

The Impact of Human Resource Management on Evaluating Administrative Staff Performance in Saudi Universities

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of human resource management (HRM) on the evaluation of administrative staff performance in Saudi universities. It explores key HRM functions, including recruitment, training, incentives, and performance assessment, and their role in enhancing employee efficiency. A descriptive survey method was employed, collecting data from 294 HR employees in public Saudi universities. Statistical analysis using SPSS and Smart PLS software revealed that HRM practices significantly influence performance evaluation, with modern evaluation standards improving efficiency. The findings provide insights into optimizing HRM policies and enhancing administrative performance in higher education institutions.

Keywords

Human Resource Management, Performance Evaluation, Administrative Staff, Saudi Universities, HR Policies

1. Introduction

Human Resource Management (HRM) plays a crucial role in the operational and strategic functions of higher education institutions. In Saudi universities, HRM is tasked with managing recruitment, training, performance evaluation, and employee development to ensure that administrative processes operate efficiently and align with institutional goals. As universities continue to advance academically and administratively, the role of HRM becomes increasingly es-

sential in enhancing staff performance and supporting organizational excellence.

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030—a national strategic framework launched by the Saudi government to diversify the economy, modernize public institutions, and enhance the quality of national services—emphasizes the importance of developing human capital and improving institutional effectiveness. Within this national context, universities are encouraged to adopt modern HRM practices and digital tools that can strengthen performance evaluation systems and foster administrative development.

Despite the increasing emphasis on HRM within Saudi universities, challenges remain in ensuring fairness, transparency, and consistency in performance evaluation systems. Previous studies highlight the need for more structured HR frameworks and technology-driven evaluation mechanisms. Therefore, the aim of this research is to investigate the role of HRM in enhancing performance evaluation systems within Saudi universities, focusing on key HRM functions such as training and development, recruitment and selection, incentives, and digital transformation.

This study contributes to existing research by examining how modern HRM practices and digital tools influence the efficiency, fairness, and transparency of performance evaluations. It further explores staff perceptions regarding the effectiveness of HRM initiatives and identifies challenges that hinder optimal HR performance within Saudi universities.

Recent initiatives within Saudi universities show an increased reliance on digital HRM platforms such as Muqem, Tawteen, and internal HR dashboards used for leave management, attendance tracking, and real-time performance monitoring. Modern digital tools—including cloud-based evaluation systems, online feedback portals, and platforms like Microsoft Power BI for performance analytics—have improved data accuracy, reduced administrative delays, and enhanced transparency in evaluation outcomes. These tools allow HR managers to track employee performance continuously rather than relying solely on annual review cycles.

2. Literature Review

The role of continuous professional development (CPD) is extensively documented in HRM literature. Research by [Balwant et al., \(2022\)](#) emphasizes that structured training and development programs significantly enhance administrative skills and overall employee performance outcomes in educational institutions. These global trends have important implications for Saudi universities, highlighting the necessity to adapt their HRM practices to ensure that professional development is integrated to enhance administrative staff performance.

The evolving landscape of HRM in global education systems emphasizes the integration of digital platforms and data analytics. Studies demonstrate that institutions utilizing digital HRM transformations and AI-driven platforms achieve greater transparency, objectivity, and performance improvement in academic set-

tings (Mohamed Ismail, 2025; Bhaskaru & Lalitha, 2026). In alignment with these advancements, Rohayati (2024) stresses that integrating digital competencies into HRM frameworks within higher education is essential to foster innovation and enhance administrative capability. These insights further validate the necessity for Saudi universities to embrace digital transformation in their HRM practices to maximize administrative efficiency.

A deeper examination of global HRM practices reveals that successful institutions often adopt competency-based evaluation models that align individual performance with organizational objectives (Gómez et al., 2017). Such frameworks ensure that performance evaluations are objective and measurable. Additionally, the evolution from traditional metrics to modern systems contributes significantly to minimized biases and enhanced transparency in evaluations (Huang et al., 2024).

The literature on HRM in academic settings highlights various models for enhancing employee performance. Research underscores the necessity of addressing performance evaluation challenges under strategic frameworks like Vision 2030 to streamline university administration (Mohiuddin et al., 2023). Studies emphasize the positive impact of adaptive HR policies on administrative efficiency.

2.1. HRM and Employee Performance

Previous studies indicate that HR functions such as recruitment, training, and incentives directly impact employee performance (Kwon et al., 2024; Southern, 2016). Furthermore, empirical links demonstrate that robust HR practices directly correlate with heightened levels of staff engagement within higher education (Aboramadan et al., 2020).

2.2. Performance Evaluation in Universities

Effective performance evaluation involves assessing employee contributions, identifying areas for improvement, and implementing strategies for professional development. Saudi universities have adopted various evaluation models, yet inconsistencies in their application remain a concern (McCann, 2016).

2.3. Research Gap

Additionally, recent studies highlight the significance of data-driven performance evaluations and competency-based HR practices in academic institutions (Bani Ahmad et al., 2025; Radonjić et al., 2024). Technology integration has also emerged as a crucial factor in modernizing HRM frameworks, enabling more accurate and real-time performance tracking (Zervas & Stiakakis, 2025). Despite these advancements, many Saudi universities continue to rely on outdated methodologies, emphasizing the need for more comprehensive reforms.

Recent literature underscores the necessity of integrating competency-based evaluation frameworks and AI-driven assessment tools to enhance HRM func-

tions in higher education institutions (Ilieva et al., 2025). Moreover, research by Iftikhar & Imtiaz (2025) suggests that digital transformation in HRM can mitigate inefficiencies in traditional performance evaluations. Further empirical studies indicate that aligning HR policies with institutional goals can significantly improve administrative efficiency (Paauwe & Boselie, 2006). Despite these insights, there remains a scarcity of research specifically addressing Saudi universities, highlighting the need for further investigation.

While numerous studies highlight the role of HRM in corporate settings, research on its impact in higher education institutions—particularly in Saudi Arabia—remains scarce. Despite these insights, there remains a scarcity of research specifically addressing Saudi universities, highlighting the need for further investigation. Strategic alignment within Middle Eastern universities remains highly dependent on macro-level human resource planning to build institutional effectiveness (Allui & Sahni, 2016). This study aims to bridge this gap by examining the effectiveness of HRM practices in evaluating administrative staff performance.

3. Methodology

The survey consisted of 30 structured questions, distributed online and through university HR departments. The questionnaire was designed to evaluate various dimensions of HRM practices and their impact on performance evaluation. The data collection phase lasted for four weeks, ensuring adequate time for participation. The final response rate was 84%, which is considered statistically robust for inferential analysis. Additionally, efforts were made to ensure data reliability through pilot testing with a small group of HR professionals.

3.1. Research Design

This study employs a descriptive survey method, utilizing quantitative data analysis to assess the relationship between HRM practices and performance evaluation.

3.2. Data Collection and Sample

A structured questionnaire was distributed to 294 HR employees across five Saudi public universities:

- King Saud University (Riyadh)
- King Abdulaziz University (Jeddah)
- Jazan University (Jazan)
- Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University (Dammam)
- Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University (Riyadh)

Respondents were selected using random sampling to ensure diverse representation. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in **Table 1** and **Figure 1**, showing the distribution across gender, age groups, and educational levels.

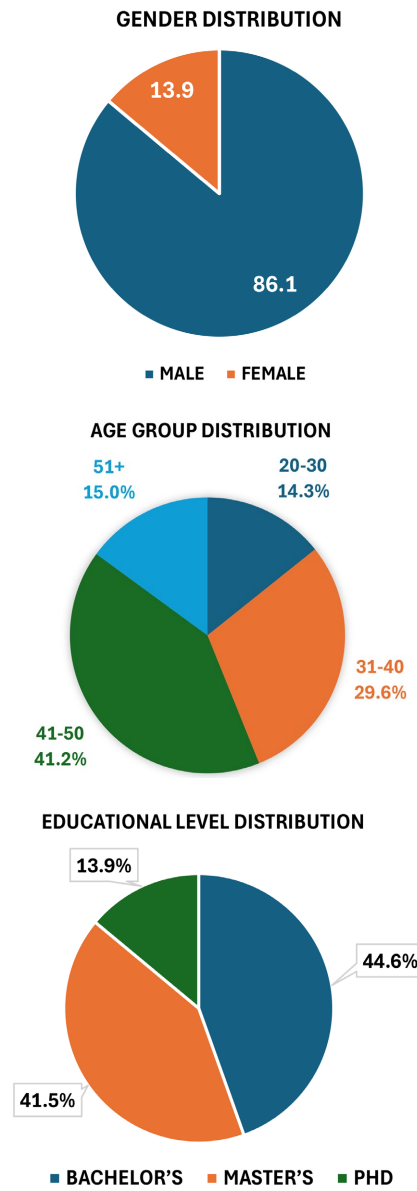


Figure 1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Variable	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	253	86.1
	Female	41	13.9
Age group	20 - 30	42	14.3
	31 - 40	87	29.6
	41 - 50	121	41.2
	51+	44	15
Educational level	Bachelor's	131	44.6
	Master's	122	41.5
	PhD	41	13.9

3.3. Data Analysis Techniques

Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS and Smart PLS software. The following techniques were employed:

- Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation)
- Cronbach's Alpha (to assess reliability)
- Regression analysis (to examine the impact of HRM functions on performance evaluation)

The descriptive statistics for HRM functions and performance evaluation are shown in **Table 2** & **Figure 2**.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of HRM functions and performance evaluation.

Hrm function	Man	Standard deviation	Cronbach's alpha
Recruitment & Selection	4.11	0.605	High
HR Planning	4.17	0.586	High
Training & Development	4.16	0.609	High
Incentives & Rewards	4.25	0.682	Very High
Performance Evaluation	4.30	0.793	Very High

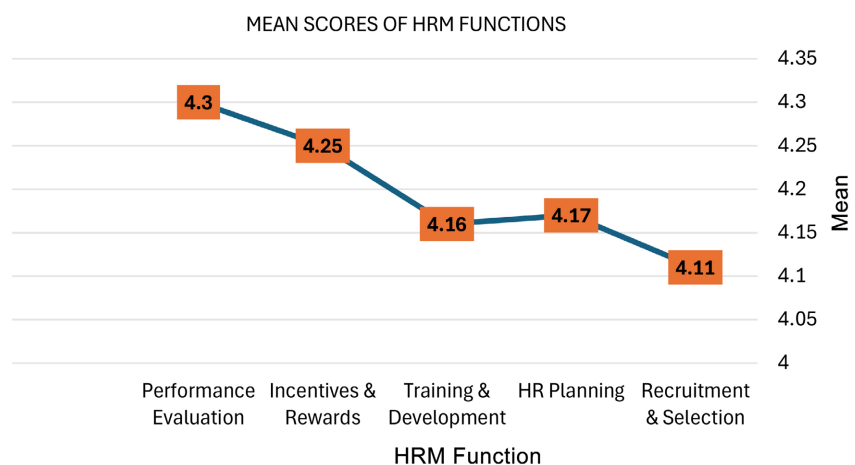


Figure 2. Descriptive statistics of HRM functions and performance evaluation.

3.4. Questionnaire Structure

The questionnaire consisted of three main sections: 1) demographic information, 2) HRM practices, and 3) performance evaluation metrics. The HRM practices section covered recruitment strategies, training programs, incentive structures, and evaluation criteria. Participants were required to rate each aspect on a five-point Likert scale. The performance evaluation section assessed the transparency, effectiveness, and perceived fairness of the evaluation process.

3.5. Data Collection and Response Rate

The survey was distributed online and via institutional HR departments. The data

collection period spanned four weeks, ensuring broad participation. A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed, of which 294 were completed, yielding a response rate of 84%.

4. Results and Discussion

Additional findings highlighted that performance evaluation transparency significantly enhances employee trust in HR systems. Respondents who perceived their evaluations as fair and consistent were more likely to exhibit higher organizational commitment and productivity. This underscores the importance of clearly defined evaluation criteria and the integration of digital tools to ensure real-time performance tracking.

The findings revealed that administrative staff highly valued training and development programs that focused on practical skill enhancement. The most appreciated programs included:

- 1) Digital skills training, particularly workshops on HR systems, data entry accuracy, workflow automation, and system integration.
- 2) Performance management workshops, which clarified evaluation criteria, feedback methods, and goal-setting techniques.
- 3) Leadership and supervisory training for mid-level administrators seeking career advancement.
- 4) Communication and professional development programs, which strengthened teamwork, conflict resolution, and customer-service skills.

These programs were perceived as directly contributing to fairer evaluations, clearer performance expectations, and improved job satisfaction.

Further insights from the interviews revealed that transparent performance evaluation processes foster a culture of trust and continuous improvement. HR managers emphasized that regular workshops and feedback sessions significantly enhance employee motivation and institutional loyalty. Comparative analysis with similar studies in the GCC region highlighted the role of digital platforms in facilitating real-time performance monitoring, which significantly contributes to enhanced administrative efficiency.

Interviews with HR managers indicated that the integration of modern digital tools has significantly improved the reliability and speed of performance evaluations. Digital platforms enabled real-time tracking, automated reminders, standardized evaluation templates, and analytics dashboards that reduced subjectivity in decision-making. Staff members expressed higher confidence in evaluations that were supported by documented digital records rather than manual methods.

The findings also highlighted that universities with dedicated HR departments and well-defined strategic objectives showed higher rates of staff satisfaction and institutional efficiency. These universities demonstrated proactive engagement in staff development, offering regular training programs and feedback sessions. Qualitative insights from HR managers revealed that staff members appreciated transparent evaluation mechanisms that provided clear career progression path-

ways. However, challenges such as limited technological infrastructure and inconsistent policy implementation were also noted. Addressing these challenges requires strategic investments in digital systems and standardized evaluation frameworks. Moreover, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and feedback is essential for enhancing administrative performance. Cross-analysis with regional universities indicated that institutions prioritizing HR digitalization experienced a notable improvement in evaluation accuracy and employee satisfaction.

The results indicate a strong correlation between advanced HR practices and improved administrative performance. Training programs emerged as critical determinants of staff satisfaction and evaluation fairness. Respondents emphasized the value of transparent incentive systems and continuous feedback mechanisms. Qualitative insights revealed challenges related to outdated policies and technological limitations. Institutions adopting modern HR systems reported better staff engagement and productivity. These findings align with global best practices, emphasizing the need for continuous HR development and technology integration to enhance administrative efficiency.

4.1. Effectiveness of HRM Practices

Findings indicate that HRM functions significantly contribute to performance evaluation. In particular, training and incentives were found to be the most influential factors. Employees in universities with structured training programs reported higher satisfaction with performance assessments.

4.2. Statistical Findings

Regression analysis was used to examine the impact of HRM functions on performance evaluation. The results are presented in **Table 3**. The impact of HRM components on performance evaluation is illustrated in **Figure 3**, based on regression analysis.

The regression model shows a positive relationship between HRM functions and performance evaluation ($R^2 = 0.68$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that HR policies significantly influence evaluation outcomes.



Figure 3. Regression analysis-impact of HRM on performance evaluation.

Table 3. Regression analysis-impact of HRM on performance evaluation.

Predictor Variable	Beta Coefficient (β)	Standard Error
Recruitment & Selection	0.25	0.08
HR Planning	0.30	0.09
Training & Development	0.35	0.09
Incentives & Rewards	0.20	0.07
$R^2 = 0.68$	Adjusted $R^2 = 0.66$	F-Statistic = 15.23

4.3. Discussion

Despite the positive impact of HRM practices, challenges remain in ensuring consistency across institutions. Differences in university policies and administrative structures lead to variability in the effectiveness of performance evaluations. This tracking process can be optimized through analytics programs specifically designed for higher education fields (Madhuri & Kumar, 2025). Furthermore, when digital tracking measures are deployed, employee engagement levels show substantial improvement (Sharif et al., 2024), validating the perspective that data-driven decision-making tools play an essential role in stabilizing contemporary university HRM systems (Saboori-Taft et al., 2025). In environments undergoing total digital restructuring, academic institutions can leverage these automated and AI-driven HR platforms to sustain long-term performance improvements (Bhaskaru & Lalitha, 2026).

This study also acknowledges limitations, including its reliance on self-reported data, which may introduce biases. Future research should consider longitudinal studies and the integration of qualitative methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of HRM effectiveness in academic settings.

These findings are consistent with previous research that emphasizes the importance of structured HRM frameworks in ensuring fair and effective performance evaluations (Aktar & Pangil, 2017; Bani Ahmad et al., 2025). However, one key limitation is the variability in HRM policies across different institutions, which introduces challenges in standardizing evaluation processes. Moreover, while training programs and incentives were found to be significant predictors of performance evaluation effectiveness, the study did not account for external socio-cultural factors that might influence employee perceptions. Future research should consider mixed-method approaches, integrating qualitative insights to complement the quantitative findings.

These findings align with previous research (Ashrafuzzaman, 2024; Aktar & Pangil, 2017) that emphasizes the need for structured HRM frameworks in academic settings. The study highlights the importance of modernizing performance evaluation systems to ensure fairness and accuracy. Enhanced HR planning, effective recruitment, structured training programs, and well-designed incentive systems are key drivers of improved performance evaluation outcomes.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In light of these findings, it is recommended that Saudi universities implement periodic audits of HRM systems to identify gaps and ensure continuous improvement. Establishing partnerships with international HR organizations can also facilitate knowledge exchange and the adoption of global best practices. These strategic initiatives will contribute to creating robust, adaptive, and future-ready HRM frameworks.

To ensure sustainable development, it is imperative for Saudi universities to foster an organizational culture that values continuous learning, transparent evaluations, and adaptive HR policies. The establishment of dedicated HR innovation hubs within universities can drive strategic reforms, encouraging the integration of advanced technologies and global best practices. Furthermore, collaborative initiatives with international institutions can offer valuable insights into innovative HRM strategies, enhancing institutional competitiveness on a global scale.

In conclusion, the study underscores the necessity for Saudi universities to adopt holistic HRM frameworks that are adaptive to both institutional needs and global trends. It is recommended that universities establish centralized HR platforms that integrate digital evaluation tools, ensuring real-time tracking of staff performance. Regular policy reviews and updates are also crucial to maintain alignment with institutional objectives and global best practices. Additionally, universities should invest in capacity-building programs for HR personnel to enhance their proficiency in utilizing advanced HR technologies. Longitudinal research is encouraged to track the long-term impacts of these HRM reforms on institutional growth and administrative efficiency. By embracing a culture of continuous learning and adaptability, Saudi universities can significantly enhance their administrative performance and contribute to broader national development goals.

The study concludes that enhancing HR practices in Saudi universities is pivotal for achieving sustainable administrative performance. Recommendations include investing in digital HR platforms, standardizing evaluation criteria, and providing ongoing professional development for HR staff. Future research should explore the longitudinal impacts of these reforms, focusing on their scalability across diverse institutional environments. By aligning HR strategies with international best practices and national development goals, Saudi universities can foster administrative excellence and contribute effectively to the broader objectives of Vision 2030.

This study underscores the critical role of HRM in performance evaluation within Saudi universities. The findings suggest that HR practices—especially training programs, incentive structures, and strategic planning—significantly impact the performance of administrative staff.

Recommendations:

- 1) Implement standardized performance evaluation systems across universities.
- 2) Enhance HRM training programs to align with institutional goals.
- 3) Adopt technology-driven assessment tools to improve efficiency.

4) Ensure continuous professional development for HR personnel.

By integrating these strategies, Saudi universities can optimize their HRM frameworks, thereby enhancing administrative performance and overall institutional effectiveness.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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