OPEN PEER REVIEW

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- Prevents reviewers from following their individual agendas and leading to the detection of reviewers' conflicts of interests

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Peer Review Report for "Identifying Key Factors Related to the Resource Allocation in the Health Sector of the Iranian Oil Industry: Application of DEMATEL Method"

Author(s): Somayeh Nouri, Leila Riahi, Kamran Haji Nabi, Katayoun Jahangiri

Review Timeline:

Submit Date: 3 Sep 2019
Revised Date: 11 Apr 2020
Accepted Date: 19 Apr 2020

Revision (0)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (0) — 21 Sep 2019

1-Oil industry in the abstract is vague and incomplete.
2- Please point to the kind of study in the abstract and the method section.
3-include the number of interviewees in the abstract.
4-Demographic characteristics of the interviewees such as position, degree, and work experience should be presented in a table.
5-Systematic review or literature review?
6-Review method is vague and needs more explanation.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (0) — 27 Sep 2019

Dear editor
This study investigates key factors affecting resources allocation in the health sector. This is an interesting topic with potential policy implications. Before publication, however, there are various critical issues that I would recommend the authors address:

1- In the Introduction, please clearly present the novel contribution of this study -how this study builds upon the existing literature on the topic.
2- Although the article title refers to “resource allocation in the health sector”, the study is about the health sector of the Iranian Oil Industry only. I, therefore, recommend changes in the title and the text,
3- It should be noted that despite some common policies in the health sector of different organizations in Iran, each of them has its own rules and policies. I think that the health sector of the Iranian Oil Industry is not representative of the Iran health system as a whole.
3- In identifying factors affecting resource allocation some important factors have been determined. What about political considerations? Political considerations are a major potential factor with a big influence on resource allocation. I would recommend the authors to consider or discuss them as well.
5- In your Conclusion, avoid pointing out that this was the first study to do something - it is seldom important, and that particular claim is so specific as to be of little use.
6- In general, the Conclusion needs an edition. It is difficult to understand the conclusion of the study. I think that “Needs-based resource allocation can lead to improved public health and can reduce inequalities in different geographical areas.” Is not originated from the study results.
4- I would recommend reviewing the use of the English language throughout the text.

regards,

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (0) 8 Oct 2019

Dear Author/s
Abstract: which databases were analyzed?
Introduction: Write reference of the following paragraph:
“In this process, it is necessary to balance between different factors and objectives, while involving various stakeholders. In addition, resource allocation certainly affects the health outcomes of the community dramatically, and at the same time, considering that health is a public good or a universal right, resource allocation also has many social and ethical responsibilities for policymakers in the health sector.”
Write full phrase of DEMATEL in the introduction.
Method writing is a weakness. Answer to the following questions carefully:
Write all literature and papers that were investigated in a Table
Demonstrate all databases that authors had used
Declare search strategy for literature review
Why Oil industry managers were selected in the study?
Demonstrate a questionnaire that was used in the second phase.
Write about the result of the second phase and findings of the questionnaire distribution
Write 25 criteria that were selected and used in the next steps.
If the study had investigated criteria in Iran or in all world?
Write a conclusion based on the finding of the study.
Used the following paper for improvement of the manuscript
Resource allocation and purchasing arrangements to improve the accessibility of medicines: Evidence from Iran

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (0) 8 Oct 2019

Dear Editor,

The manuscript needs Major Revision.

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision** (0) 16 Oct 2019

Dear Author/s
Abstract: which databases were analyzed?
Introduction: Write reference of the following paragraph:
“In this process, it is necessary to balance between different factors and objectives, while involving various stakeholders. In addition, resource allocation certainly affects the health outcomes of the community dramatically, and at the same time, considering that health is a public good or a universal right, resource allocation also has many social and ethical responsibilities for policymakers in the health sector.”
Write full phrase of DEMATEL in the introduction.
Method writing is a weakness. Answer to the following questions carefully:
Write all literature and papers that were investigated in a Table
Demonstrate all databases that authors had used
Declare search strategy for literature review
Why Oil industry managers were selected in the study?
Demonstrate a questionnaire that was used in the second phase.
Write about the result of the second phase and findings of the questionnaire distribution
Write 25 criteria that were selected and used in the next steps.
If the study had investigated criteria in Iran or in all world?
Write a conclusion based on the finding of the study.
Used the following paper for improvement of the manuscript
Resource allocation and purchasing arrangements to improve the accessibility of medicines: Evidence from Iran

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

Reply to Reviewers

Ideally, the reviewing process can significantly improve the submitted manuscripts by allowing the authors to take into account the advice of reviewers. Author(s) must reply to all reviewers' comments in a separate Word file, point by point. A "**Reply to Reviewers**" document is submitted along with revised manuscript during submission of revised files, summarizing the changes that the authors made in response to the reviewers' comments. The responses to reviewers' comments specifies how the authors addressed each comment the reviewers made.

You can read the authors' responses to the reviewers' comments in the next page.

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the invitation to revise and resubmit our manuscript entitled "**: Identifying key factors affecting resources allocation in health sector: application of DIMATEL method**". We have revised the issues brought up by the editor and reviewers, the point-by-point response can be found below. The changes in the manuscript are highlighted in red.

Sincerely yours

Corresponding author

Reviewer 1

1-Introduction, please clearly present the novel contribution of this study- how this study build upon the existing literature on the topic.

We added some sentences to page 3 paragraph 1 to elaborate the novel contribution of the study.

2- Although the article title refers to "resource allocation in the health sector", the study is about the health sector of the Iranian Oil Industry. I therefore recommend change in the title and the text.

We changed the title and the text according to the reviwer's suggestion.

3- It should be noted that despite some common polices in the health sector of different organization in Iran, each of them has its own rules and policies. I think that the health sector of the Iranian Oil Industry is not representative of the Iran health system as a whole

We agree with the reviewer that despite some common polices, the health sector of the Iranian Oil Industry has its own rules and regulations and consequently, the results may not be completely generalizable to the entire Iran's health system. However, due to the same context, we think similarities are more than differences. The point raised in this question, was added as a limitation of the study to the limitation section (page 12, paragraph 3, line 5).

4- In Identifying factors affecting resource allocation some important factors have been determined. What about political considerations? Political considerations are a major potential factor with a big influence on resource allocation. I would recommend the authors to consider or discuss them as well.

We considered political consideration in the "Upstream documents and general policies of health system" criteria.

5- In your conclusion, avoid pointing out that this was the first study to do something- It is seldom important, and the particular claim is so specific as to be of little use.

We thank the reviewer for raising this critical issue. According to the reviewer's suggestion, this claim was removed form conclusion.

6- In general, the conclusion needs edition. It is difficult to understand the conclusion of the study. I think that "need based resource allocation can lead to improved public health and can reduce inequalities in different geographical areas." is not originated from this study.

The conclusion section was revised according to the reviewer's suggestion.

Reviewer 2

1-Oil industry in abstract is vague and incomplete.

We modified the abstract section according to the reivewer's suggestion.

2-Please point out to the kind of the study in the abstract and method section.

This was a cross sectional case study, which was mentioned in both abstract and method (page 1, paragraph 2, line 1 & page 3, paragraph 3, line 1).

3-Include the number of interviewees in the abstract.

It was added to the abstract (page 1, paragraph 2, line 2).

4-Demographic characteristics of the interviewees of the interviews such as position, degree, and work experience should be presented in a table. Demographic characteristics of the interviewees was added to the main text (page 3, last paragraph).

5- Systematic review or literature review.

It was a systematic review which was carried out and published by the authors previously (Reference # 24). The method and main results were added to the manuscript (page 3, paragraph 4 & page 5, paragraph 4).

6- Review method is vague and needs more explanations.

The review was published by authors previously. However, we added more detail to this section (page 3, paragraph 4).

Reviewer 3

Abstract: which data base were analyzed?

We searched Chocrane library, Pubmed and Scopus databases to identify possible relevant studies from 2005-2106 (page 3, paragraph 4).

1-Introduction: Write reference of following paragraph "In this process, it is necessary to balance between different factors and objectives, while involving various stakeholders. In addition, resource allocation certainly affects the health outcomes of the community dramatically, and at the same time, considering that health as a public good or a universal right, resource allocation also has many social and ethical responsibilities for policymakers in the health sector (ref)."

The reference number was added to the text (ref #2).

2-Write full phrase of DEMATEL in the introduction.

The full phrase of DEMATEL was added to the introduction section (page 2, paragraph 2, line 8).

3-Method writing is weakness. Answer the following questions carefully:

- Write all literature and papers that were investigated in a table.
  Since the results of the systematic review was published previously, we just added a brief description of it and its results (page 3, paragraph 4 & page 5, last paragraph).
- Demonstrates all data base that author has used.

  The name of databases searched were mentioned in the text (page 3, paragraph 4).

- Declare search strategy for literature review.
  Considering the fact that the results of the systematic review was published in another paper, we think there is no need to include the search strategy here. We hope the reviewer find the presentation sufficiently.
- Why oil industry managers were selected in this study?
  This setting was selected due to data availability. Since one of the author is working in the health sector of the Iranian Oil Industry, this setting was selected as the study setting.
- Demonstrate about the questionnaire that used in second phase.
  More details on the questionnaire were added to paragraph 2, page 6.
- Write about the result of second phase and finding of the questionnaire distribution.
  Actually, the results of the phase 2 were presented in Table 2 to Table 5 in the text.
- Write 25 criteria that were selected and used in the next steps.

  It was a typographical mistake. There were 19 criteria(not 25) which was listed in the text (page 5 last paragraph).
- If the study had investigated criteria in Iran or in all world?

In the systematic review the international studies were searched. However, the criteria that were entered to the final model were selected according to the Iranians experts' views.

- Write conclusion based on the finding of the study.

The conclusion part was revised according to the all reviewers' comments.

- Use the following paper for improvement of the manuscript " Resource allocation and purchasing arrangements to improve accessibility of medicines: evidence form Iran"

Thank the reviewer for introducing the article.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (1) — 16 Dec 2019

All of the requested comments were done by the authors and are accepted. thanks

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (1) — 24 Dec 2019

Dear Editor,

The manuscript is revised according to the first round of revisions. Also, other comments for this manuscript are as follows:

1. Why did you select the oil industry?
2. Previous studies have been done for determining the factors affecting resource allocation? What does the study add to the previous literature?
3. Is it a cross-sectional study? You have a qualitative method in your study.
4. Please explain more about the characteristics of the experts in each stage.

Best Regards

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (1) — 29 Dec 2019

Dear Editor,
The manuscript needs minor revision.
Best.

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision** (1) — 30 Dec 2019

Dear Editor,
The manuscript needs minor revision.
Best.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (2)

Reply to Reviewers

Ideally, the reviewing process can significantly improve the submitted manuscripts by allowing the authors to take into account the advice of reviewers. Author(s) must reply to all reviewers' comments in a separate Word file, point by point. A "**Reply to Reviewers**" document is submitted along with revised manuscript during submission of revised files, summarizing the changes that the authors made in response to the reviewers' comments. The responses to reviewers' comments specifies how the authors addressed each comment the reviewers made.

You can read the authors' responses to the reviewers' comments in the next page.

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the invitation to revise and resubmit our manuscript entitled: "**Identifying key factors affecting resources allocation in health sector: application of DIMATEL method**". We have revised the issues brought up by the editor and reviewers, the point-by-point response can be found below. The changes in the manuscript are highlighted in red.

Sincerely yours

Corresponding author

Reviewer 1

Many thanks for approval of the manuscript.

Reviewer 2

1-Why did you select Oil industry?

The health sector of the Iranian Oil Industry is an independent body that is responsible of the provision of healthcare services to the Oil industry's employees and their families across the country (almost 800.000 people) through a network of hospitals and health facilities. The allocation of resources in the health sector of the Iranian Oil Industry is faced with a number of challenges that have not been addressed before. We have mentioned the reason in page 3, paragraph 2.

In addition, this setting was selected due to data availability. Since one of the authors is working in the health sector of the Iranian Oil Industry, this setting was selected as the study setting.

2-Previos studies have been done for determining factors affecting resource allocation. What does the study added to previous literature?

We do agree with the reviewer's opinion. There are several studies in the field of resource allocation. However, we have tried to use a multi-criteria decision-making method in the field of health resource allocation to show how a multi-criteria approach can be used to solve complex problems, including rational resource allocation. We have mentioned the distinction of our study with those of similar studies in page 3, paragraph 1.

3-Is this a cross sectional study? You have qualitative method in your study?

We did a cross-sectional study that employed both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection. A sentence was added to the method section (page 3, paragraph 3, line 1) to highlight this issue.

4- Please explain more about characteristics of the experts in each stage?

The characteristics of the experts have been explained further in the text page 4,paragraph 1.

Reviewer 3

1. In title and study aim, it is recommended to use related word instead of effecting word. The effect of a variable is only measurable in interventional studies.

We appreciate the reviewer for the suggestion. The word “affecting” was replaced by “influencing” in the title and the aim of the study.

2. In introduction, describe why has been selected health sector of the Iranian oil industry.

We have provided more explanations for the reason why health sector of the Iranian oil industry has been selected as the study setting (page 3, paragraph 2).

3. Please provide more information about health sector of the Iranian oil industry.

More information about the health sector of the Iranian oil industry has been provided on page 3, Paragraph 2.

4. What does “to evaluate” mean? If you mean prioritize it is suggested that use prioritize word. Page 2

We thank the reviewer for the suggestion. The word “to evaluate” was replaced by “to prioritize” in the text.

5. What does “experienced health experts” mean? Please describe to details.

There were managers who were involved at a high level in budgeting and financial management working in the health sector of the Iranian oil Industry with at least five years experience in budgeting and financial management (page 4, paragraph 1).

6. Why is the questionnaire distributed among 250 people?

The research team decided to distribute it among all financial managers of the health sector of the Iranian health industry with at least two years experience, which were totally 250 managers.

7. Why Delphi method has not been used to evaluate the criteria?

Since similar studies used a questionnaire to prioritize the criteria, we did it too.

8. Please provide more information about the questionnaire?

The questionnaire listed 19 criteria and asked the respondents using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 0 least important to 4 most important ones to prioritize them. The sentence has been added to page 4, paragraph 1.

9. Finding, Conclusion and Discussion are suitable.

We thank the reviewer for his/her positive comment.

10. Please mention include and exclude criteria in each phase in the method.

Including and excluding criteria have mentioned already in the method section.

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Revision (2)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (2) — 21 Jan 2020

Dear Authors,
The previous comments has been done. Also, for improvment manuscript quality use of the following paper "Identifying the Criteria Affecting Appropriate Allocation of Health System Resources to Different Diseases in Iran: A Qualitative Inquiry"
Write ethical consideration in the method section.
describe more about participants selection.
Ethic code, project number and conflic of interst should be written carefully.
Best,

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (2) — 4 Feb 2020

In title and study aim, it is recommended to use related word instead of influencing word. The
effect of a variable is only measurable in interventional studies.

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (2) — 18 Feb 2020

Dear Authors,
The previous comments has been done. Also, for improvment manuscript quality use of the following paper "Identifying the Criteria Affecting Appropriate Allocation of Health System Resources to Different Diseases in Iran: A Qualitative Inquiry"
Write ethical consideration in the method section.
describe more about participants selection.
Ethic code, project number and conflic of interst should be written carefully.
describe more about quanitative approch and the numbers of studies in search section and detail.
n title and study aim, it is recommended to use related word instead of influencing word. The
effect of a variable is only measurable in interventional studies.
Best,

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision** (2) — 21 Feb 2020

Dear Authors,

The previous comments have been done. Also, for improvement manuscript quality use of the following paper "Identifying the Criteria Affecting Appropriate Allocation of Health System Resources to Different Diseases in Iran: A Qualitative Inquiry"
Write ethical considerations in the method section.
describe more about participants selection.
Ethic code, project number, and conflict of interest should be written carefully.
describe more about the quantitative approach and the number of studies in the search section and detail.
n title and study aim, it is recommended to use related words instead of influencing words. The
effect of a variable is only measurable in interventional studies.
Best,

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (3)

Reply to Reviewers

Ideally, the reviewing process can significantly improve the submitted manuscripts by allowing the authors to take into account the advice of reviewers. Author(s) must reply to all reviewers' comments in a separate Word file, point by point. A "**Reply to Reviewers**" document is submitted along with revised manuscript during submission of revised files, summarizing the changes that the authors made in response to the reviewers' comments. The responses to reviewers' comments specifies how the authors addressed each comment the reviewers made.

You can read the authors' responses to the reviewers' comments in the next page.

Thank you for submitting your valuable manuscript to the journal. We would like to inform you that the peer review of your manuscript is now completed and despite several useful points, it needs "Minor Revision". Below you may find the peer review comments. Please reply to them one-by-one and re-submit it again.

Thank you for the invitation to revise and resubmit our manuscript entitled: "**Identifying key factors related to the resource allocation in the health sector of the Iranian Oil Industry: application of DIMATEL method**". We have revised the issues brought up by the editor and reviewers. The changes in the manuscript are highlighted in red. Hope our revision meets your approval.

Sincerely yours

Corresponding author

Reviewers' Comments:

Reviewer 1:

In title and study aim, it is recommended to use related word instead of influencing word. The effect of a variable is only measurable in interventional studies.

We thank the reviewer for the comment. We have replaced "influencing" with "related to" in the title and study aim.

Reviewer 2:

Dear Authors,

The previous comments have been done. Also, for improvement manuscript quality use of the following paper "Identifying the Criteria Affecting Appropriate Allocation of Health System Resources to Different Diseases in Iran: A Qualitative Inquiry"

Thank for reviewer's suggestion. Actually, we saw this article while drafting the first draft of the manuscript and found it useful. It is the reference #8.

Write ethical consideration in the method section.

It should be mentioned that the manuscript is a part of the PhD thesis of the author first author. At the time of the thesis approval, PhD theses were not supposed to be reviewed by an ethics committee. However, we have asked for a formal letter from the University pointing out the issue to the journal (the letter will be provided immediately as soon as we receive it).

Describe more about participants selection.

Thank the reviewer for pointing this out. There were managers who were involved at a high level in budgeting and financial management (include executive officer, executive officer vice-chancellor, financial officer, financial officer vice-chancellor, development officer, development officer vice-chancellor, strategic purchasing officer and strategic purchasing officer vice-chancellor) of the health sector of the Iranian oil Industry with at least five years' experience in budgeting and resource allocation.

Ethic code, project number and conflict of interest should be written carefully.

Two parts as "conflict of interest" and "acknowledgments" have been added to the end of manuscript (Last paragraph, page 13).

As mentioned above, the project was not reviewed or approved by any ethics committee since there was not any ethics committee in our istitute then. However, there is an ethics committee now and we have asked for a letter from it to explain the issue and review and approve our study. We will send the letter as soon as we receive it.

This study was a part of a Ph.D. thesis of one of the first author (thesis code: 900767387), which has been mentioned in the acknowledgements section. The conflict of interest was also mentioned at the end of the manuscript.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (3)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (3) 18 Apr 2020

Dear Editor,
The manuscript entitles: Identifying key factors related to the resource allocation in the health sector of the Iranian Oil Industry: application of DIMATEL method, has been revised by the author/s. Now, after three review rounds, it has criteria for publication in Journal.
Best,

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (3) 18 Apr 2020

Dear Editor,
The manuscript entitles: Identifying key factors related to the resource allocation in the health sector of the Iranian Oil Industry: application of DIMATEL method, has been revised by the author/s. Now, after three review rounds, it has criteria for publication in Journal.
Best,

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision** (3) 19 Apr 2020

Dear Author
Your article has criteria for publication in Journal.
Best