# Identification of Criteria and Indicators of the "Paternal Home" Metaphor in Public Organizations

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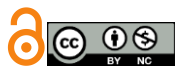**\* Corresponding author email address**: Davoodkia@iauc.ac.ir

A r t i c l e   I n f o

**Article type:**
*Original Research*

**How to cite this article:**

A B S T R A C T

**Objective:** This study aims to identify the criteria and indicators of the "Paternal Home" metaphor in public organizations. This metaphor can reflect the distribution of power, authority, responsibility, expectations, and organizational values.

**Methodology:** Using the phenomenological method, a framework of these criteria and indicators has been identified at the levels of managers, employees, and the organization. This framework was developed through semi-structured interviews and Colaizzi's content analysis.

**Findings:** At the managerial level, the identified criteria are: clear goals of the manager, manager's support, managerial modeling, managerial consideration, power sharing and participation, justice and non-discrimination, and managerial transparency. At the employee level, the identified criteria are: organizational commitment of employees, employee effectiveness, task importance, trust among employees, employee dependency and attachment to the organization, willingness to continue cooperation with the organization, loyalty and sense of responsibility towards the organization, employee altruism, work conscience among employees, protection of organizational resources, civic behavior and social etiquette of employees, employee interest, and employee intimacy. At the organizational level, the identified criteria are: organizational integrity and honesty, organizational reliability, organizational competence, shared organizational vision, team learning in the organization, organizational attention to employees, and organizational adaptability and organicity.

**Conclusion:** These findings can help organizations create an environment that employees perceive as their paternal home, thereby increasing their commitment, loyalty, responsibility, and satisfaction.

**Keywords:** *Organization as Paternal Home, Public Organizations, Metaphor*

# 1 Introduction

Nowadays, the increasing complexity of organizations and the rising prevalence of unethical and illegal behaviors in workplaces have necessitated that managers and leaders create and maintain environments free from any form of deviance and misconduct in all organizations. If the attitudes and behaviors of employees are not aligned with the organization's philosophy or values, the organization will experience instability and dysfunction. Examples of such disruptive behaviors include indiscipline, frequent absenteeism, delinquency, misconduct, anti-organizational behavior, and sabotage (Litzky et al., 2006), shirking, rudeness towards colleagues, and withholding effort (Saravakos & Sirakoulis, 2014). Consequently, one of the issues many organizations struggle with is the changing behavior of their employees over time. An employee who initially exhibits professional and excellent behavior towards customers may change over time, resulting in customer dissatisfaction. Similarly, a manager known for precise and honorable work may suddenly be found guilty of bribery or embezzlement (Amiri et al., 2018). In response to this issue, in recent years, the topic of metaphors in organizational studies has attracted researchers' attention and interest, leading to a significant body of research aimed at developing theoretical understanding, philosophical concepts, and empirical interpretations of this subject (Tohidian & Rahimian, 2019).

Therefore, scholars in management have so far proposed various metaphors to aid in understanding organizations. Each metaphor, viewing the organization from a specific perspective, has elucidated particular aspects and dimensions of organizations for researchers in organizational and management studies. For instance, the valuable works of Morgan and Hatch are metaphor-based studies that have approached the organizational phenomenon more fundamentally than purely technique-driven perspectives on management (Tohidian & Rahimian, 2019). Accordingly, in this study, the researcher intends to design a model to introduce a new metaphor called the "Paternal Home" metaphor in public organizations. Given the novelty of this metaphor and to conceptualize and explain the relevant components, it is essential to draw from existing theories and related concepts.

One of the theories that can aid in conceptualizing the "Paternal Home" metaphor is Theory Z or Japanese management. In Japanese management, the principle is to align and harmonize the interests of workers and management, and these two aspects are not only entirely compatible but also mutually reinforcing. Another theory that can be used to conceptualize the "Paternal Home" metaphor is the Learning Organization theory. The Learning Organization, as a new managerial model, is based on deep theories and backgrounds. The significant interest of companies and academic circles in this model is due to its ability to develop and enhance learning capabilities in organizations and economic enterprises (Lehtonen & Martinsuo, 2009). Parent companies are another concept that can be effective in explaining the components of the "Paternal Home" metaphor. Today, parent companies play a crucial role in managing and supervising their subsidiaries and enhancing their industrial activities. However, the main problem of parent companies is the lack of clarity and confusion of responsibilities among units. A successful parental role must align the performance methods of parent companies with their business characteristics. The parental strategy should determine how value can be added to each organizational structure, and the main structure should align with the value creation strategy (Nazarizadeh et al., 2018). Moreover, many organizational change programs fail to engage the parent organization's staff sufficiently, leading to problems or failures in achieving their goals. Traditional management literature has always examined projects and programs as isolated entities, while recent research focuses on the content of change programs. Given the weaknesses of analogy and induction in understanding, the use of analogy and metaphor in understanding organizations and their interactions has gained significant importance. Hence, metaphorical studies in the organizational field have garnered more serious attention than other areas of social sciences (Lehtonen & Martinsuo, 2009).

In this article, given the numerous challenges faced by public organizations, we intend to present a model where employees perceive their organization as their paternal home. Using metaphors, a powerful tool in the field of organization and management, we aim to facilitate organizational transformations and correct employee organizational behavior patterns in public organizations. In this context, we will identify the components of the "Paternal Home" metaphor in public organizations. Given the theoretical and research gaps on this subject, this study aims to identify the criteria and indicators of the "Paternal Home" metaphor in public organizations. This metaphor can reflect the distribution of power, authority, responsibility, expectations, and organizational values. We hope that the

findings of this study can help improve the organizational behavior patterns of employees in public organizations.

## 2    Methods and Materials

In this study, the phenomenological method was used to identify appropriate criteria and indicators for measuring the "Paternal Home" metaphor in public organizations. Given the nature of the topic and the lack of sufficient information, this method allows us to understand and analyze the mental images of subject matter experts and discover hidden dimensions.

The participants in this study were experts and specialists in managerial metaphors, selected using purposive sampling. The main criterion for selecting participants was having at least 20 years of experience in public organizations. Data saturation was achieved after conducting nine semi-structured interviews, and two additional interviews were conducted for validation purposes. A structured interview protocol was used to guide the interviews systematically and reliably. After developing the interview protocol, pre-arranged interviews were conducted, and the conversation texts were edited and reviewed.

For data analysis, Colaizzi's seven-step method was employed. This method includes steps such as reading all the descriptions provided by the participant, extracting sentences and phrases related to the phenomenon under study, formulating meanings, repeating the steps for each protocol, integrating results into a comprehensive description, formulating a clear and explicit statement of the fundamental structure of the phenomenon, and finally, revisiting each participant and conducting an individual interview to ask their opinions about the findings.

In qualitative research, issues of validity and reliability are crucial. In this study, the concept of trustworthiness was used to replace validity and reliability. This concept includes criteria such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These criteria help us conceptualize the quality of the research. In this study, due to the importance of validity and reliability, techniques and strategies such as prolonged engagement in the research environment, spending extensive time with participants, peer debriefing, member checking, and triangulation through the diversity of questions, analysis of negative and contradictory cases in the data, and consulting with a panel of management experts were used to apply final judgments. Additionally, efforts were made to provide detailed descriptions of the study context, assumptions, and research conditions to enhance the transferability of the findings (equivalent to external validity in quantitative research). To ensure the dependability of the research (equivalent to reliability in quantitative research), efforts were made to provide detailed descriptions of how data was collected, decision-making processes, interpretations, and analyses during the research process, creating an "audit trail." This audit trail means making raw data and the methods of their collection, recording, and documentation, theoretical and short notes, findings and results notes, and the integration of personal notes and research processes accessible. Moreover, to enhance the confirmability of the research findings (equivalent to objectivity in quantitative research), efforts were made to use field notes during the data collection and analysis process to control the researchers' thoughts, beliefs, and expectations during the data collection and analysis process as much as possible.

## 3    Findings and Results

In order to address the main research question, the interviews were reviewed, and the identified findings were categorized into criteria and indicators. A total of 27 criteria and 86 indicators were identified under three main factors: manager, employees, and organization. Specifically, 7 criteria and 27 indicators were identified for the organizational factor, 13 criteria and 38 indicators for the employee factor, and 7 criteria and 21 indicators for the managerial factor. These findings are detailed in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Identified Factors, Criteria, and Indicators for the Paternal Home Metaphor in Public Organizations*

| Factor | Criteria | Indicators |
|---|---|---|
| Organization | Organizational Integrity | Fair and just behavior towards all employees |
| | | Involvement of all employees in important organizational decisions |
| | | Guidance of behavior by rules and principles |
| | | Managers acting on their words and gaining employee trust |
| | Organizational Reliability | Organizational reliability and commitment to promises |
| | | Utilizing employee opinions in important decisions |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | Fulfilling promises to employees |
| | | Approaching managers in case of problems |
| | Organizational Competence | Ability to perform tasks as directed by the organization |
| | | Employee confidence in organizational skills |
| | | Organizational success in achieving goals and plans |
| | Shared Organizational Vision | Presenting a vision statement for employees to align with values |
| | | Vision statement endorsed and accepted by the majority |
| | | Shared vision between employees and managers on work methods |
| | | Opportunities for self-evaluation in achieving goals |
| | Team Learning in the Organization | Presence of incentives for solving issues among employees before referring to supervisors |
| | | Problem-solving groups involving employees from various departments |
| | | Training through work teams |
| | Organizational Attention to Employees | Allowing each employee to express opinions on work-related decisions |
| | | Providing opportunities for employees to improve work quality |
| | | Facilitating connections among colleagues to resolve work problems |
| | Adaptive and Organic Organization | Reviewing policies by affected individuals before implementation |
| | | Emphasis on allowing individuals to showcase abilities and talents |
| | | Temporary and changing work groups in the organization |
| | | Emphasis on continuous and effective adaptation to environmental changes |
| | | Review and approval of all decisions by higher management |
| Employees | Organizational Commitment Among Employees | Existence of a durable relationship between individuals and the organization |
| | | Preference for collaboration with their own organization over others |
| | | Sense of belonging to the organization |
| | Employee Effectiveness | High control over what happens in the work unit |
| | | Consideration of opinions in work unit decision-making |
| | Task Importance | Meaningfulness of the work being done |
| | | Importance and significance of the work being done |
| | Trust Among Employees | Trust in colleagues' honesty |
| | | Confidence in sharing important information among colleagues |
| | Employee Dependency and Attachment to the Organization | Happiness from spending the rest of their employment period in this organization |
| | | Feeling that the organization's problems are their own |
| | | Feeling like a member of the organizational family |
| | Willingness to Continue Working with the Organization | Difficulty in leaving the job even voluntarily |
| | | Feeling that there are few chances of finding another job |
| | Loyalty and Responsibility Towards the Organization | Not leaving the current job even with a better offer |
| | | Belief in loyalty to the current job and organization |
| | | Belief that conditions were better in the past when people spent most of their careers in one organization |
| | | Emphasis on adherence to professional ethics in the organization |
| | Employee Altruism | Willingness to perform colleagues' tasks when they need help |
| | | Willingness to help colleagues with heavy workloads |
| | | Assisting in colleagues' tasks for better productivity |
| | Work Conscience Among Employees | Following organizational rules and regulations even without supervision |
| | | Seriousness in performing duties and minimizing work errors |
| | | Timely presence at work and striving to complete tasks on time |
| | | Extensive effort to improve work quality |
| | | Effort to keep the work environment clean and tidy |
| | Protection of Organizational Resources | Not using work hours for personal matters |
| | | Not taking advantage of sick leave or making excuses to use it |
| | Employee Civic Behavior and Social Etiquette | Paying attention to organizational notices, messages, and information posters |
| | | Participation and presence in meetings related to organizational issues |
| | | Providing constructive suggestions to improve unit operations |
| | Employee Interest | Interest in attending workplace meetings |
| | | Interest in solving clients' problems |
| | | Showing initiative and creativity in work |
| | Employee Intimacy | Bonding and socializing with colleagues outside the workplace |
| | | Helping each other in facing problems |
| | | Enjoying socializing and talking with each other at work |

| Manager | Clear Managerial Goals | Clearly defining tasks and responsibilities |
|---|---|---|
| | | Clearly stating expectations |
| | Managerial Support | Providing regular feedback and necessary support |
| | | Defending and supporting the interests and concerns of the work unit |
| | Managerial Role Modeling | Complete acceptance of the manager as a role model and striving to emulate them |
| | | Encouraging successful employees who can serve as role models |
| | | Creating role models for exemplary behavior |
| | Managerial Consideration | Seeing the manager as a friend, not a superior |
| | | Providing opportunities for employees to express their opinions |
| | | Holding formal work environment meetings with agendas |
| | Power Sharing and Participation by the Manager | Allowing employee participation in decision-making |
| | | Considering decision-making based on subordinate suggestions |
| | | Delegating challenging responsibilities to subordinates |
| | | Creating a suitable environment for employee participation |
| | Managerial Justice and Non-Discrimination | Fair distribution of workload with corresponding rewards |
| | | Making impartial and fair decisions |
| | | Fair responsibilities and proper scheduling |
| | | Avoiding discrimination and adhering to merit principles in appointments |
| | Managerial Transparency | Clarifying ambiguities and solving organizational problems through transparency |
| | | Creating transparent and equal conditions for employee promotion and growth |
| | | Preventing the creation of an unhealthy organizational atmosphere through transparency |

## 3.1 Organization

One dimension of the identified model from the interviews pertains to the organization and its characteristics, comprising seven sub-themes: organizational integrity, organizational reliability, organizational competence, shared organizational vision, team learning in the organization, organizational attention to employees, and adaptive and organic organization.

The paternal home metaphor in public organizations includes aspects such as organizational integrity. This organizational model is based on ethical and social ideals present in society. Organizational integrity refers to behaviors that the organization must adhere to in fulfilling its duties, including fair performance of tasks, revealing truths instead of hiding them, assigning tasks to suitable individuals, and verifying the accuracy of information and opinions. In the organizational model of the paternal home metaphor, organizational integrity is recognized as one of the fundamental principles. This model emphasizes that the organization must always prioritize its longevity and sustainability, achievable only through adherence to ethical and social principles. Therefore, to create an organization based on the paternal home metaphor in public organizations, organizational integrity must be emphasized as a fundamental principle, familiar and adhered to by all individuals within the organization.

One interviewee's view on organizational integrity: "In my opinion, when honesty and goodwill prevail in the organization and all members are intimate with each other, and there is a healthy atmosphere, we can get closer to the concept of the paternal home metaphor."

Organizational Reliability: This criterion refers to the stability and reliability of the organization, which attracts the trust of customers, employees, shareholders, and other stakeholders. In other words, organizational reliability means that the organization can create trust and confidence in its customers and other stakeholders and can easily provide them with services and products. Approaching the system as a paternal home requires strong organizational reliability. A reliable organization, like a paternal home, is one that individuals can trust and seek refuge in.

Organizational Competence: This criterion encompasses a set of attributes, abilities, knowledge, skills, and characteristics that an organization must possess to perform effectively and efficiently. Organizational competence means the ability of the organization's members to perform their duties and tasks professionally and with quality. These competencies relate to individual skills, technical knowledge, experience, and other capabilities of the organization's members. Organizational competence, as a crucial factor in creating a healthy and sustainable organizational culture, plays a significant role in approaching the system as a paternal home.

Shared Organizational Vision: This criterion plays a significant role in approaching the system as a paternal home. By formulating a clear and attractive vision of the organization's future, motivation, job satisfaction, and solidarity among members can be enhanced, contributing to

organizational growth and development. Additionally, increasing customer trust in the organization can strengthen competitiveness and ensure the quality of services and products provided by the organization. Therefore, creating and developing a shared organizational vision is of high importance and should be considered a priority.

One interviewee's view on shared vision: "When we say organization, we mean a group of individuals working towards achieving goals with shared characteristics. However, when we say paternal home, it seems that while we define the conditions for achieving the goals, we also consider the organizational environment as a paternal home."

Team Learning in the Organization: Team learning as a group process, aimed at sharing experiences, knowledge, and skills through interaction and collaboration among group members, can significantly improve performance and work quality in the organization. Additionally, this process fosters a collaborative and interactive spirit within the organization, increases employee satisfaction, and enhances dynamic organizational communication. Organizations aiming to achieve goals such as improving work culture, employee satisfaction, and organizational performance can form teams with common viewpoints and goals and use this process to enhance performance and work quality. Ultimately, this process can reduce employee fatigue and stress, increase motivation and commitment, and improve overall organizational performance, transforming the organization into a paternal home for employees.

Organizational Attention to Employees: This criterion refers to the organization's consideration of the needs, problems, expectations, and desires of its employees. An organization that pays attention to its employees creates an environment for them that resembles the paternal home. In this environment, employees feel safe and comfortable, perceiving the organization as a paternal home. Approaching the organization as a paternal home means creating a comfortable and friendly environment for employees. In this space, employees can confidently pursue their dreams and develop themselves. Similarly, in a paternal home, individuals live together and, through cooperation and solidarity, help achieve shared goals. Therefore, organizations that value their employees as family members generally attract individuals who feel a sense of responsibility and belonging to the organization and strive for personal and organizational advancement.

Adaptive and Organic Organization: Adaptability refers to systematic and planned influence on changes and adjustments to the environment. In this scenario, the organization quickly changes based on environmental transformations and new needs, striving to align with its surroundings. An organic organization, on the other hand, integrates traditional and modern organizational structures, aiming for a dynamic and flexible structure that simultaneously resembles traditional structures and embraces innovation and change. Adaptive and organic organizations are often regarded as ideal workplaces for employees due to their high work spirit and dynamic and creative environment. This leads to motivated and enthusiastic employees who contribute to achieving organizational goals. Overall, adaptive and organic organizations provide a suitable foundation for career development, effective interaction, quality of life improvement, and fostering a high work spirit among employees.

## 3.2    Employees

Another dimension of the identified model from the interviews pertains to the organization's employees, comprising thirteen sub-themes: organizational commitment among employees, employee effectiveness, task importance, trust among employees, employee dependency and attachment to the organization, willingness to continue working with the organization, loyalty and responsibility towards the organization, employee altruism, work conscience among employees, protection of organizational resources, employee civic behavior and social etiquette, employee interest, and employee intimacy. A brief description of each is provided below.

Organizational Commitment Among Employees: Organizational commitment among employees can help transform the organization into a paternal home. Organizational commitment indicates that employees are loyal to their organization and adhere to organizational values and goals. This fosters a sense of security and belonging among employees, making the organization feel like a second home. Organizational commitment enhances work processes, work relationships, creates a friendly work environment, and increases trust in the organization. Consequently, the organization becomes a paternal home for its employees, where they feel comfortable, secure, and connected. When employees have organizational commitment, this commitment fosters the feeling of the organization as a paternal home. Generally, from the interviewees' perspective, the feeling of the organization as

a paternal home means creating a friendly, welfare-oriented, and supportive work environment for employees.

One interviewee's view on organizational commitment among employees: "Someone who is not committed and responsible does not pursue learning, synergy, and problem-solving. The main axis is that the organization should be a learning organization, and its human resources should be responsible and committed. If such people are correctly appointed, related to their job, and properly supported, you will see enthusiasm and job interest in their behavior, and such an organization tends to be healthy."

Employee Effectiveness: Employee effectiveness and its relation to the organization as a paternal home mean that, just as parents strive to provide the best conditions and support for their children, the organization should also strive to provide the best conditions and support for its employees so they can use their abilities effectively and improve organizational performance. Similarly, as parents respect their children and try to meet their needs, the organization should respect its employees and pay attention to their needs and abilities. By creating a suitable work environment and supporting employees, the organization, like a paternal home, can help its employees participate effectively in organizational performance and improve organizational performance.

Task Importance: The tasks of employees in the organization can significantly contribute to approaching the organization as a paternal home. These tasks include collaboration and interaction, adherence to organizational values, improving service and product quality, and active participation in organizational processes. By performing these tasks, employees can help improve performance and productivity, enhance the quality of services and products, increase customer satisfaction, strengthen communication among employees, and contribute to creating a unique identity and distinction for the organization. Therefore, the importance of employee tasks in approaching the organization as a paternal home is very high. By performing their tasks, employees help improve performance and organizational effectiveness, enhance service and product quality, increase customer satisfaction, and strengthen customer trust in the organization. Therefore, the role of employees in approaching the organization as a paternal home is crucial in improving performance and productivity.

Trust Among Employees: Trust among employees can act as a key factor in creating a good and effective work environment similar to a paternal home. When employees trust each other, they feel satisfied and content with their work and organization, contributing to a positive work environment and friendly relationships. This work environment may resemble a paternal home where employees treat each other respectfully and with goodwill, working together to achieve organizational goals and missions.

Employee Attachment to the Organization: According to the interviewees, employee attachment means that employees enjoy and empathize with their organization. They enjoy friendly and intimate relationships with colleagues and managers and feel they are part of a supportive and caring community.

Willingness to Continue Working with the Organization: Willingness to continue working with the organization means employees' desire and inclination to continue their activities and services to the organization. This willingness usually stems from the benefits and opportunities provided by the organization to its employees, as well as positive and friendly relationships with colleagues and managers. In an organization perceived as a paternal home by employees, the desire to continue working is higher. This is because an organization that resembles a paternal home has close and friendly relationships with its employees and generally enjoys a friendly, stable, and effective work environment.

Loyalty and Responsibility Towards the Organization: Increased loyalty and responsibility among employees in an organization can make it more like a paternal home. This is because employee loyalty and responsibility create a friendly, close-knit, and dynamic work environment where members work harmoniously and rely on each other. Employee loyalty to the organization fosters trust and commitment between employees and the organization, which is crucial in strengthening relationships among organizational members and creating a friendly and intimate work environment.

Employee Altruism: Employee altruism refers to the positive and friendly interactions among employees. As a metaphor, employee altruism can be compared to a paternal home within the organization. In this metaphor, the organization is like a family, and the employees are like family members who, through cooperation and solidarity, achieve greater success in organizational tasks and work in a stable and protected environment. In a paternal home, individuals have intimate and honest relationships and try to help each other and avoid unnecessary stress and conflicts. Therefore, if friendships and work relationships in the organization are established in a friendly and honest manner, it can help create a stable and protected work environment.

Similarly, in the organization, members should respect and help each other to achieve greater success.

Work Conscience Among Employees: Work conscience refers to the sense of responsibility and consideration for the impact of one's work on others and the work environment. Employees with a strong work conscience typically focus more and make greater efforts to improve their work, increasing work quality and job satisfaction. Work conscience in the organization can improve employee performance and job satisfaction, enhance customer relationships, and improve organizational performance. Approaching the organization as a paternal home means creating an emotionally connected and continuous environment for employees. The presence of work conscience among employees can help establish these emotional connections and ultimately strengthen internal relationships and organizational stability. Overall, work conscience is an essential attribute that should be strengthened in employees as it can improve individual and organizational performance, enhance work culture, and increase job satisfaction, ultimately helping the organization approach the paternal home metaphor.

Protection of Organizational Resources: Protecting organizational resources plays a vital role in the organization's progress and the perception of the organization as a paternal home. Organizations that protect their resources are financially more stable, incur lower replacement costs, and are consequently more profitable. Progress and growth in the organization require creating a positive and long-term vision. Protecting resources helps maintain these long-term visions.

Employee Civic Behavior and Social Etiquette: Employee civic behavior and social etiquette include a set of rules and behaviors that employees must observe in the workplace and in interactions with colleagues, managers, and customers. Observing social etiquette in the organization can play a significant role in transforming the organization into an environment similar to a paternal home. Social etiquette improves communication between employees, managers, and customers, creating a friendly and warm atmosphere in the workplace. By observing social etiquette, employees show respect for customers and colleagues and adjust their behavior to create a friendly and warm atmosphere, considering the organization's cultural environment.

Employee Interest: Interest can be achieved through developing positive human relations within the organization, providing educational and professional opportunities, improving employees' social and economic status, enhancing organizational culture, and promoting transparency and flexibility within the organization. As a result, employees feel they are part of a larger family, increasing motivation and job satisfaction. Additionally, this feeling can increase collaboration and interaction among employees, improving organizational performance.

One interviewee's view on employee interest: "A successful organization is one where employees love to be. This makes employees eager to come to work. When they go home on weekends, they look forward to coming back to work on Saturday."

Employee Intimacy: Intimacy fosters friendly and trusting relationships among employees, positively impacting work processes. Employees who are closer collaborate better and find solutions to problems more effectively. Intimate relationships lead to increased job satisfaction, confidence, and respect. Therefore, intimacy in the organization creates positive relationships and a sense of enjoyment and peace in work, bringing the organization closer to the paternal home metaphor.

### 3.3 Manager

Another dimension of the identified model from the interviews pertains to organizational managers, comprising seven sub-themes: clear managerial goals, managerial support, managerial role modeling, managerial consideration, power-sharing and participation by the manager, managerial justice and non-discrimination, and managerial transparency. A brief description of each criterion is provided below.

Clear Managerial Goals: Clear managerial goals in an organization refer to a set of specific and clear objectives that the manager sets for the organization. Having clear goals by the organization's manager plays a significant role in approaching the organization as a paternal home. Just as a paternal home is a secure and stable place for the family, an organization with clear and specific goals uses a stable and secure path for progress and growth.

One interviewee's view on clear managerial goals: "In a paternal home, family members consider the family's goals as their own and thus share in its success and failure. Similarly, in an organization, when the manager's goals are clear, the workforce can play a role in achieving these goals and share in the successes and failures."

Managerial Support: When employees know their manager supports them in performing their duties, they feel

secure and calm, allowing them to work more freely. This environment is similar to that of a family and the paternal home. Managerial support indicates the manager's interest and attention to employees, fostering warm and friendly relationships among members, just like in a family. When employees know their manager supports them, it strengthens their trust in the manager and each other, creating a greater sense of solidarity. Managerial support leads to greater satisfaction and motivation among employees, akin to family members being satisfied with their father's support. Therefore, in summary, managerial support can transform the organization into a secure, friendly, and cohesive environment similar to the paternal home.

Managerial Role Modeling: Managerial role modeling in an organization means the manager sets an example for others through behavior and actions. When the manager follows specific behavioral patterns, these patterns naturally reflect in others. Managerial role modeling in approaching the organization as a paternal home means creating positive and effective behaviors in management and leadership that are exemplary and can be followed by team members and the organization.

Managerial Consideration: Managerial consideration is crucial in approaching the organization as a paternal home. Through careful observation and consideration, the manager closely monitors the systems and employees' performance and takes appropriate actions to improve performance and productivity. By providing feedback and guidance to employees, the manager can direct them towards growth and improvement, ultimately enhancing the organization's efficiency and performance. Like a father adhering to family values and ethics, the manager also needs to adhere to organizational values and ethics, strengthening organizational culture and guiding employees towards organizational goals.

Power Sharing and Participation by the Manager: Power sharing and employee participation by the organization's manager can help approach the organization as a paternal home. By creating opportunities for employee participation in decision-making processes and sharing power, managers can allow employees to play a positive role in the organization. This makes employees feel that they are not just part of the organization but are recognized as owners and participants in the decision-making and implementation processes. By involving employees, managers can leverage their experience, knowledge, and expertise, leading to better organizational decisions.

Managerial Justice and Non-Discrimination: Managerial justice and non-discrimination mean treating employees fairly and equally without favoritism. In this scenario, the manager evaluates employees based on their performance and capabilities rather than personal preferences or friendships. This fosters employee satisfaction and motivation, ultimately improving organizational performance and development. Therefore, achieving a dynamic and effective organization requires the manager to uphold justice and treat all employees equally. This means evaluating employees based on performance, capabilities, and competencies without favoritism in promotions and financial and non-financial benefits. In summary, managerial justice and non-discrimination play a crucial role in transforming the organization into a large family.

Managerial Transparency: Managerial transparency as a fundamental management principle helps managers make the best decisions and assure employees, customers, and other stakeholders that the organization operates correctly. Managerial transparency ensures that members are aware of managerial performance and decisions, fostering greater trust in the organization and creating a sense of connection and solidarity with the organization and colleagues. When managers provide necessary information to employees and other stakeholders, organizational members feel more autonomy and responsibility.

One interviewee's view on managerial transparency: "A manager must have transparency and display honesty. Now, if a manager is dishonest, it's clear that the personnel and subordinates won't trust them. Why should they trust?"

## 4 Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to identify the criteria and indicators of the paternal home metaphor in public organizations. Using the phenomenological method, the framework of criteria and indicators for the paternal home metaphor in public organizations was identified. The findings revealed that these criteria and indicators are distinguishable at the levels of managers, employees, and the organization. At the managerial level, the identified criteria are: clear managerial goals, managerial support, managerial role modeling, managerial consideration, power-sharing and participation, managerial justice and non-discrimination, and managerial transparency. At the employee level, the identified criteria are: organizational commitment among employees, employee effectiveness, task importance, trust among employees, employee dependency and attachment to

the organization, willingness to continue working with the organization, loyalty and responsibility towards the organization, employee altruism, work conscience among employees, protection of organizational resources, employee civic behavior and social etiquette, employee interest, and employee intimacy. At the organizational level, the identified criteria are: organizational integrity, organizational reliability, organizational competence, shared organizational vision, team learning in the organization, organizational attention to employees, and adaptive and organic organization.

The paternal home metaphor is one of the metaphors used in examining organizational culture, depicting the relationship between employees and managers with an emphasis on the role of the father in the family. This metaphor can illustrate the distribution of power, authority, responsibility, expectations, and organizational values. In public organizations, which are usually hierarchical, formal, and bureaucratic, the paternal home metaphor may be more prominent (Lehtonen & Martinsuo, 2009). Based on the interview findings, some characteristics of this metaphor in public organizations include: the father of the organization, meaning the high-ranking manager who has overall supervision of the organization and makes strategic decisions. It is respected and admired but may also be feared and tolerated. The children of the organization, meaning the lower-level employees who perform operational tasks and adhere to the father's directives. They seek the father's satisfaction but may also feel rebellious, angry, or distrustful towards him. The siblings of the organization, meaning the peers who cooperate and have friendly or competitive relationships with each other. They may form informal groups and advocate for their interests. The paternal home of the organization, meaning the physical and spiritual space of the organization, including its structure, infrastructure, rules, regulations, emblems, logos, and symbolic elements. This space is where the father and children of the organization are present, active, and interact, and it must be respected (Abedi, 2010; Saravakos & Sirakoulis, 2014).

The concept of the organization as a paternal home in the public sector is a common term used to describe the relationships and duties of employees in public organizations. This term suggests that public organizations should act as a united and cooperative family, and employees should treat each other with respect and trust. The organization as a paternal home in the public sector is not just a term but an organizational culture essential for enhancing job satisfaction, organizational commitment,

coordination, and cooperation, improving service quality, and enhancing the performance of public organizations. This organizational culture implies that organizations must respect each other and work together effectively to achieve organizational goals to create a healthy and sustainable work environment (Ghorbankhani et al., 2024; Ghorbankhani et al., 2022; Ghorbankhani et al., 2020). As an organizational culture, the "organization as a paternal home" can help improve organizational performance, increase employee commitment and job satisfaction, enhance internal coordination and cooperation, and ultimately improve the quality of services provided to the public. In this organizational culture, the organization acts as a united and cooperative family, and employees treat each other with respect and trust. This approach is particularly important in public organizations responsible for delivering public services and can help improve service quality and public satisfaction (Nazarizadeh et al., 2018; Tohidian & Rahimian, 2019).

Given the theoretical and research gaps in this area and the lack of conducted studies, it is suggested that the validity of the findings of the present study be examined in a quantitative research approach. Additionally, it is recommended to design a tool for measuring each of the identified criteria.

**Authors' Contributions**

All authors have contributed significantly to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

**Declaration**

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

**Transparency Statement**

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

**Acknowledgments**

We would like to express our gratitude to all individuals helped us to do the project.

**Declaration of Interest**

The authors report no conflict of interest.

**Ethical Considerations**

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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