2-35-1
3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile of fundamental assumptions (122-125)	4-15-33-39-17-5-2-35-23	33-39-17-5-2-35-23

Based on the data presented in Table (7), companies numbered 15, 4, 8, 25, 19, 28, 21, 3, 27, 30, 9, 32 and 38 have been organized in an order of the lowest to the highest productivity in the fourth quartile. Amongst them, only company numbers 15 and 4 have not been grouped in the fourth quartile of the employees' fundamental beliefs and assumptions. Thus, the match between the fourth quartile of companies' productivity and the fourth quartile of the employees' fundamental beliefs and assumptions was 84.61%.

**Table 7: The match between the companies' productivity and the employees' fundamental beliefs and assumptions in the fourth quartile**

Quartile	Company number (lowest score on the right side)	Match
4 <sup>th</sup> quartile of productivity (4-7.04)	38-32-9-30-27-3-21-28-19-25-8-4-15	
4 <sup>th</sup> quartile of systematic thinking (38-41)	9-32-3-28-38-30-17-39-19-18-22-31	9-32-3-28-38-30-19
4 <sup>th</sup> quartile of lenience and cooperation (17.8-19.9)	30-9-33-32-23-21-3-38-22-10	30-9-32-21-3-38
4 <sup>th</sup> quartile of intellectuality (14.5-16.2)	8-30-39-27-9-21-28-19-18-25-32-11	8-30-27-9-21-28-19-25
4 <sup>th</sup> quartile of principle of confrontation (22.6-24.8)	38-27-25-15-32-8-33-9-2-7	38-27-25-15-32-8-9
4 <sup>th</sup> quartile of applied thinking (35-36.8)	4-25-27-19-11-34-17-8-24-5	4-25-27-19-8
4 <sup>th</sup> quartile of fundamental assumptions (125-131)	38-32-9-30-27-3-21-28-19-25-8	38-32-9-30-27-3-21-28-19-25-8



The data in Table (8) showed that the first and the fourth productivity quartiles featured more match than the other quartiles with each of the five aspects of the fundamental beliefs and assumptions. In the first quartile, more than 65% of the companies whose employees acquired the lowest scores in the dimensions “order, rule-orientation and systematic thinking”, “principle of confrontation” and “lenience and cooperation” were found with the lowest productivity rates as well. In the fourth quartile, nearly 70% of the companies whose employees acquired the highest score in “intellectuality” were found with the highest productivity as well. In addition, the productivity of the fourth quartile's companies indicated a 50-percent match with the employees' scores for such aspects as “order, rule-orientation and systematic thinking”, “lenience and cooperation” and “principle of confrontation”. Additionally, 72% of the employees in the studied companies obtained a little more than half of a total of 210 scores (the threshold for employees' fundamental beliefs and assumptions score). It appears that the fundamental beliefs and assumptions of most of the employees were far away from the favorable and suitable culture needed for growth and development.

**Table 8: Percentage of the match between the companies' productivity and employees' fundamental beliefs and assumptions**

Productivity		Systematic thinking		Lenience and cooperation		Intellectuality		Principle of confrontation		Applied thinking	
Quartile	Percentage	Quartile	Percentage	Quartile	Percentage	Quartile	Percentage	Quartile	Percentage	Quartile	Percentage
0.59-1	3	2	0.66	2	0.66	1	0.33	2	66.66	1	33.33
1-2	11	3	27.27	3	27.27	2	18.18	3	27.27	0	0
2-4	12	4	33.33	3	25	4	33.33	3	25	3	25
4-7.06	13	7	53.80	6	46.15	9	69.23	7	53.84	5	38.46

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In today's competitive world, the survival and the persistence of the business entities depends on their competitiveness and the staff's culture plays a considerable role and exerts a large deal of effect on the competitiveness and productivity of the companies. Considering the theory of productivity from the perspective of activity, productivity is a cultural issue and it has to be approached within its immediate society and through the corresponding culture. Technical methods can be promising in assessing the productivity when the cultural grounds are set and prepared. The findings indicated that the companies whose staff's culture was formed based on development-oriented culture also featured a higher productivity. In the discussions on the business management, order, rule-orientation and systematic thinking have been enumerated amongst the preliminary infrastructures and necessities of every business entity's persistence and survival. A company cannot be imagined as a competitive one without its performance being based on order and system. The present research's findings also indicated that those companies would have a higher productivity that make more emphasis on and pay more attention to the order, rule-orientation and systematic thinking in their employees' fundamental beliefs and assumptions.

Establishment and keeping on order, rule-orientation and systematic thinking in a company depends on the existence of a thinking style laid on the foundation of lenience and cooperation between its members. One cannot speak of such rule-orientation and systematic thinking while the individuals who are supposed to exercise the rules in that system lack the lenience and cooperation. This is a sure reality that differences and sometimes conflicts can come about in the perspectives and tastes in group working. However, the thing that guarantees the survival and persistence of that group is the perspective based on lenience and cooperation and such an important issue cannot be actualized unless the individuals of that group believe in lenience and cooperation.

It was also considered that the companies wherein culture of lenience and cooperation governs their employees' intercommunications featured higher productivity in contrast to the companies lacking and/or paying less attention to this culture. It seems that the absence and/or lack of the regulations and systems in the company and/or the self-absorbed and

individualist personalities of the employees are amongst the important factors giving rise to the low level of lenience and cooperation culture in the enterprises. Absence of a rule in the company is followed by non-transparency in the relations and roles of the individuals as a result of which, inconsistency and tension come about in the individuals' interrelationships inside the company. Haughtiness and self-absorption of the individuals, as well, would make the rules and system's implementation face problems in the company. The prerequisite and infrastructure of lenience and cooperation culture is the existence of this fundamental belief and assumption that the individuals' speaking and behaving has to be based on intellectuality and logics. The individuals with behaviors based on intellectuality calculate things and look for a reason and a rationale for performing everything; they try to find answers to the reasons and effects and they do not bind the events and incidents to chance and supernatural things; they are futurists and do not approach the relations with the others through short-sighted short-term perspectives. Additionally, data indicated that the companies who had higher intellectuality governing their employees' fundamental assumptions and beliefs enjoyed a higher productivity.

The abovementioned fundamental assumptions and beliefs are all necessary and required but not sufficient for the companies' survival and persistence. It is well known that the businesses do not work in separate and alone rather they are competing with one another to win their customers' satisfaction. Technological progresses, as well, have caused the competition between the companies to exit their local and regional states and many of the companies are coerced to compete with their rivals in global level. The fundamental belief and assumption of the individuals who preempt their rivals is that their competitors are not their enemies and that they should be authenticated but competed. Therefore, the business entities are incumbently compelled to face their competitors and those companies can overtake their rivals that can better and more win the customers' satisfaction. The principle of confrontation also implies customer-orientation culture. The companies believing that the customer has a right to choose and have offering of valuable products to the customers as their existential philosophy would be also leading in the competition arena. This was the issue well reflected in the results obtained herein.

Additionally, the study results showed that the culture of a company had a positive effect on its productivity and competitiveness when there was a balance established between the aspects and indicators constituting the culture thereof. The employees of a company may have an acceptable situation in one or two aspects of culture but they may be found not in an appropriate situation in terms of the other aspects of the organizational culture. Thus, such an organizational culture cannot be a suitable ground and support for companies' development and competitiveness. In sum, findings of the study demonstrated the significant statistical relationship between business entities' productivity and the culture and personality of their employees. Therefore, it can be possibly stated that many of the Iranian businesses' challenges and problems, especially their low share of the market and their low competitiveness power, are rooted in their corresponding cultures. Findings also verified the accuracy of this claim and the companies whose employees' beliefs and cultures had been formed based on the fixed principles of development and development-oriented culture were found enjoying a higher productivity hence a higher competition power.



However, it is known that the individuals' sociability forms in family, amongst the group of others in the same age, in schools, educational institutions, workplaces and, generally, in the society. In other words, the fundamental beliefs and assumptions of the business entities' staff are not solely formed in the company environment. Before entering the company, individuals have lived in the society for years with their perspectives and attitudes being well established towards life and business. Moreover, staff members only spend part of their day in the workplace with the rest being spent in the society. The companies are also enumerated amongst the subsystems and subparts of the society. Naturally, the companies are more influenced than the environment and society. Therefore, it is inappropriate to expect the employers and managers of the businesses solely form their employees' culture based on fixed development principles and the society's problems and challenges would be accordingly left unsolved.

According to the fact that productivity and competitiveness of the businesses are directly associated with the culture and they should be investigated within the format of the society and culture, it is necessary to pay serious attentions to the fixed development principles as the grounds and infrastructures of the cultural and personality upbringing of the individuals in the policymaking and strategies related to the fostering of human workforce at schools, universities and educational centers, ministries and the responsible and industry-related institutions as well as the sections in charge of the country's general culture.

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