

Designing a Model of Organizational Authenticity, Its Antecedents and Consequences at Kerman University of Medical Sciences

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the first paragraph of the Introduction, the authors state that “authenticity has emerged as one of the most important concepts in organizational behavior and management research.” This assertion is overly broad and requires stronger empirical justification. The authors should provide bibliometric evidence, citation trends, or a more critical synthesis demonstrating why organizational authenticity has become a dominant research construct relative to related concepts such as organizational identity, legitimacy, ethical climate, or organizational trust.

The paragraph defining organizational authenticity describes it as “the extent to which organizational practices, decisions, communications, and behaviors are perceived as genuine, consistent, and aligned with the organization's core values and identity.” Although useful, this definition remains largely descriptive. The authors should critically compare competing

conceptualizations of organizational authenticity and explicitly justify why this specific definition was adopted as the theoretical foundation of the study.

The Introduction presents authentic leadership, organizational culture, organizational justice, psychological safety, employee authenticity, and empowerment as antecedents of organizational authenticity. However, the manuscript does not provide a coherent theoretical framework explaining how these variables interact. A conceptual model grounded in a specific theory (e.g., social exchange theory, institutional theory, organizational identity theory, or authentic leadership theory) should be introduced before presenting the antecedents individually.

Table 2 includes interview excerpts regarding antecedents of organizational authenticity. Several excerpts appear repetitive. For instance, statements by participants I.7 through I.15 substantially overlap with earlier quotations. The authors should provide more diverse quotations and ensure that each excerpt illustrates a unique aspect of the identified themes.

Similarly, Table 3 contains repeated statements regarding consequences of organizational authenticity. For example, participant I.13 repeats the phrase “We are always thinking about improving our work methods,” and participant I.15 repeats the same sentence about “inner peace and deep satisfaction.” These repetitions reduce analytical depth and should be replaced with richer illustrative evidence.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the new document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The statement “medical universities occupy a unique position because they simultaneously serve educational, research, healthcare, and community service functions” is important but underdeveloped. The authors should elaborate why organizational authenticity may manifest differently in medical universities compared with other higher education institutions or healthcare organizations and explain what contextual characteristics make Kerman University of Medical Sciences a suitable case.

The research gap presented in the final section of the Introduction is relatively generic. The paragraph beginning with “Despite growing scholarly interest in authenticity...” should be strengthened by systematically reviewing existing organizational authenticity models and explicitly identifying which dimensions, relationships, or contextual factors remain unexplored. The current justification does not sufficiently establish the novelty of the proposed model.

In the Methods section, the authors state that “this research was conducted as an exploratory mixed-methods study (qualitative–quantitative).” However, throughout the remainder of the manuscript only qualitative procedures and findings are reported. No quantitative phase, instrument, sampling strategy, data analysis procedure, or quantitative results are presented. The authors must either report the quantitative phase comprehensively or revise the methodology and classify the study as purely qualitative.

The sampling strategy requires further clarification. The manuscript indicates that 15 experts were selected using purposive sampling, but no detailed inclusion criteria are provided beyond general references to managerial experience and familiarity with the topic. The authors should specify minimum years of experience, academic qualifications, managerial positions, and rationale for selecting each participant category.

The claim that “the interviews continued until theoretical saturation was achieved” requires methodological evidence. The manuscript should explain how saturation was assessed, which indicators were used, at what interview saturation emerged, and whether a saturation grid or coding matrix was employed. Merely stating that saturation occurred is insufficient.

The description of thematic analysis follows Braun and Clarke’s six-stage process; however, the manuscript does not report the coding structure. The authors should provide the number of initial codes, focused codes, categories, and final themes extracted during the analysis process. This information is essential for evaluating analytical rigor.

The section discussing trustworthiness refers to Guba and Lincoln’s criteria but lacks operational details. The authors should explain how credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability were specifically established. For example, was

member checking conducted? Were peer debriefings used? Was an audit trail maintained? Such information is necessary to assess qualitative validity.

Table 1 presents demographic characteristics of participants; however, some percentages appear inconsistent. For example, the percentages associated with work experience categories and educational qualifications should be checked carefully because rounding and cumulative percentages do not always align with the sample size of 15 participants. The table requires verification and possible revision.

The extensive narrative explaining each stage of thematic analysis occupies several pages and largely reproduces textbook descriptions of the method. Instead of describing generic procedures, the authors should focus on how each stage was implemented in this specific study and provide concrete examples from the coding process.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the new document.

2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.