






Presenting the Organizational Legitimacy Model in Iraqi Public Universities

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The first paragraph cites multiple foundational definitions of legitimacy but lacks a critical comparison between them. Consider adding a brief synthesis highlighting conceptual differences between pragmatic, moral, and cognitive legitimacy as applied in higher education.

The description “sample size of 361 was determined using stratified random sampling and Cochran’s formula” is clear, but the manuscript does not indicate how strata were defined (e.g., by university, faculty type, or administrative role). This detail is important for replication.

The questionnaire development process is described, but the paragraph “Content validity was used to determine the validity...” lacks detail on how expert panel members were selected and the number of experts involved.

While Cronbach’s alpha of 0.86 is reported, it would be helpful to also present dimension-wise reliability values since the instrument covers 14 distinct constructs.

When interpreting Table 1's normality results, the statement "the data related to these dimensions follow a normal distribution" is correct, but adding skewness and kurtosis values would provide further confirmation for normality assumptions.

The paragraph discussing "organizational support and commitment" is theoretically rich, but lacks specific implications for university HR policies in Iraq. Providing concrete recommendations could enhance the applied value.

The authors note "identity and organizational structure... showed more moderate coefficients". It would be useful to explore potential reasons—such as centralization of decision-making or structural rigidity—that might explain these lower contributions.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the new document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The sentence "Public universities in Iraq operate in a complex environment characterized by post-conflict reconstruction, political instability, and socio-economic reform efforts" is strong, but could be better supported with empirical or statistical data illustrating the extent of these challenges in recent years.

When mentioning "transparency in operations, responsiveness to student and faculty concerns, investment in research excellence..." it would strengthen the argument to reference specific examples from Iraqi or regional universities that have implemented these practices successfully.

The claim "legitimacy is often contested and subject to competing interpretations" would benefit from a short example showing how conflicting political or cultural expectations have influenced legitimacy criteria in Iraqi universities.

Table 2 presents coefficients and t-values, but the narrative does not identify which dimensions had the highest and lowest path coefficients. This would help highlight priority areas for policy interventions.

Figures are referenced but not embedded in the provided excerpt. Ensure that in the final publication, both standardized coefficient and significance plots are clear, labeled, and include legends for interpretability.

The sentence "The high coefficients observed for variables such as independence and organizational culture underscore the importance of institutional autonomy and shared values..." could be strengthened by integrating Iraq-specific governance reforms that relate directly to these dimensions.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the new document.

2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.