Journal of Medical Education for Future Demands
Volume 22 · Issue 1 · e142760

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Applying a Meta-synthesis Approach to Present a Blended Learning Model for Talent Development

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SUBMITTED	REVISED	ACCEPTED	DOI
21 Nov 2023	27 Dec 2023	2 Jan 2024	10.5812/jme-142760

About this report

This open peer review (OPR) report shows the public comments made on this article during peer review, by the reviewers, the associate editor and the editor-in-chief, for every revision round, together with the authors' replies. Comments appear only with the consent of the people who wrote them. Reviewers who chose to sign their report are named; the others are shown as "Referee". Comments are edited for language only, and confidential remarks to the editors are not included.

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1 Original submission

3 comments · 5 Dec 2023 – 9 Dec 2023

Hamed Khani Reviewer

MAJOR REVISION 5 Dec 2023

Dear authors
Congratulations on your research focus on this important topic!
After carefully reading your research, I have provided my feedback.
Comments are included in the article file.

kind regard,

Tayyebe Shokri Reviewer

MINOR REVISION 6 Dec 2023

Thank you for choosing your subject in the field of integrated learning. Some tips for enriching your research work are mentioned in the text and attached to the referee file.

Referee 1 Reviewer

MINOR REVISION 9 Dec 2023

 The introduction section needs to be rewritten:
o The study question is not very clear. What is the main problem? The introduction does not clearly identify the main issue.
o The objective of the study should be clear in two or three sentences.
o In the introduction, mention the history of the subject worldwide or in Iran (for example, the use of the blended learning method in the training of health workers).
 Please attach your search strategy to the manuscript.
 Due to the focus on hospital staff, a search in PubMed is suggested.
 Use the PRISMA template in Figure 1.
 In the findings, describe the retrieved articles. For example, describe their methods, the countries in which the studies were conducted, and similar details.
 Most of the results presented in the method section should be transferred to the findings section. The search results and data extraction, etc., are all related to the findings of the study, not the method.
 The application of the model in the hospital setting should be further explained. In fact, how can these findings and models be used in the training and development of hospital staff? Provide a practical solution.
 Mention study limitations: Given that most of the studies you searched for were in non-hospital settings, would the same findings hold in a hospital setting, or might there be differences?

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Revision 1

AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Authors' reply to reviewers

The next pages contain the authors' point-by-point reply to the comments of this revision round, as submitted with the revised manuscript. It is published as the authors wrote it.

Thank you very much for agreeing with us on the intention of this manuscript. We have read your comments carefully and tried to address them individually. Also, thank you for allowing me to submit a revised draft of my manuscript.

We are grateful to the reviewers for their insightful comments on my paper. We have been able to incorporate changes to reflect most of the suggestions provided by the reviewers. We have highlighted the changes within the manuscript. Here is a point-by-point response to the reviewers' comments and concerns.

Comments from Reviewer 1

- **Comment 1:** *The introduction section needs to be rewritten:*
  The study question is not very clear. What is the main problem? The introduction does not guide us well to what is the main issue.
  The objective of the study should be clear in two or three sentences.
  In the introduction, mention the history of the subject in the world or Iran) (for example, using the blended learning method in the training of health workers)
  Response:
  According to the guidance, we completely modified the context of the background and objective sections to raise the issue we seek. We tried to show the main problem more clearly in the Abstract and context of background and objective and also we mentioned the history of the subject in some countries for training programs for health workers.

- **Comment 2:** *Please attach your search strategy to the manuscript.*
  Response: Following your guidance, the search strategy was added to the manuscript. (Page 7)

- **Comment 3:** *Due to the focus on hospital staff, a search in PubMed is suggested*
  Response: Thank you for your careful attention, we searched our topic in PubMed and as a result, we used about ten references from PubMed to modify our study.

- **Comment 3:** *Use the PRISMA template in Figure 1*
  Response: Thank you for this suggestion. It would have been interesting to explore this aspect. However, Due to the increase in the number of words we had to remove Figure 1.

- **Comment 3:** *In the findings, describe the retrieved articles. For example, what was their method, in which countries was the study done, and details like this?*
- **Response:** All the mentioned items were modified and included in the objective section. As per your recommendation, we used 10 new references from PubMed, we have mentioned why we thought that there is a real need to configure a new model of blended learning for employees' talent development. (we have highlighted all changes in the context)

- **Comment 4:** *Most of the results presented in the method section should be transferred to the findings section. The search results and data extraction, etc., are all related to the study's findings, not the method.*

- **Response:** According to your guidance, the data extraction section, or the fourth step was transferred to the results section so all data extraction and search results that are related to findings are in the result section.
- **Comment 5:** *The application of the model in the hospital setting should be further explained. In fact, how can these findings and models be used in the training and development of hospital staff? Provide a practical solution.*
- **Response:** We have fully explained in the background, objectives, and discussion sections, what support and why this model is effective for training hospital employees and what results it can have. We highlighted the added content in yellow.

- **Comment 6:** *Mention study limitations: Given that most of the studies you searched for were in non-hospital settings, would the same findings hold in a hospital setting, or might there be differences?*
- **Response:** Due to the use of your worthy comments we wrote Inclusion and Exclusion of the study and uploaded it as a separate file but also we added about 10 references which directly related to hospital staff training in the process of manuscript modification.

Comments from Reviewer 2

- **Comment 1:** *After carefully reading your research, I have provided my feedback. Comments are included in the article file.*
- **Response:** Thanks a lot for your attention and careful reading of our research. We mentioned all of your comments and recommendations below and we highlighted all changes to the manuscript in yellow.
  -paragraph one of the Introduction which was repeated in the text, has been deleted and replaced by revised context.
  - In the introduction(Background) the paragraph that begins with the sentence"It can be said that the real advancements in e-learning are not much due to poor design" transferred to discussion and removed from the introduction section.
  -As per your guidance the research objectives were very broad, so we modified the objectives section thoroughly.
  - In line with your conduction, we removed the ranking table and the importance coefficient of the indicators affecting the combined learning model for talent development and showed them in a figure summarizing the results.
  -In modification of the context we used about 10 references from PubMed published between 2020 to 2023.

Comments from Reviewer 3

- **Comment 1:** *Some tips for enriching your research work are mentioned in the text and attached to the referee file.*
- **Response:** Thanks a lot for your attention and careful reading of our research. We mentioned all of your comments and recommendations below and we highlighted all changes to the manuscript in yellow.
  -paragraph one of the Introduction which was repeated in the text, has been deleted and replaced by revised context.
  - In the introduction(Background) the paragraph that begins with the sentence"It can be said that the real advancements in e-learning are not much due to poor design" transferred to discussion and removed from the introduction section.
  -As per your guidance the research objectives were very broad, so we modified the objectives section thoroughly.
  - In line with your conduction, we removed the ranking table and the importance coefficient of the indicators affecting the combined learning model for talent development and showed them in a figure summarizing the results.
  -In modification of the context we used about 10 references from PubMed published between 2020 to 2023.

We look forward to hearing from you in due time regarding our submission and to respond to any further questions and comments you may have.

Sincerely,
Dr. Ahmad Vedadi
18 - 12 - 2023

2 Revision 1

1 comment · 20 Dec 2023

Hamed Khani Reviewer

MAJOR REVISION 20 Dec 2023

Dear editor,

My previous comments have not been edited.
Once again, I will send my comments, which are included in the PDF file of the manuscript.

3

Revision 2

AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Authors' reply to reviewers

The next pages contain the authors' point-by-point reply to the comments of this revision round, as submitted with the revised manuscript. It is published as the authors wrote it.

Thank you very much for agreeing with us on the intention of this manuscript. We have read your comments carefully and tried to address them individually. Also, thank you for allowing me to submit a revised draft of my manuscript.

We are grateful to the reviewer for your insightful comments on my paper. We have been able to incorporate changes to reflect most of the suggestions provided by the reviewer. We have highlighted the changes within the manuscript. Here is a point-by-point response to the reviewers' comments and concerns.

Comments from Reviewer 1

- **Comment 1:** *Your study is primarily a review. Secondly, your study is a qualitative inquiry. According to Zimmer (2006), the meta-synthesis is a qualitative study incorporating data from other qualitative studies on the same topic. The researchers integrate the findings of various qualitative studies in this process, resulting in a whole that is more than the sum of its components/*
- **Response:**
  According to the guidance, we completely modified the context of the methods section in the abstract to raise the issue we seek. We tried to modify this part of the abstract in a way that clearly shows what we did.

- **Comment 2:** *There is no need to mention reference in the abstract!*
- **Response:** Due to your true comment we deleted any references in abstract section.

- **Comment 3:** *Practically, no problem has been proposed for this research. What gap is there in the literature? The problematization of the research problem should be clear. The literature review is brief, it is also focused on educational design models*
- **Response:** Thank you for your careful attention, we rewrote part of this section in a way that practically shows the problem for that we did this research.

- **Comment 4, 5:** *There is no theoretical-methodological coherence between the title, purpose, and methodology of the research. The title of the research is Meta-synthesis, in the method it is mentioned mixed research method of exploratory type. Meta-study method is mentioned elsewhere in the text.*
- **Response:** While thanking you for your attention and precision, some of the things you said were created due to translation and of course should have been corrected. All the things you mentioned were corrected and rewritten it.(It has been highlighted)

- **Comment 6:** *In the meta-synthesis approach, "What" is not the first and last question. You should also ask other questions in this step. For example, who? (research population), when? (Time scope) and how? ..... Of course, you can use different*

strategies in this step, such as the following: PCC (Population, Concept, and Context)/ PICO (Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcomes) SPICE (Setting, Perspective, Intervention/Phenomena of Interest, Comparison, and Evaluation)

- **Response:** As your mentioned, "What" cant not be the first and last question. So we modified the Step 1: Formulating Research Questions, in a way that clearly explain our strategy which is the four-question strategy or W^3H and then we wrote the related questions according to our strategy.

- **Comment 7:** *What search strategies did you use?*

  Response: we added our search strategy as Table 1. In page 6.

- **Comment 8:** *Screening and selecting appropriate qualitative studies.*
  Response: The title of Step 3 changed to Screening and Selecting Appropriate Qualitative Studies.

- **Comment 9:** *Classify the inclusion and exclusion criteria in a table*
  Response: Inclusion and exclusion criteria has been classified in Table 2.

- **Comment 10:** *Describe the distribution of studies in terms of "Yes", "No" and "Not clear" according to the ten CASP criteria*
- **Response:** The distribution of studies has been explained in terms of "Yes", "No" and "Not clear" according to the ten CASP criteria, and also mentioned in Table 3. (six study did not have the third criterion; eight cases did not have a clear fourth criterion; nine cases did not meet the fourth criterion, two cases did not meet the fifth criterion . Also, the sixth criterion was not clear in 20 cases, and 11 cases did not have the sixth criterion. In addition, four items were not clearly explained about the seventh criterion, three cases did not meet the seventh criterion and one cases did not meet the eight criterion. Finally, out of the total cases, 55 studies had excellent value and rigorous (++), and 31 studies had good value and rigorous (+).

- **Comment 11:** *Distribution of articles according to the country (research place), according to the year of publication, and according to the method of study?*
- **Response:** The last paragraph of Step 4, modified as bellow:
  …in addition to evaluating the studies, data such as author/authors (publish year), country, language, discipline/context of the study, study methodology (qualitative research method, data collection methods and techniques), study participants (number and type), and purpose of the research (the focus of the study) were extracted…

- **Comment 12:** *How was your coding? Inductive or deductive? Please Explain more in this regard!*

- **Response:** This study employed inductive coding, which involves a systematic process of carefully reading and analyzing the studies, followed by open coding, axial coding, and selective coding to identify patterns and themes. This approach allowed for the development of a comprehensive understanding of the key findings from the selected studies.(Step 5, page 10 has been modified and highlighted)

- **Comment 13:** *Add a column to the table and write the code reference (articles or studies)*
- **Response:** Due to the increase in the number of words in the article from the standard size, we have listed the sources from which the codes were extracted in Table 2, but if you consider it necessary to mention them in full, they will be added.
- **Comment 14:** *What is meant by business needs?*
- **Response:** business needs in blended learning refer to the process of identifying and analyzing the specific organizational goals, objectives, and challenges that blended learning can address.

- **Comment 15:** *Codes do not explain this concept!*
- **Response:** Content governance is a set of policies, processes, and procedures that govern the creation, management, distribution, and usage of content within an organization. It encompasses the entire lifecycle of content, from conception to disposal, and aims to ensure that content is accurate, consistent, relevant, compliant with legal and ethical standards, and aligned with organizational goals.
  Key aspects of content governance include:
  Content ownership: Defining who owns and has responsibility for different types of content.
  Content creation: Establishing guidelines and standards for content creation, including style guides, templates, and approval processes.
  Content management: Implementing systems and processes for storing, organizing, and updating content.
  Content distribution: Deciding where and how content is distributed, ensuring consistency and brand identity across channels.

- **Comment 16:** *Rigor and Trustworthiness are important in reviewing the findings of qualitative studies. Since the results of qualitative studies are synthesized in meta synthesis, researchers must ensure the credibility of their synthesis. What criteria and strategies did you use to guarantee credibility? I recommend to use the Maxwell (1997, 2003) and Kvale (1994) criteria and apply strategies for synthesis validity.*
- **Response:** Following your worthy recommendation we incorporating a comprehensive set of strategies aligned with the Maxwell and Kvale criteria, specifically descriptive validity, interpretive validity, theoretical validity, and pragmatic validity. These strategies are meticulously outlined in Table 6 of page 12.

- **Comment 17:** *In this step, researchers are expected to provide a conceptual model or framework.*
- **Response:** Thank you for this suggestion. It would have been interesting to explore this aspect. However, in the case of our study, we think that presenting the dimensions, components, and indicators found shows the effectiveness of findings but the effect of each one is different tried to show which one can be more effective, but we think that we can only present the dimensions, components, and indicators found and it can be enough so, if you think that there is no need to show the ranking and importance, please let us know, furthermore, according to the comment of other reviewers we deleted the table of data in this part and replaced it with a figure.
-
- **Comment 18:** *The discussion is very weak. Strengthen the discussion:*
- **Response:** we modified the discussion part in this way: Reiterate the research problem and objectives/Summarize the key findings/Interpret and explain the findings/Contextualize the findings within the literature/Discuss the implications of the findings/Address limitations and considerations and provide recommendations (changed part has been highlighted in yellow)

We look forward to hearing from you in due time regarding our submission and to respond to any further questions and comments you may have.

Sincerely,
Dr. Ahmad Vedadi
18 - 12 - 2023

3 Revision 2

1 comment · 31 Dec 2023

Referee 2 Reviewer

MINOR REVISION 31 Dec 2023

Comments are included in the manuscript file.