

Reviewer Report (Revised Manuscript)

Thank you for the opportunity to review the revised version of this manuscript. I appreciate the considerable effort the authors have invested in addressing the comments raised during the first round of review. The manuscript has improved substantially in terms of its conceptual framing, methodological presentation, and overall organization. The revised title better reflects the study's actual contribution, the literature review has been updated with recent references, and the rationale for developing a new employee engagement instrument has become much clearer. I also appreciate the shift from a three-factor model to a theoretically grounded multidimensional framework based on person–environment fit. Overall, the manuscript is considerably stronger than its previous version. Nevertheless, several important issues remain unresolved and should be addressed before the manuscript can be considered for publication.

Major comments

1. Qualitative evidence and generational comparisons

My previous concern regarding the qualitative phase has only been partially addressed. The authors have moderated their conclusions and now refer to "substantial thematic similarity" rather than claiming the absence of generational differences. This is an improvement. However, the qualitative sample still contains only a very limited number of Generation Z participants, making it difficult to draw broader conclusions regarding similarities across generations. The conclusions should therefore remain appropriately cautious and explicitly acknowledge this limitation.

2. Discriminant validity

The authors have expanded the validation analyses; however, discriminant validity remains one of the weaker aspects of the instrument. Given that this manuscript proposes a completely new multidimensional measure, stronger evidence demonstrating that the six dimensions are empirically distinct would strengthen the study considerably. If not already reported, the manuscript would benefit from additional evidence such as the HTMT criterion or a more detailed discussion of discriminant validity.

3. CFA interpretation

The confirmatory factor analysis has been improved and supported with additional references. Nevertheless, the interpretation of the model fit should remain appropriately conservative. Rather than describing the instrument as fully validated, I recommend emphasizing that this study provides **initial validation evidence**, consistent with the title of the manuscript.

4. AI-assisted qualitative analysis

The manuscript still lacks sufficient transparency regarding the use of artificial intelligence during the qualitative phase. While AI-assisted coding is increasingly accepted, the authors should clearly explain how AI-generated coding was verified by the researchers, how disagreements were resolved, and what procedures ensured the credibility of the qualitative analysis.

Minor comments

The abstract has improved considerably but still contains several awkward sentences that should be edited for clarity and readability. Several long sentences throughout the manuscript would benefit from stylistic revision. A few grammatical inconsistencies remain and should be corrected during copy-editing. The item reduction process could be described more explicitly,

either in the text or by including a flow diagram summarizing the successive stages of item elimination.

Overall recommendation

This manuscript represents a substantial improvement over the original submission. Most of the editorial and conceptual concerns raised during the first review have been addressed satisfactorily. The revised manuscript presents a stronger theoretical foundation, a clearer methodological description, and a more coherent presentation of the proposed Multidimensional Employee Engagement Instrument. However, some concerns remain regarding the strength of the qualitative evidence, discriminant validity, transparency of the AI-assisted qualitative analysis, and the interpretation of the validation results. These issues are addressable through revision and do not require additional data collection.

Recommendation: Minor Revision.