



Governance of Human Resource Development and Institutional Excellence in Public Universities: A Conceptual Review

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Abstract

Public universities operate in increasingly complex environment characterized by pressure for accountability, global competition, and demands for quality and innovation. In this context, Human Resource Development (HRD) plays a critical role in enhancing teaching quality, research productivity, and institutional performance. However, the effectiveness of HRD is strongly influenced by governance structures that shape decision-making, resource allocation, and accountability. Weak governance often leads to fragmented HRD practices, limited strategic alignment, and ultimately constrained institutional excellence. This article synthesizes existing scholarly literature to examine how governance mechanisms influence HRD processes and how HRD, in turn, contributes to institutional excellence in public universities. Using a conceptual and narrative review approach, the study integrates insights from research on higher education governance, strategic HRD, and excellence frameworks. Key themes include governance principles and actors, HRD mechanisms such as faculty development and performance management, and multidimensional indicators of institutional excellence. The article offers theoretical clarification by distinguishing between governance and management and positioning HRD as a mediating mechanism between the two. It proposes an integrated conceptual framework that explains this relationship. The findings carry implications for policymakers, university administrators, and future research seeking to empirically test and refine the governance–HRD excellence nexus.

Keywords: Human Resource Development, Governance, Institutional Excellence, Public Universities, Higher Education Governance.

1. Introduction

The importance of Human Resource Development (HRD) in higher education institutions has taken center stage due to its strategic role in enhancing institutional performance, academic quality, and national development outcomes. In universities, HRD underpins the recruitment, development, and retention of academic and administrative staff, thereby directly affecting the quality of teaching, the level of research output, and the institutional reputation. With the increasing pressures emerging in higher education systems due to globalization, technological change, and accountability, strategic HRD has become an important mechanism for maintaining institutional competitiveness and excellence.

HRD cannot be avoided in preparing teaching and non-teaching staff with the capabilities needed to provide high-quality education and research, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4, which emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education. Faculty development, leadership training, and ongoing learning initiatives are strategic HRD practices that foster a culture of innovation and organizational learning in

universities (Prabawati et al., 2024). In addition, successful HRD increases employee satisfaction, enhances the quality of the student experience, and enables the institution to adapt to changes in regulations and policies (Hugar & Battase, 2024). This review focuses on public universities because they operate under formal governance frameworks, public accountability requirements, and state funding mechanisms, making the governance–HRD relationship more visible, comparable, and consequential for institutional excellence outcomes.

Public universities are at the core of national development as they produce skilled human capital, generate knowledge, and promote innovation and socio-economic change. They are critical tools for research, knowledge transfer, and societal development, which makes them part of competitiveness at the regional and national levels (Hitimana et al., 2017). Governance practices within universities can significantly influence these outcomes by shaping institutional strategies, accountability mechanisms, and quality assurance processes (Alshammari, 2025).

Good governance has been widely viewed as a key driver of effective performance in institutions of higher education. Governance systems that are more focused on accountability, transparency, participation, and effective management of resources will enhance institutional effectiveness and responsiveness to societal demands (Abdelaziz, 2022; Alshammari, 2025). Governance is also critical for addressing global issues related to quality, performance, and accountability in higher education. The epistemic perspectives of governance also underscore the significance of knowledge-based decision-making in quality assurance and the development of institutions (Campbell & Carayannis, 2012).

Nevertheless, although HRD and governance are identified as significant, even in public universities, a significant number of institutions continue to face problems of government deficiency, insufficient funding, restrictive policies, and capacity issues, especially in developing contexts (Hitimana et al., 2017). Although governance and HRD have been studied independently in the past, there has been a conceptual gap in understanding how governance structures influence the HRD process and the mediating role of institutional excellence in HRD. The existing literature is often characterized by a lack of theorizing the governance–HRD–excellence nexus and by merely demonstrating empirical performance results, thus creating a conceptual gap in synthesizing governance mechanisms, HRD practices, and institutional excellence into a single analytical framework.

To address this gap, the current research aims to synthesize the available theoretical and empirical literature on the governance of HRD and its association with institutional excellence in public universities. The conceptual review will elucidate key concepts and major themes and develop a comprehensive conceptual framework that explains the role of governance in HRD and how HRD can enhance institutional excellence in tertiary education.

2. Methodology of the Review

2.1 Nature of the Study

This study is designed as a conceptual and narrative review. It analyzes available theoretical and empirical research on the governance of Human Resource Development (HRD) and its connection with institutional excellence in state universities. It is an integrative and exploratory method that focuses on conceptual clarification rather than statistical aggregation of findings.

2.2 Sources of Literature and Search Strategy

The review included peer-reviewed journal articles, books, book chapters, and policy documents from UNESCO, World Bank, and OECD. The literature was retrieved through searches in Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar using the following keywords: Human Resource Development (HRD), Governance, Public Universities, and institutional excellence. A total of about 180 publications were

retrieved initially. After removing duplicates and screening titles, abstracts, and full texts for relevance, approximately 70 sources were selected for inclusion based on their theoretical and empirical contribution to the review topic. Relevant publications were retrieved using keywords related to HRD, governance, higher education, and public universities. The remaining references were identified through citation tracking and screening of reference lists.

2.3 Inclusion Focus

The review involved studies on the governance structure, HRD practices, higher education management, and the performance of institutions in public universities. Conceptual and empirical research were considered to develop a well-rounded understanding of the subject.

2.4 Analytical Approach

The thematic and conceptual synthesis method was used to analyze the literature. The major themes, theoretical lenses, and connections among governance, HRD, and institutional excellence were identified and integrated into a coherent theoretical framework. The proposed study is not a systematic review but a conceptual synthesis of prevailing themes and theoretical views to build theory and future research.

3. Conceptualizing Human Resource Development (HRD) in Higher Education

Human Resource Development (HRD) in the higher education sector is a complex paradigm that has evolved over time, from simplistic training programs to a strategic view. This development reflects the pressures that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) face to remain competitive and maintain academic standards. HRD in this context encompasses a range of dimensions, including faculty development, curriculum design, career development, and performance governance, all of which cumulatively affect organizational effectiveness and competitive position.

3.1 Definitions of HRD

Traditionally, HRD was viewed as a branch of human resource management that aimed to strengthen employees' competencies and performance. In modern language, HRD is seen as a syntactic orchestra of structures and unstructured learning that integrates both individual and institutional competencies, capacities, and capabilities (Simmonds & Pedersen, 2006).

3.2 HRD in University Context

In the university setting, critical considerations include faculty development, curricular training, career development, and performance management. Faculty development cannot be underestimated as a means of improving the quality of pedagogy and research output. The efforts are aimed at enhancing skills, pedagogical practice, and research (Kamble & Kariguleshwar, 2023; Falola et al., 2016). Faculty and staff are provided with ongoing learning opportunities to adapt to new educational technologies and practices, thereby promoting a culture of continuous learning (Prabawati et al., 2024). Faculty career development and job satisfaction entail programs that include mentorship, academic linkages, and leadership training (Falola et al., 2016). Moreover, the use of performance indicators, which are also based on academic performance, fosters responsibility and ongoing quality enhancement in teaching and research activities (Pérez-Briceño, 2025).

3.3 Strategic vs Traditional HRD

Strategic HRD is focused on aligning HRD practices with institutional goals, thereby driving innovation and enhancing organizational competitiveness. It is the paradigm that involves not only strategic planning but also the development of leadership and organizational learning. On the contrary, traditional HRD is

more of an operational focus that covers training and administrative systems without being in touch with broader institutional objectives (Pérez-Briceño, 2025).

3.4 Importance of HRD for Academic Quality and Competitiveness

HRD is important for maintaining high academic standards and institutional reputation by developing an effective, flexible workforce. Faculty performance improvement has a direct effect on teaching quality and research productivity (Kamble et al., 2023; Falola et al., 2016). Strategic HRD initiatives help to achieve educational goals like Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG -4) as educators are empowered to provide an inclusive and future-oriented education (Prabawati et al., 2024).

3.5 Linking HRD to Organizational Performance

HRD contributes to organizational performance by strengthening employees' commitment and competence, which are crucial to financial and academic success. The combination of quantitative and qualitative HRD dimensions produces better employee results, which will contribute to improved institutional performance (Sung & Choi, 2014). Good HRD practices foster a culture of innovation and continuous improvement, which is critical to ensuring a competitive advantage in the higher education sector (Falola et al., 2016; Sung & Choi, 2014). However, there are barriers to HRD, including financial constraints, change, and the need to continuously assess it. Addressing these obstacles requires an active HRD role that aligns with institutional objectives and remains open to the changing educational environment (Kamble & Karigleshwar, 2023).

4. Governance in Public Universities: Concepts and Dimensions

Governance in the public universities is a complex construct that involves the structures, processes, and practices by which the universities are directed and controlled. It entails the interaction of universities with external parties, i.e., the state and the market, as well as with internal decision-making structures. Higher education governance is essential for accountability, transparency, and alignment with society's needs, especially amid an increasingly global emphasis on sustainability and innovation (Shin & Jones, 2022; U., 2025).

4.1 Meaning of Governance in Higher Education

Governance in higher education refers to the structures and processes that guide decision-making and the implementation of policies in universities. It involves other levels of power and influence, such as institutional, state, and market factors, and it is also influenced by historical, political, and cultural structures (Shin & Jones, 2022; U., 2025). Governance is critical to aligning university operations with public accountability, quality assurance, and strategic objectives (U., 2025).

4.2 Key Governance Principles

Accountability, transparency, participation, adherence to the rule of law, and strategic leadership are the major tenets of governance in public universities, and each of them influences institutional performance and legitimacy. Accountability holds universities accountable to the main stakeholders, students, staff, and government, in place of auditing, performance reviews, and reporting systems that preserve the integrity of the institutions (Rusdi et al., 2023). Simultaneously, transparency reflects the openness of the decision-making process and the access to information by stakeholders, which enhances trust and reduces the risk of corruption or mismanagement (Rusdi et al., 2023; Alshammari, 2025). Another vital value is participation, which focuses on the inclusion of faculty, students, and external stakeholders in decision-making within

institutions, thereby facilitating decision-making and bringing diversity into institutional policies (U., 2025; Alshammari, 2025).

Additionally, the rule of law ensures that governing practices do not violate legal frameworks and institutional regulations, thereby providing stability, predictability, and equity in university operations (Alshammari, 2025; Rusdi et al., 2023). Lastly, strategic leadership steers institutions toward long-term objectives and helps them adapt to an evolving external environment, which requires visionary leadership that facilitates innovation, sustainability, and organizational change (Carnegie & Tuck, 2010; Alshammari, 2025).

4.3 Governance Actors

In public university governance, various actors shape the direction of institutions, accountability, and performance. Governments play a central role in higher education governance through funding, policy formulation, and regulatory oversight, and they influence institutional behavior through legislation and public accountability frameworks (Shin & Jones, 2022; Amaral et al., 2002). University administration encompasses the internal executive branch responsible for translating governance policies into operational strategies, leveraging institutional resources, and ensuring that strategic plans are implemented. Chancellors, vice-chancellors, deans, and administrative managers are typical members of this group and are involved in executive activities and in organizing the work of the institution (Carnegie & Tuck, 2010; Shin & Jones, 2022). Another critical governance participant is academic bodies: faculty members, senates, and academic committees, which help in the process of making academic decisions, designing the curriculum, and governing research and upholding academic standards and scholarly integrity (Carnegie & Tuck, 2010; Amaral et al., 2002).

5. Governance of Human Resource Development

HRD governance is the set of structures and procedures that guide the management and development of human resources within an organization. It involves policies, structures, and systems that ensure HRD activities align with organizational goals and ethical guidelines. Proper HRD governance plays a vital role in creating transparency, accountability, and efficiency in HR practices, ultimately leading to an organization's overall success.

5.1 HRD Governance Mechanisms

HRD governance has a firm foundation embedded in a full-fledged policy framework that guides human resource practices and holds them to legal, ethical, and institutional standards. These structures offer official regulations and principles in recruitment, training, performance management, and HRD research activities. Ethical conduct of research and legal responsibility in HRD processes require adherence to policies and legal requirements of the institutional review board and the Freedom of Information Act (Hughes, 2019; Clardy, 2003). These policy tools provide an orderly framework within which the HRD activities can be planned and assessed.

Successful HRD governance is also based on transparent decision-making frameworks that facilitate transparency, coordination, and accountability when formulating and implementing HRD. These are the structures that enable decision-making in collaboration and ensure that HRD initiatives are always in line with organizational strategies and institutional priorities (Dieleman & Hilhorst, 2011). Leadership commitment will be very important during this process because senior leaders will be responsible for approving HRD strategies, aligning them with the wider governance frameworks, and instilling a culture of learning and development. Leadership support also develops organizational models of HR management and determines the effectiveness of HRD interventions (Kaehler & Grundei, 2019).

HRD governance is further enhanced by accountability systems and resource-allocation mechanisms, which ensure ethical behavior, performance evaluation, and the sustainable delivery of HRD programs. Strong

accountability ensures that institutions can measure HRD impacts and make stakeholders accountable to the programs and ethical standards (Dieleman & Hilhorst, 2011).

5.2 Role of Governance in HR Functions

In HEIs, governance plays a critical role in defining key HR functions, particularly training, promotion, appraisal, and faculty research. Governance frameworks ensure that faculty training programs are aligned with institutional strategy, academic standards, and national and international educational priorities, such as Sustainable Development Goal 4, thereby reinforcing the capacity and quality assurance mechanisms of institutions (Prabawati et al., n.d.). On the same note, governance influences promotion and appraisal systems by establishing clear guidelines, formalized processes, and performance-based evaluation systems, thereby improving fairness, motivation, and employee retention (Alamsyah et al., 2023). Furthermore, governance aids in research capacity building by offering ethical principles, institutional policies, and resource frameworks that promote scholarly productivity, innovation, and continuous learning in universities (Hughes, 2019; Prabawati et al., 2024).

6. Institutional Excellence in Higher Education

Institutional excellence in higher education is a multidimensional construct that encompasses various aspects of quality and performance within universities. It refers to an ongoing, systematic endeavor to improve teaching, research, innovation, and governing in accordance with the changing demands of students and society. Institutionalized excellence models, especially the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model and similar models of performance excellence, provide systematic approaches to assessing and improving institutional quality. The strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and foreground leadership are the key drivers of excellence in these models.

6.1 Concept of Institutional Excellence

Institutional excellence in higher education refers to the holistic development and performance of universities across teaching, research, and community engagement. This requires a quality management strategy that emphasizes continuous improvement and stakeholder satisfaction (Arjomandi et al., 2009; Steed et al., 2005).

The EFQM Excellence Model is widely used in tertiary education to assess and improve the quality of institutions. It emphasizes that leadership, human resource management, and critical processes are key success factors (Blackmore & Douglas, 2003; Laurett & Mendes, 2019). The model supports self-assessment and continuous improvement processes, helping institutions identify their strengths and opportunities for growth (Zink & Vob, 2000).

Other renowned models, including the Baldrige and Deming models, are also being adopted in the tertiary education to enhance quality and excellence. These models leverage strategic thinking, customer orientation, and performance outcomes, thereby streamlining institutional operations with educational demands.

6.2 Indicators of Excellence in Universities

Institutional excellence in universities is reflected through multiple interrelated indicators that capture academic, organizational, and societal performance. Quality in teaching is a fundamental aspect that entails faculty development and sustained support for faculty development to promote pedagogical efficacy and learning outcomes. Universities are becoming more oriented towards a culture of excellence in teaching alongside research performance, as they become aware that high-quality teaching is a foundation for student performance and the credibility of the institution (Robson, 2017; Sanders et al., 2020).

Another important excellence measure is research productivity, which is traditionally evaluated through publications, citations, research grants, and scholarly impact. To uphold sound academic standards and to enhance their ability to create knowledge, institutions have worked to strike the right balance between teaching and research (Mudho, 2025). Innovation is also an important indicator, encompassing curriculum design, teaching and learning strategies, and research that address the changing needs of both society and technology. Innovative practices help universities remain relevant, competitive, and responsive to stakeholder expectations (Steed et al., 2005).

Institutional reputation is another outcome of excellence that is salient and determined by the quality of academics, the influence of research, the success of graduates, and external perceptions. Although rankings and surveys are often used to assess reputation, they often offer a biased perspective on institutional performance and omit aspects of excellence on a larger scale (Mudho, 2025). Student outcomes, including employability, academic success, satisfaction, and advancement rates, are used to define performance metrics that determine how well institutions are functioning and aligning with strategic goals (Sarrico, 2022). These effects are attributable to the direct impacts of institutional policies, teaching practices, and the governance system on learners.

The conceptualization of excellence increasingly takes the form of a governance outcome, in which effective leadership, strategic planning, stakeholder involvement, and accountability mechanisms facilitate continuous quality improvement and institutional performance (Zink & Vob, 2000; Laurett & Mendes, 2019). However, excellence remains difficult to measure, as most traditional ranking systems focus on a few areas of performance. New indicators, such as the Multi-Metric Index of Institutional Performance, aim to provide a more in-depth evaluation, including the level of digital maturity, industry participation, and overall societal effects (Mudho, 2025). This is where the need arises to adopt adaptive, holistic methods to assess and promote institutional excellence in higher education.

7. Linking HRD Governance and Institutional Excellence

HEIs' governance is crucial in determining the effectiveness of HRD, which, in turn, leads to institutional excellence. Good governance will also ensure that HRD practices align with institutional goals, thereby creating a favorable environment that promotes faculty development, organizational learning, and quality assurance. This relationship among governance, HRD, and institutional excellence is a prerequisite for sustainable educational outcomes.

7.1 Governance and HRD Effectiveness

Governance is pivotal to the effectiveness of Human Resource Development in HEIs because it addresses mechanisms of accountability and participatory structures, as well as the process of strategic alignment. Strong governance enhances the effectiveness of HRD through accountability and the proper management of resources, which cannot be achieved without planning, implementing, and sustaining HRD initiatives (Abdelaziz, 2022). Transparent governance systems ensure that HRD policies are checked and reviewed, thereby minimizing inefficiencies and misallocation of resources. Additionally, participatory governance processes enable faculty, staff, and other stakeholders to contribute to HRD decision-making and make development programs more inclusive, context-sensitive, and responsive to institutional needs (Abdelaziz, 2022; Gunawan et al., 2024). Another crucial governance role is strategic alignment; governance frameworks that incorporate HRD into institutional strategies ensure that development initiatives promote the mission, vision, and long-term goals of the university, thereby maximizing organizational outcomes (Sousa, 2020; Sziegat, 2022).

Good HRD facilitated by strong governance produces various organizational advantages. Faculty development programs enhance teaching, research, and professional development, thereby improving academic outcomes and institutional efficiency (Al-Hamad et al., 2023). Moreover, HRD promotes organizational learning through fostering lifelong learning, innovation in sharing knowledge as well as

adapting to changing academic and technological conditions (Prabawati et al., 2024). Another aspect by which HRD can lead to quality assurance is the linking of competency-based training and performance evaluation to institutional standards, thereby strengthening academic quality and accountability systems (Prabawati et al., 2024; Thoenig & Paradeise, 2014). Overall, these results indicate that governance-based HRD is a strategic tool for boosting institutional performance and maintaining excellence.

7.2 Mediating Role of HRD

The mediating effect of HRD in the connection between governance and institutional excellence is supported by empirical evidence. Examples of top research institutions such as Berkeley and MIT indicate that well-structured systems of governance, along with highly developed HRD, contribute to increased research output, high-quality teaching, and improved institutional reputation (Thoenig & Paradeise, 2014). Similarly, the example of governance reforms in German institutions of higher education demonstrates how HRD efforts can support sustainable development and excellence by strengthening institutional capabilities and responsiveness in strategic areas (Sziegat, 2022).

Despite these beneficial links, several threats can limit the usefulness of HRD as an intervening mechanism. Resistance to flexibility and innovation in HRD practices, along with inadequate resources and institutional commitment, can undermine development efforts due to the inflexibility of governance structures. To this end, governance and HRD should be supported by a conducive organizational culture, strategic leadership, and the allocation of sufficient resources to realize their potential and achieve institutional excellence.

8. Conceptual framework

The extant literature reviewed has led to the development of a conceptual framework in which governance at public universities is the independent variable, human resource development (HRD) is the mediating variable, and institutional excellence is the dependent variable. Governance can be observed through key dimensions such as accountability, transparency, participation, the rule of law, and strategic leadership, which affect institutions' decision-making processes, resource allocation, quality assurance, and related activities (Abdelaziz, 2022; Alshammari, 2025; Shin & Jones, 2022).

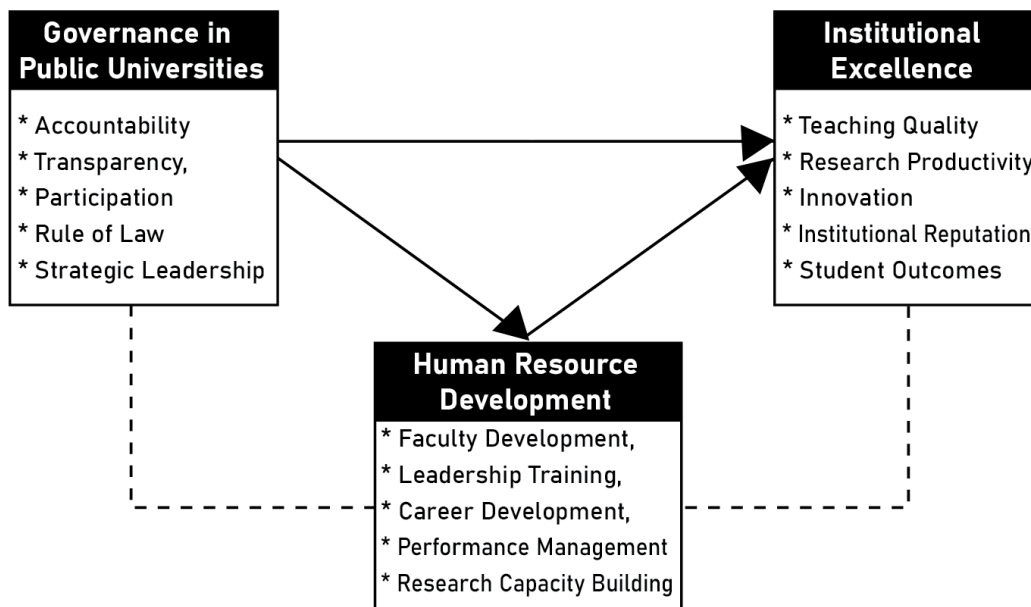


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework

The framework proposes that good governance can foster effective HRD practices through supportive policies, leadership commitment, accountability systems, and a transparent decision-making process (Dieleman & Hilhorst, 2011; Kaehler & Grundei, 2019). Hence, governance affects faculty development, leadership training, career development, performance management, and research capacity-building initiatives, thereby improving an institution's human capital (Falola et al., 2016; Prabawati et al., 2024). The framework also argues that effective HRD is a key element in improving institutional excellence by enhancing teaching and learning, research and innovation productivity, institutional reputation, and student outcomes (Sung & Choi, 2014; Al-Hamad et al., 2023; Laurett & Mendes, 2019). In this way, HRD is a key instrument for bringing governance into the fruition of excellence outcomes. The framework provides a theoretical basis for future empirical studies to test the direct and indirect relationships among governance, HRD, and institutional excellence in public universities.

9. Discussion

This current review was conducted to explain the role of the governance structure in Human Resource Development (HRD) and vice versa. One key observation from the synthesis is that governance and HRD should not be treated as independent entities. Although earlier research has investigated the principles of governance as accountability, transparency, and participation (Abdelaziz, 2022; Alshammari, 2025) and other researchers have explained the practices of HRD, including faculty development, career progression, and performance management (Falola et al., 2016; Pérez-Briceño, 2025), the interconnection between the two realms has not been well-theorized. The review has shown that the structure of governance preconditions the design, implementation, and appraisal of HRD systems, and that HRD is a pragmatic system in which governance reforms affect teaching quality, research output, and overall institutional performance.

The second important lesson is the strategic character of HRD in higher education. The literature consistently draws a clear distinction between traditional, training-oriented HRD and strategic HRD, aligned with institutional missions (Pérez-Briceño, 2025; Bailey et al., 2018). When institutional structures encourage long-term planning, leadership dedication, and evidence-based decision-making, HRD will shift its administrative routine from a mere driver of institutional transformation to a strategic driver. Conversely, poor governance marked by opaque decision-making or limited accountability is likely to reduce HRD to disjointed training exercises with minimal organizational impact (Dieleman & Hilhorst, 2011). This observation supports the argument that excellence in universities cannot be ensured merely by isolated quality efforts but rather by effective, governance-backed human-capital policies.

A number of conceptual ambiguities are also explained in the review. To begin with, it distinguishes between governance and management by underscoring that the former concerns the structures and principles that shape decision-making, while the latter concerns the operational implementation of those decisions (Shin & Jones, 2022; Carnegie & Tuck, 2010). This difference is imperative, as HRD governance does not just entail running training programs but also includes policy frameworks, accountability mechanisms, and strategic controls that define the HR functions. Secondly, the analysis narrows the HRD concept within higher education settings by situating it within a broader institutional framework that encompasses faculty development, research capacity building, leadership training, and performance assessment (Kamble & Kariguleshwar, 2023; Alamsyah et al., 2023). With these factors combined, the review goes beyond single-minded definitions of HRD as skill development and presents it as an institutional strength.

The integration of governance and HRD is a key theoretical contribution of this work. The proposed conceptual connection establishes governance as an enabling structure, HRD as a mediating mechanism, and institutional excellence as a result. This triadic connection is based on previous studies that have linked governance and accountability with quality assurance (Abdelaziz, 2022; Thoenig & Paradeise, 2014) and HRD with organizational performance (Sung & Choi, 2014), but this connection pulls these strands into a consistent explanatory model. By so doing, the review would fill the stated conceptual gap in the

governance-HRD-excellence nexus; the conceptualization of HRD is not simply an achievement of governance but rather an instrument through which the principles of governance are operationalized into improved teaching, research, innovation, and student outcomes.

From a practical perspective, the findings have significant implications for university administrators. HRD should be institutionalized by the institution's leaders rather than introduced as a support issue. This requires the creation of clear promotion and appraisal mechanisms, alignment of faculty development with strategic goals, and the provision of sufficient resources for continuous learning programs (Alamsyah et al., 2023; Prabawati et al., 2024). Leadership commitment is critical because senior administrators determine whether HRD should be incorporated into institutional planning and quality assurance processes (Kaehler & Grundei, 2019). The administrators should also strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems to assess the effects of HRD investments on teaching quality, research output, and student achievement.

For policymakers, the review highlights the need to develop regulatory and funding structures that promote strategic HRD. Governments are at the center of defining the governance environments by legislation, accountability frameworks, and models of public financing (Amaral et al., 2002; Shin & Jones, 2022). Policies focused on performance-based funding, open assessment, and capacity building can encourage universities to adopt a governance structure that promotes a strong HRD system. On the other hand, excessive political influence or strict bureaucratic oversight can undermine the institutions' independence and diminish the effectiveness of HRD. Policymakers ought thus to strive to balance accountability and flexibility so that universities can be innovative in their HRD practices without being held responsible by the public.

This argument is especially applicable to developing contexts of public universities, where governance is weak, funding is scarce, and capacity is limited, which tends to suppress institutional performance (Hitimana et al., 2017). Enhancing HRD governance in these environments is a viable measure to improve institutional resilience and competitiveness. By coordinating governance changes with systematic faculty development, leadership training programs, and research support systems, universities can progressively build internal capacity, even when constrained by resources. This practice also serves the broader national developmental interests by enhancing the quality of higher education and human capital formation.

The review supports the view that institutional excellence is not only the outcome of ranking measures or specific quality efforts, but also of a consistent system of governance that prioritizes and perpetuates human resource development. This study is more detailed in its elucidation of concepts and in its combination of governance and HRD, offering a better understanding of how public universities can attain and maintain excellence in an ever more complex and challenging environment.

10. Implications for Policy and Practice

This review shows that HRD governance structures in public universities need to be strengthened through institutionalized, clear policy frameworks, transparent appraisal systems, and robust accountability mechanisms. Making HRD part of official governance practices could help ensure that institutional missions and quality-assurance guidelines align with recruitment, promotion, training, research development, and so forth (Abdelaziz, 2022; Alamsyah et al., 2023). Without such structural coherence, HRD initiatives risk disintegration and ineffectiveness. It is also necessary for strategic leadership. The leaders of the university must make HRD part of the long-term strategic planning, resource distribution, and performance assessment systems, and create a culture of lifelong learning and innovation (Kaehler & Grundei, 2019). Policies derived from evidence-based HRD, based on systematic analysis and performance data, can also lead to greater transparency and impact (Sung & Choi, 2014). Lastly, capacity building should be sustained, especially in resource-limited public universities, to enable institutions to build resilience, research potential, and scholarly quality in their operations (Hitimana et al., 2017).

10. Conclusion

The study aimed to review the literature on the governance of Human Resource Development and its relationship to institutional excellence in public universities. The article also bridged the gap in integrating the domains of governance, HRD, and higher-education quality by reviewing conceptual and empirical contributions to the governance, HRD, and higher-education quality frameworks, and by presenting a coherent interpretation of the governance-HRD excellence nexus. The argument in the review is that the structural and normative basis in which HRD functions is governance, and the operational means by which governance intentions in the form of better teaching, research, innovation, and student outcomes is brought to actualized is HRD. The following conditions were found to be important in effective HRD: strategic alignment, accountability, participatory decision-making, and leadership commitment. In case of weak or fragmented governance systems, HRD initiatives are likely to lose its strategic direction and institutional influence.

Finally, institutional excellence within contemporary public universities is not a matter of resources and rankings alone but rather the quality of governance that fosters and maintains the growth of human capital. Enhancement of HRD governance is thus not a marginal reform but a core channel towards realizing sustainable academic quality and institutional sustainability over time.

11. Future Research Directions

Further studies are advised to go beyond conceptual synthesis and to conduct a rigorous empirical test of the suggested governance-HRD-excellence framework. Quantitative research can measure the intensity and direction of relationships among governance mechanisms, HRD practices, and institutional performance indicators. More focused studies are needed, particularly in specific country contexts, to understand how political, cultural, and resource conditions affect HRD governance. Mixed-method designs would allow for more comprehensive insights, including statistical analysis accompanied by a qualitative investigation of institutional processes. Longitudinal studies are particularly important for understanding the effects of governance reform and HRD investments on institutional excellence in the long run.

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