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Identifying and Analyzing Factors Influencing Educational Management in the Medical Education Development Center at the Islamic Azad University, Tehran Branches

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The main objective of this article is to identify and analyze the factors influencing educational management in the Medical Education Development Center at the Islamic Azad University, Tehran Branches.

Methods and Materials: The research method is qualitative. In addition to document analysis, thematic analysis was conducted using MAXQDA12 software to identify the factors and components. The statistical population of this research comprised all experts in educational management, as well as managers and physicians in the healthcare sector. After conducting 18 interviews, theoretical saturation was achieved. The interviews lasted between 75 and 120 minutes. Ultimately, basic, organizing, and overarching themes were extracted.

Findings: Based on semi-structured interviews, 9 dimensions (perceptual, leadership, decision-making, executive, perceptual, communication, teamwork, people management, personality traits) and 42 components (organizing themes), along with 103 indicators, were identified for educational management in the Medical Education Development Center.

Conclusion: The results showed that the majority of experts believed that educational management in the Medical Education Development Center faces challenges in the areas of systems thinking and executive factors, which have the most significant impact in this regard.

Keywords: Educational Management, Medical Development, Medical Education

1. Introduction

In today's competitive world, one of the key tools for creating transformation, ensuring organizational survival, and achieving desired goals and missions is the human element (Ehsan et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2023). Among these, the factor that brings life to transformation and guarantees the survival of organizations is human resources. The role of humans in organizations and the perspective towards them play a significant part in the success or failure of an organization. With the onset of the third millennium, the role of human resources has become increasingly prominent, and it is now regarded as the only factor that brings success and sustainable competitive advantage to organizations (Pinilla et al., 2021; Sadati et al., 2021). Humans have always strived to make the most efficient use of resources and capabilities and to attract and equip resources effectively (Sahlin, 2023; Siminto, 2023).

The enhancement of educational management has been a concern for many scholars for a long time due to its close relationship with underdevelopment in nations. On a national level, improving the effectiveness and development of human resources brings about a greater increase in gross national income or production (Gross National Product) compared to the use of additional capital and labor. Productivity in organizations is one of the main concerns of executive managers and decision-makers in every country, to the extent that many countries base their development programs on increasing productivity (Yoonesi & Jafari, 2024). Undoubtedly, the human factor is considered the most important part of transformation and development in human societies over the years (Asgharinezhad et al., 2024; Nazari Ardabili et al., 2024; Zhou, 2023). On the other hand, attention to human resources as the foundation for production and service delivery in organizations is one of the key solutions for enhancing organizational productivity, as scientific achievements show that everything from the simplest tools to the most advanced technologies is the result of human creativity and innovation accumulated over many years of knowledge and intellectual development (Motavalli Jafarabadi et al., 2021; Oproescu, 2019).

Currently, increasing and maintaining productivity is one of the most important goals pursued by organizational managers (Seifi et al., 2024; Tamaddoni & Hoseinkhlezadeh, 2024; Zhou, 2023). The role of educational management in advancing organizations and countries worldwide to achieve economic, political, and social goals is among the crucial topics in the management

field, prompting organizations to adopt significant and appropriate methods and approaches to come closer to these benchmarks (Mansouri & Khalkhali 2018). Achieving productivity is, more than anything, dependent on the correct identification of potential paths and influencing factors (Hosseini Bor et al., 2021; Jamei et al., 2021). Given that improving management and employee productivity is the driving force behind organizations, numerous factors can influence employee performance. Therefore, in the modern era, educational strategies have a substantial impact on organizational performance. One of these strategies is the qualitative improvement of education, which leads to organizational productivity, achievement of organizational goals, and customer satisfaction (Esmaili et al., 2019).

If the development of higher education institutions is not satisfactory, the scientific and research future of the country will not be promising. Moreover, continuous social and economic transformations towards a knowledge-based society have profoundly impacted educational institutions and learning processes (Daouk-Öyry et al., 2021; Dzwigol et al., 2021; Jamei et al., 2021). Considering that today's knowledge workers are regarded as the new capitalists and owners of production tools, they must possess effective and vital knowledge and skills for personal and organizational development (Abu-Dari, 2015; Mahmoudi et al., 2020). This can only be achieved through the qualitative enhancement of educational management in organizations (Agomoh et al., 2020; Zahedi & Sheikh, 2020).

On the other hand, today, healthcare is a dynamic and active sector with many opportunities and challenges (Abbasi, 2018). Given that medical education, like higher education, requires growth and change aligned with qualitative educational models, and considering that medical education has been criticized for reasons such as excessive training of specialized staff, an overemphasis on treatment instead of education, insufficient training in medical ethics, changes in social and behavioral sciences, and patient care, attention to quality in service organizations, especially universities, is not only important but essential. This importance is felt even more in medical universities due to the unique nature of services (Hosseini Bor et al., 2021; Rahimnia & Houshiar, 2019).

Due to the increasing complexity of technology and medical knowledge, continuous education for medical staff is essential. Providing appropriate and high-quality training enables medical staff to update and enhance their knowledge and skills in using new technologies and treatment techniques. Furthermore, continuous training for medical

staff allows them to become familiar with new innovations in the medical field. Developing the skills of medical staff reduces the likelihood of errors in medical work and improves the quality of medical services. Additionally, with increased knowledge and skills, medical staff become more effective in delivering medical services to patients. Therefore, educational management is a process that improves medical quality, reduces medical errors, and enhances patient satisfaction. This process also allows medical staff to become familiar with new innovations in the medical field and share their experiences with others (Bhagavathula et al., 2021; Chitsaz et al., 2018; Daouk-Öyry et al., 2021; Dzwigol et al., 2021; Panahi et al., 2018).

Hence, accreditation serves as a tool to achieve these global standards for continuous improvement of this medical institution's performance. The accreditation process is generally representative, responsive, and tailored to the type of institution being accredited, depending on peer reviews. It is conducted by accreditation organizations based on specific criteria (national, regional, or global standards). Certification is proof of quality for a certain period and a guarantee of the quality of graduates from medical faculties with a good reputation. However, adopting quality management in medical education is considered one of the contemporary challenges that still faces many obstacles (Abu-Dari, 2015; Agomoh et al., 2020; Chitsaz et al., 2018). Therefore, examining the educational management model is of great importance, as it is directly related to the quality of healthcare services and the improvement of patient health. Medical management involves managing human resources, financial resources, technical equipment, medical information systems, and administrative processes related to providing healthcare services.

To improve the quality of medical management, multiple approaches must be used. These approaches include increasing access to up-to-date and accurate information, analyzing medical data to improve processes and make better decisions, enhancing the capabilities and education of managers and staff, implementing quality management systems and national and international standards, fostering a culture of quality among staff and patients, and developing optimal processes for delivering medical services. In general, the quality of medical management requires cooperation and coordination between physicians and other staff at different levels of healthcare organizations (Esmaili et al., 2024; Fel Araghi et al., 2024; Miri Rami et al., 2022; Nazari Ardabili et al., 2024; Shariati et al., 2024). In this research, the investigator seeks to answer the question: What

are the dimensions, components, and indicators of educational management in the Medical Education Development Center at the Islamic Azad University, Tehran Branches?

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study employed a qualitative approach. In this phase, using semi-structured interviews, the indicators, components, dimensions, and factors were identified through thematic analysis. The participants in the research were experts in educational management and healthcare management, as well as faculty members from medical universities who had relevant academic qualifications, publications, books, or teaching experience in these fields. The inclusion criteria for the study were experts with at least three years of university experience in educational management and healthcare fields, specialists with a minimum of a doctoral degree in medical sciences or related healthcare fields, and faculty members at medical universities. The sampling method was purposive. According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003), in purposive sampling, cases are selected non-randomly and with specific intent (p. 93).

2.2. Data Collection

The interviews were conducted between the summer and autumn of 2021, with an average duration of 73 minutes. After transcribing the interviews, thematic analysis was performed concurrently with data collection. The interview recordings were transcribed, and an initial version of the extracted codes was sent to the interviewees for confirmation. To familiarize with and immerse in the data, the transcripts were read multiple times, leading to the identification of initial themes. Similar initial themes were grouped into categories, which then merged to form the core themes. To ensure the accuracy of the collected data, prolonged and deep engagement with the data was maintained. Additionally, two other researchers, apart from the main researchers, participated in data analysis. The researchers reviewed the transcripts for coding and category validation. To enhance confirmability, the participants were revisited, and maximum diversity in sampling and prolonged engagement were employed as other methods to increase data credibility.

2.3. Data Analysis

From the initial interviews, sub-themes and categories emerged, and data reduction continued across all units of analysis (themes) until the core themes emerged. The interviews continued until theoretical saturation was reached. Qualitative content analysis was conducted using MAXQDA12 software. Ethical considerations in this study included obtaining informed consent, maintaining participants' confidentiality, and ensuring fidelity in transcribing the interview content.

3. Findings and Results

The participants in the interviews were faculty members from medical universities and experts in educational management and healthcare management. Among them, 15 were faculty members in medical universities, and 3 were

faculty members in educational management and healthcare management. In terms of educational qualifications, all participants held PhDs, with no participants holding master's degrees. Regarding gender distribution, 11 participants were female, and 7 were male. The age of participants ranged as follows: 1 participant was under 39 years old, 6 were between 40 and 45 years old, 5 were between 46 and 50 years old, and 6 were over 50 years old. Regarding work experience, 1 participant had less than 10 years of experience, 8 had between 11 and 20 years, and 9 had over 20 years of work experience.

The views of the research participants revealed that the educational management model in the Medical Education Development Center of the Islamic Azad University, Medical Sciences Branches, consists of 9 dimensions, 42 components, and 103 indicators.

Table 1

Dimensions, Components, and Indicators of the Educational Management Model in the Medical Education Development Center

Dimensions	Components	Indicators
Perceptual	Systems Thinking	Ability for analytical and synthetic thinking; identifying the elements and components of the subject and understanding the relationships between them.
	Creative Thinking	Ability to think and act innovatively; welcoming new ideas; striving to solve problems and obstacles in the Medical Education Development Center.
	Strategic Thinking	Ability to understand environmental variables and changes; identifying opportunities, threats, strengths, and weaknesses; defining goals and strategies for development.
	Critical Thinking	Evaluating phenomena through logical and systematic examination; critical outlook on current issues in medical education development.
Leadership	Networking	Fostering collaboration rather than competition; creating cohesion among members of the Medical Education Development Center.
	Developing Others	Responsibility for the growth of the medical education staff; organizing knowledge enhancement workshops; maintaining supportive relationships with staff.
Decision-Making	Stability	Ability to choose effective, timely solutions with decisiveness; persistence in addressing challenges at the Medical Education Development Center.
	Flexibility	Adapting work methods to rapidly changing events; maintaining a positive attitude toward change and remaining calm in stressful situations.
	Problem-Solving	Identifying problems through symptoms; analyzing cost-benefit of solutions; selecting and implementing the most suitable solution.
Execution	Work Discipline	Familiarity with educational laws and regulations; prioritizing rules over relationships in decision-making and actions.
	Supervision and Control	Monitoring the Medical Education Development Center to ensure desired outcomes; ensuring staff complete tasks correctly, using proper methods, and on time.
	Time Management	Managing tasks according to schedule; preparing annual, monthly, weekly, and daily schedules for staff; using time management strategies.

	Resource Management	Identifying needed resources (human, financial, etc.) to achieve educational goals; effectively distributing and controlling resources.
	Planning	Identifying and envisioning desired outcomes; predicting and planning effective ways to achieve those outcomes.
	Organizing	Understanding priorities; organizing people, materials, and activities efficiently to achieve goals; distributing tasks among education staff.
	Work Order	Organizing workflow and prioritizing tasks.
	Information Dissemination	Timely communication of decisions and policies; conveying issues and challenges within the center to staff.
	Knowledge	Having expertise in required activities; ensuring managerial tasks are supported by sufficient knowledge of management practices.
	Communication	
	Individual Communication Skills	Ability to convey messages clearly; using non-verbal cues to emphasize important points.
	Interpersonal Communication	Understanding others' positions and effectively communicating one's own; engaging with other organizations related to education and research.
Teamwork	Team Building	Belief in teamwork; ability to create and manage teams; maintaining strong relationships and considering the concerns of team members.
	Consultation	Intellectual and practical collaboration with others; belief in idea development through interaction.
	Counseling	Helping team members resolve misunderstandings and increase motivation; awareness of problems in medical education units and assisting in resolving them.
People Management	Trust-Building	Creating an open, safe environment for dialogue and work; ensuring commitments to employees and the public are fulfilled.
	Motivation	Striving to meet material and non-material needs of staff to motivate them; addressing the educational needs of staff.
	Empowerment	Expanding the authority of the education staff; continually developing the skills of managers and healthcare staff.
	Conflict Management	Recognizing conflicts; analyzing conflict situations; managing conflicts effectively and constructively.
Personality Traits	Responsibility	Accepting responsibility for assigned tasks; following up on uncompleted tasks at the Medical Education Development Center.
	Organizational Commitment	Commitment to meeting the needs, expectations, and goals of the Medical Education Development Center; sense of belonging to the group.
	Continuous Learning	Interest in enhancing knowledge and skills; promoting continuous learning among staff and managers; preserving acquired knowledge within the center.
	Tolerance	Openness to opposing views and critics; responding appropriately to opposing behaviors.
	Self-Confidence	Strong confidence in skills and judgment when facing challenges; trust in one's ability to manage tasks.
	Appearance	Maintaining a professional appearance; dressing appropriately for the workplace.
	Openness to Criticism	Accepting mistakes; being receptive to constructive criticism and feedback; maintaining composure when criticized.
	Decisiveness	Ability to adopt suitable strategies for dealing with issues; persistence in achieving decision-making goals.
Ethical Traits	Respect for Human Dignity	Respecting the intellectual, spiritual, and physical abilities of individuals; acknowledging the efforts and perseverance of staff.
	Religious Commitment	Practicing adherence to Islamic values; observing religious principles and laws.
	Honesty	Verbal and written expression of facts and truths; ensuring alignment between thoughts, speech, and actions based on reality.

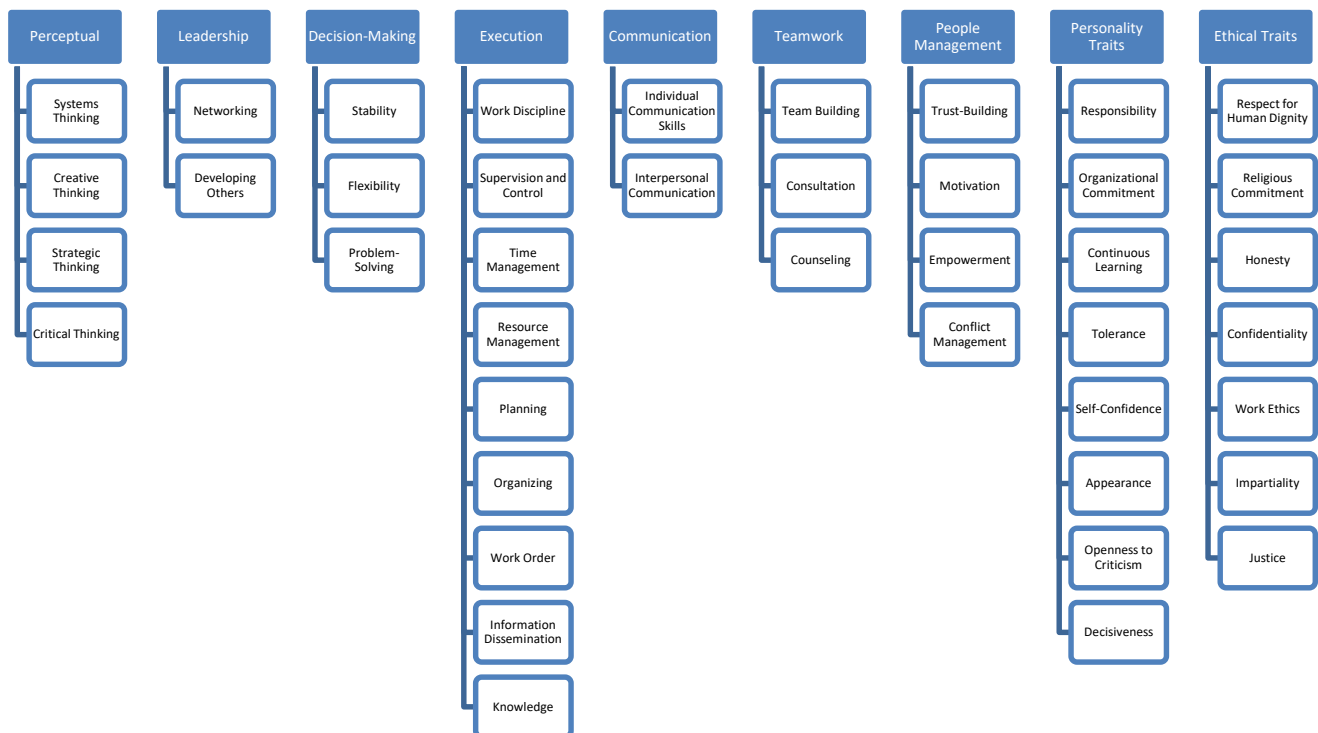
Confidentiality	Protecting individuals' confidentiality; maintaining organizational secrets according to internal regulations.
Work Ethics	Commitment and interest in the job; perseverance; maintaining healthy and humane relationships at the Medical Education Development Center.
Impartiality	Setting aside personal biases when evaluating issues; acting as a mediator rather than judging conflicts within the center.
Justice	Treating others equally; ensuring fairness in the application of laws and equal opportunities for all.

In conclusion, 9 dimensions, 42 components, and 103 indicators were identified for the educational management

model in the Medical Education Development Center at the Islamic Azad University, Medical Sciences Branch.

Figure 1

Final Model



4. Discussion and Conclusion

Every country in the world heavily relies on education, and medical education has always been a top priority for governments. This is because they believe that education is a continuous effort to improve the future well-being of their citizens. Substantial investments are made in medical education to ensure that educational systems are of high quality and on par with leading countries worldwide. High-

quality medical education requires effective and high-quality educational management. If we aim for the educational growth of a nation to contribute to human progress, it is essential to enhance and improve educational management skills (Abu-Dari, 2015; Agomoh et al., 2020; Bagheri Karachai et al., 2019; Bhagavathula et al., 2021; Chitsaz et al., 2018; Daouk-Öyry et al., 2021; Dzwigol et al., 2021; Jamei et al., 2021; Jamshidi et al., 2021; Mahmoudi et al., 2020; Ofei et al., 2020). In this context, examining the

dimensions, components, and indicators of educational management at the Medical Education Development Center of the Islamic Azad University, Medical Sciences Branches, becomes critically important. To achieve this, the first step is identifying the dimensions, components, and indicators of educational management at the center. Following this, appropriate management and planning can create a pathway to enhance and improve the quality of educational management at the Medical Education Development Center. Given these considerations, studying educational management at this center is of great significance.

The primary objective of this study was to provide a comprehensive analysis of educational management in the Medical Education Development Center at the Islamic Azad University, Tehran Branches. By identifying the key dimensions, components, and indicators, we aimed to present an actionable framework that could be applied to improve the management of medical education. The study's findings highlight the importance of tailored management strategies that can address the unique challenges faced by medical education centers, especially in a dynamic and rapidly evolving healthcare landscape.

Educational management plays a pivotal role in the success of medical education, as it ensures that medical professionals are not only well-trained but also equipped with the necessary skills to adapt to the changing needs of society. In recent years, the field of medical education has seen significant transformations, influenced by technological advancements, changing healthcare policies, and an increased focus on patient-centered care. As a result, medical education management must continuously evolve to meet these demands. A structured management approach can enhance the learning environment, promote the professional development of faculty members, and ensure that students receive the best possible education.

This study emphasizes that for medical education to contribute meaningfully to human progress, it is essential to focus on improving the educational management skills within medical centers. This aligns with previous research (Esmaili et al., 2019; Zahedi & Sheikh, 2020), who highlighted the role of educational management in fostering innovation and ensuring the sustainability of educational institutions. In this regard, the study's findings are critical for policymakers, educational leaders, and administrators who seek to enhance the quality of medical education in Iran.

The study identified nine key dimensions of educational management in the Medical Education Development Center: perceptual, leadership, decision-making, execution,

communication, teamwork, people management, personality traits, and ethical traits. Each of these dimensions encompasses multiple components and indicators, which together form a comprehensive framework for effective educational management.

The perceptual dimension, which includes systems thinking, creative thinking, strategic thinking, and critical thinking, is fundamental to understanding and addressing the complexities of medical education. Systems thinking enables managers to see the broader picture, recognizing how various elements within the educational environment are interconnected. Strategic thinking, on the other hand, helps in identifying opportunities and challenges, allowing for the development of long-term strategies that ensure the success of the medical education center.

The leadership dimension focuses on networking, developing others, and building cohesive teams. Effective leadership in medical education requires more than just administrative skills; it involves nurturing the talents of others and fostering an environment where collaboration thrives. This finding aligns with prior research (Bagheri Karachai et al., 2019; Chitsaz et al., 2018; Jamshidi et al., 2021), who emphasized that teamwork and leadership are critical skills for educational managers. These studies found that strong leadership is essential for motivating staff, improving organizational performance, and achieving educational goals.

The decision-making dimension highlights the need for stability, flexibility, and problem-solving skills. In a medical education center, decisions must often be made under pressure, and managers must be able to remain calm and composed while addressing complex issues. Flexibility is also crucial, as medical education is constantly evolving, requiring managers to adapt quickly to new developments in the field.

The execution dimension includes work discipline, supervision, time management, and resource management. These components ensure that the day-to-day operations of the medical education center run smoothly and efficiently. Managers must be able to allocate resources effectively, supervise staff, and ensure that tasks are completed on time. These operational aspects of management are critical for maintaining high standards of education and ensuring that students receive the best possible training.

The communication dimension emphasizes the importance of clear and effective communication within the medical education center. This includes both verbal and non-verbal communication, as well as the ability to communicate

with other organizations involved in education and research. Clear communication is essential for ensuring that everyone in the organization is aligned with the center's goals and objectives.

Teamwork is another key dimension that highlights the importance of building strong teams and fostering collaboration. The ability to work effectively in teams is critical for medical professionals, as healthcare delivery often requires a multidisciplinary approach. The study's findings align with those of Mahmoudi et al. (2020) and Rahimnia and Houshyar (2019), who found that teamwork is a core skill for educational managers and is essential for achieving organizational success.

The people management dimension focuses on building trust, motivating staff, empowering others, and managing conflicts. Effective people management requires managers to create an environment where staff feel valued and supported. This includes providing opportunities for professional development, recognizing individual contributions, and addressing conflicts in a constructive manner. The study's findings are consistent with prior research (Zahedi & Sheikh, 2020) which highlighted the importance of trust and empowerment in educational management.

The personality traits dimension emphasizes qualities such as responsibility, organizational commitment, continuous learning, tolerance, self-confidence, and openness to criticism. These traits are essential for educational managers, as they must navigate complex challenges and lead by example. The study's findings suggest that managers who possess these traits are better equipped to handle the demands of their role and foster a positive and productive work environment.

Finally, the ethical traits dimension focuses on respect for human dignity, religious commitment, honesty, confidentiality, work ethics, impartiality, and justice. These traits are essential for maintaining the integrity of the educational management process and ensuring that all stakeholders are treated fairly and with respect. The findings highlight the importance of ethical leadership in medical education, as managers must uphold the highest standards of integrity and professionalism.

The study's findings have significant implications for policy and practice in medical education management. First and foremost, the development of a comprehensive educational management model can serve as a guide for improving the quality of medical education in Iran. By focusing on the nine key dimensions identified in this study,

educational leaders can develop strategies that address the unique challenges faced by medical education centers.

One of the key recommendations is the need for continuous professional development for educational managers. As the field of medical education evolves, managers must stay informed about the latest developments in educational theory and practice. This includes attending workshops, participating in leadership training programs, and engaging in lifelong learning. Continuous professional development will ensure that managers have the skills and knowledge necessary to lead their organizations effectively.

Another important recommendation is the need for greater collaboration between medical education centers and other organizations involved in healthcare and education. By building strong partnerships, medical education centers can benefit from shared resources, expertise, and best practices. This will help to improve the quality of education and ensure that students are prepared to meet the demands of the healthcare industry.

The study also highlights the importance of ethical leadership in medical education. Managers must be committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity and professionalism, ensuring that all stakeholders are treated with respect and fairness. This includes maintaining confidentiality, promoting transparency, and fostering a culture of accountability within the organization.

In conclusion, the findings of this study provide valuable insights into the dimensions, components, and indicators of educational management in the Medical Education Development Center at the Islamic Azad University, Medical Sciences Branches. By identifying these key elements, the study offers a comprehensive framework for improving the management of medical education. The study's findings align with previous research, highlighting the importance of leadership, teamwork, communication, and ethical leadership in educational management.

The study's implications for policy and practice are significant, as they offer a roadmap for enhancing the quality of medical education in Iran. By focusing on continuous professional development, fostering collaboration, and promoting ethical leadership, educational leaders can ensure that medical education centers are equipped to meet the challenges of the future. Ultimately, improving educational management will lead to better outcomes for students, faculty, and the broader healthcare industry.

Authors' Contributions

All authors significantly contributed to this study.

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.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

In this study, to observe ethical considerations, participants were informed about the goals and importance of the research before the start of the interview and participated in the research with informed consent.

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