

Human Resource Management Practices and Faculty Performance in Higher Education Institution

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ABSTRACT

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Human resource management has become an important institutional function in higher education, where faculty performance depends on a combination of professional capability, motivation and organisational support. This theoretical paper examines the relationship between human resource management practices and faculty performance by drawing attention to recruitment, professional development, performance appraisal, recognition, career advancement, workload management, participation and professional autonomy. The discussion considers relevant theoretical perspectives, particularly the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity framework, to explain how institutional practices can create conditions conducive to effective academic work. It further examines contemporary challenges associated with managing faculty resources, including changing performance expectations, multiple academic responsibilities and the need for continuous professional development. The paper argues that an integrated and development-oriented HRM approach can strengthen faculty performance while maintaining an appropriate balance between institutional accountability and academic

autonomy.

Keywords— Human Resource Management; Faculty Performance; Higher Education; Academic Development

Introduction

Human resource management in higher education has increasingly moved beyond routine personnel administration to become an important component of institutional functioning and academic quality. Universities and colleges operate through a workforce whose responsibilities extend across teaching, research, academic mentoring, curriculum development, institutional administration and wider social engagement. Consequently, the effectiveness of faculty members is closely connected with the organisational conditions under which academic work is performed. Contemporary scholarship indicates that recruitment, professional development, performance appraisal, recognition, career progression and supportive working conditions can influence the capacity and motivation of academic staff to fulfil these responsibilities (van den Brink, 2013; Strike & Taylor, 2009). Unlike conventional organisational settings, however, higher education involves professional autonomy, specialised expertise and relatively distinctive career structures. HRM practices must therefore accommodate the professional character of academic work rather than treating faculty members solely as organisational employees. This distinction is important because institutional policies may appear appropriate at the administrative level while failing to correspond fully with academics' professional expectations and everyday experiences. Strike and Taylor (2009), for example, identified a disjuncture between formal HR policy discourse and the concerns expressed by academic staff, suggesting that effective HRM requires sensitivity to the actual conditions of academic careers.

Faculty performance is a multidimensional construct encompassing substantially more than classroom teaching or measurable research output. Academic staff contribute through teaching effectiveness, research and publication, student supervision, curriculum development, professional learning, institutional service and community engagement. The quality of these contributions depends partly on individual competence, but it is also shaped by institutional arrangements that influence motivation, resources, recognition and opportunities for professional growth. In this context, HRM practices can establish conditions that either facilitate or constrain academic performance. Recent evidence from higher education demonstrates that HRM practices and job autonomy can have significant positive relationships with faculty job performance, indicating that organisational support and professional discretion may operate together in shaping academic outcomes (Mahade et al.). Similarly, research on academic staff in Malaysian private universities has shown that talent-management practices, including succession planning, promotion and performance appraisal, are associated with employee performance, with employee engagement playing a mediating role in this relationship (Ansar et al., 2022). These findings suggest that faculty performance should be understood within the broader institutional system in which academic work is organised, supported and evaluated.

The theoretical relationship between HRM practices and faculty performance can be understood through frameworks that emphasise employees' ability, motivation and opportunity to contribute. The Ability–Motivation–Opportunity perspective is particularly relevant because professional development and recruitment can strengthen academic capability, recognition and reward mechanisms can influence motivation, while participation, autonomy and adequate institutional resources can create opportunities for

effective contribution. Recent work specifically examining academic staff performance identifies professional development, resources, recognition, collaboration and knowledge sharing, workload and job security as interconnected HRM conditions shaping employees' ability, motivation and opportunity to perform (Shimaneni,). The relevance of this perspective becomes clearer when talent and performance management are considered as integrated institutional processes rather than isolated administrative activities. Van den Brink (2013) notes that talent management and performance systems have become increasingly significant HRM concerns within universities, reflecting the growing pressure on institutions to attract, develop and retain academic talent. At the same time, empirical research indicates that the effects of individual HRM practices may vary across institutional and national contexts. For instance, Kasule et al. (2022) found that satisfaction with recruitment and placement practices was positively associated with academic staff performance, whereas development, engagement and retention practices did not show significant effects in their specific setting. Such variation reinforces the need to examine HRM in relation to the distinctive organisational realities of higher education rather than assuming uniform effects across institutions.

The need to examine HRM practices in higher education has become particularly important as academic institutions face simultaneous demands for teaching quality, research productivity, innovation, accountability and continuous professional development. Faculty members are increasingly expected to manage multiple responsibilities within environments characterised by changing technologies, evolving performance expectations, competitive pressures and growing administrative demands. Recent research in India has similarly examined the role of strategic HR practices in supporting faculty well-being, recognising that demanding academic environments require institutional approaches capable of addressing both performance and the conditions in which performance is sustained (Shimaneni,). From this perspective, HRM cannot be viewed simply as a mechanism for monitoring or evaluating faculty output; it also concerns the creation of organisational conditions that enable academics to use their knowledge and professional capabilities effectively. The significance of HRM is therefore linked to the alignment between institutional expectations and the resources, autonomy, recognition and developmental opportunities available to faculty members. A theoretically informed examination of these relationships can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how higher education institutions manage academic talent, support professional performance and respond to the changing nature of academic work.

Human Resource Management in Higher Education

Human Resource Management (HRM) in higher education refers to the systematic management of academic and non-academic personnel in ways that support institutional objectives while recognising the distinctive nature of academic work. Unlike many conventional organisations, higher education institutions depend heavily on specialised knowledge, professional autonomy and intellectual labour. HRM therefore extends beyond recruitment, appointment and administrative procedures to encompass professional development, career progression, performance management, employee engagement, recognition and the creation of supportive working conditions. Pandit and Paul (2021) argue that the effectiveness of higher education is closely associated with the manner in which institutions manage their human resources, particularly within the Indian context. The strategic orientation of HRM becomes important because faculty members simultaneously contribute to teaching, research, institutional governance and wider academic responsibilities. Thus, HRM in higher education must balance institutional priorities with

professional expectations, ensuring that personnel policies facilitate rather than constrain academic work.

The scope of HRM in higher education has consequently expanded from personnel administration towards a broader institutional and developmental function. It includes workforce planning, recruitment and selection, induction, training, performance appraisal, promotion, compensation, career development, workload management, employee welfare and retention. These functions are interconnected and influence the conditions within which faculty members undertake their academic responsibilities. Recent scholarship identifies professional development, institutional resources, recognition, collaboration, workload and job security as important HRM dimensions associated with academic staff performance (Shimaneni,). From an institutional perspective, HRM also involves aligning individual capabilities with organisational goals and creating mechanisms through which academic expertise can contribute to institutional development. In the Indian higher education context, this strategic orientation is particularly relevant because universities operate within distinctive governance structures and professional systems that differ substantially from conventional business organisations (Pandit & Paul, 2023). HRM can therefore be viewed as an institutional process connecting people, professional development and organisational performance.

Major HRM Practices and Their Institutional Significance

Recruitment and selection constitute the initial foundation of an effective HRM system because the quality and suitability of academic appointments influence institutional capability over the longer term. Transparent selection procedures, appropriate qualification criteria and alignment between faculty expertise and institutional requirements are therefore important considerations. Once appointed, faculty members require opportunities for continuous professional development so that their pedagogical, research and technological capabilities remain responsive to changing academic expectations. Performance appraisal is another significant practice, particularly because academic performance involves diverse responsibilities that cannot be adequately represented through a single indicator. Punia and Siwatch (2009) emphasised the importance of organised performance evaluation and faculty awareness of appraisal systems within Indian universities. Similarly, evidence from higher education research indicates that recruitment, training, appraisal and reward practices can influence faculty performance, although their effects may vary according to institutional context (Mishra et al.).

Beyond formal personnel procedures, HRM practices also shape the motivational and organisational environment in which academic work takes place. Recognition of achievement, fair rewards, career advancement, participative decision-making, manageable workloads and institutional support can influence faculty members' willingness and capacity to contribute to teaching, research and institutional activities. Recent research suggests that job autonomy can operate alongside HRM practices in shaping faculty performance, highlighting the importance of allowing academics sufficient professional discretion within institutional frameworks (Alomari et al.). From a strategic perspective, these practices should not operate as disconnected administrative interventions. Their institutional significance lies in how effectively they function as an integrated system that develops academic capability, sustains motivation and creates opportunities for meaningful contribution. The emerging literature on HRM in higher education similarly emphasises the need to move from fragmented personnel practices towards strategically aligned systems

capable of supporting both faculty performance and institutional development (Pandit & Paul, 2023; Shimaneni,).

Conceptualising Faculty Performance in Higher Education

Faculty performance in higher education represents the extent to which academic staff effectively fulfil the interconnected responsibilities associated with teaching, research, student support, institutional service and professional development. It is therefore more appropriately understood as a multidimensional construct than as a narrow measure of individual productivity. Teaching effectiveness may involve curriculum delivery, pedagogical engagement and student support, while research performance may encompass scholarly inquiry, publications, knowledge creation and academic collaboration. Institutional responsibilities and professional contributions further broaden the meaning of performance. Barani and Rajesh (2016) identified teaching tools, academic performance, creativity, personal attributes and institutional development activities as important dimensions of faculty performance management in higher education. More recent scholarship similarly treats faculty performance as an outcome shaped by both individual capabilities and organisational conditions, including professional autonomy and institutional support (Mahade et al.). Accordingly, conceptualising faculty performance requires recognition of the distinctive professional responsibilities of academics and the institutional context within which these responsibilities are performed.

HRM Practices and Faculty Performance

The relationship between HRM practices and faculty performance is grounded in the proposition that institutional policies concerning people can influence the conditions under which academic work is undertaken. Recruitment and selection determine the availability of appropriate academic expertise, while training and development can strengthen teaching, research and professional capabilities. Performance appraisal provides mechanisms for feedback and performance recognition, whereas promotion and reward systems can reinforce institutional expectations and encourage sustained contribution. Empirical evidence supports the relevance of these practices, although their effects may vary according to institutional and contextual conditions. Mishra, Bisen and Painoli, for example, reported significant relationships between career planning, training and development, performance appraisal, reward and compensation, and faculty performance in higher education institutions in Central Gujarat. Similarly, Mahade et al. found that HRM practices and job autonomy were positively associated with faculty job performance in UAE higher education. These findings suggest that HRM practices are most meaningful when they function as an interconnected institutional system that develops capability, supports motivation, recognises contribution and provides academics with appropriate opportunities to perform.

Theoretical Perspectives on HRM and Faculty Performance

The relationship between HRM practices and faculty performance can be interpreted through theoretical perspectives that connect employee capability, motivation and organisational support. The Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) framework provides a useful basis for understanding this relationship by proposing that performance is influenced by employees' ability to perform, their motivation to apply their capabilities and the opportunities available to contribute. In higher education, recruitment and professional development can strengthen academic ability, while appraisal, recognition and career advancement may influence motivation. Participation in institutional decision-making, professional autonomy and access to appropriate resources can create opportunities for faculty members to apply their expertise. Bos-Nehles, Van Riemsdijk and Looise (2013)

demonstrate the relevance of the AMO framework for understanding how HRM implementation can influence employee outcomes. The framework is particularly useful in higher education because faculty performance depends not only on individual competence but also on the organisational environment within which academic work is undertaken.

A complementary perspective is provided by Social Exchange Theory, which views employment relationships through reciprocal exchanges between employees and organisations. When faculty members perceive that their institution provides fair treatment, professional support, recognition and development opportunities, they may respond through stronger organisational attachment and greater willingness to contribute. This perspective helps explain why HRM practices may influence performance indirectly through attitudes such as organisational commitment, engagement and job satisfaction. Research on high-performance work systems also suggests that bundles of mutually reinforcing HR practices can shape employee outcomes rather than individual practices operating in isolation (Messersmith et al., 2011). In the academic context, the theoretical implication is that effective HRM should create an environment in which faculty members perceive institutional expectations and organisational support as reasonably balanced. Thus, faculty performance emerges through an interaction between individual capability and the quality of the institutional relationship.

Contemporary Challenges in Managing Faculty Resources

Managing faculty resources has become increasingly complex as higher education institutions face simultaneous demands for teaching quality, research productivity, innovation, accreditation, digital competence and institutional accountability. Faculty members often perform several roles concurrently, and the expansion of administrative and reporting requirements can create tensions between teaching, research and other academic responsibilities. Workload is therefore an important consideration in HRM because excessive or poorly distributed responsibilities may affect motivation and the capacity to sustain high-quality academic work. Contemporary research on academic staff also identifies workload, job security, institutional resources, recognition and professional development as important conditions associated with faculty performance (Shimaneni,). The challenge for higher education management is consequently not simply to increase faculty output but to design personnel systems that recognise the breadth of academic work. Effective resource management requires an appropriate balance between institutional expectations, professional autonomy and the resources available to fulfil academic responsibilities.

Another challenge concerns the changing nature of academic careers and the need to retain capable faculty within increasingly competitive institutional environments. Recruitment alone cannot ensure sustained performance when employees face limited career progression, inadequate professional development, uncertain recognition or insufficient institutional support. Performance appraisal can also become problematic when evaluation systems rely excessively on easily measurable outputs while overlooking teaching quality, mentoring, collaboration and other less visible contributions. Strike and Taylor (2009) highlight tensions between formal human resource discourses and academics' perceptions of their careers, illustrating the importance of considering faculty perspectives when designing HR policies. Moreover, growing digitalisation and technological change require continuous development of academic competencies. Managing faculty resources therefore calls for HRM approaches that are flexible, transparent and development-oriented, while maintaining appropriate standards of accountability. The central challenge is to align institutional

performance expectations with sustainable academic careers and the professional conditions necessary for meaningful faculty contribution.

HRM Strategies for Enhancing Faculty Performance

Human resource management in higher education requires strategies that recognise faculty members as knowledge professionals whose performance is influenced by institutional support, professional autonomy, motivation and opportunities for development. Rather than treating HRM as a collection of administrative procedures, institutions need to develop coordinated practices that connect faculty capabilities with academic and organisational priorities. The following strategies can contribute to strengthening faculty performance:

1. **Strategic Recruitment and Selection:** Institutions should adopt transparent and merit-based recruitment processes that consider subject expertise, pedagogical competence, research potential and alignment with institutional requirements.
2. **Continuous Professional Development:** Regular opportunities for faculty development can strengthen teaching, research, digital and administrative competencies and help academics respond to changing expectations in higher education.
3. **Fair and Developmental Performance Appraisal:** Appraisal systems should provide constructive feedback and recognise diverse academic contributions rather than relying exclusively on publication or quantitative performance indicators.
4. **Career Development and Advancement:** Clearly defined promotion pathways, mentoring and opportunities for academic leadership can encourage faculty members to pursue sustained professional growth.
5. **Recognition and Reward Mechanisms:** Appropriate recognition of teaching, research, innovation, institutional service and community engagement can strengthen motivation and reinforce valued academic contributions.
6. **Workload Management and Institutional Support:** Rational distribution of teaching, administrative and research responsibilities, together with adequate institutional resources, can help faculty maintain performance without compromising academic well-being.
7. **Faculty Participation and Professional Autonomy:** Involving faculty members in academic and institutional decision-making can strengthen ownership, while reasonable autonomy allows academics to apply their professional expertise effectively.
8. **Collaborative and Supportive Work Environment:** Collegial relationships, mentoring, interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge sharing can facilitate professional learning and create conditions conducive to sustained faculty performance.

These strategies are most effective when implemented as an integrated HRM approach rather than as isolated interventions. The AMO perspective is relevant here because faculty performance depends on the combination of ability, motivation and opportunity. Similarly, research on high-performance work systems suggests that complementary HR practices can influence employee outcomes when they operate collectively rather than independently (Messersmith et al., 2011). Thus, institutions seeking to enhance faculty performance should focus not only on evaluating academic outcomes but also on creating the organisational conditions that enable faculty members to achieve them.

Conclusion

Human resource management in higher education is increasingly central to sustaining the quality and effectiveness of academic institutions because faculty performance is shaped not only by individual competence but also by the organisational environment in which academic work occurs. The discussion indicates that recruitment, professional development, performance appraisal, recognition, career progression, workload management, participation and professional autonomy should be viewed as interconnected elements of an institutional HRM system. Faculty performance likewise extends beyond measurable research output to encompass teaching, student support, institutional responsibilities and scholarly engagement. An effective HRM approach therefore requires a balance between accountability and professional discretion, institutional expectations and faculty needs. Theoretical perspectives such as the AMO framework further suggest that sustained performance depends upon strengthening academic capability, maintaining motivation and providing meaningful opportunities to contribute. Higher education institutions can consequently enhance faculty performance by developing transparent, supportive and development-oriented HRM systems that recognise the distinctive nature of academic work and align individual professional growth with institutional priorities.

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