The Role of Human Resource Management in the Context of Jordanian Higher Education: A Study of the Literature

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This paper explores the role of Human Resource Management (HRM) in the context of Jordanian Higher Education (HE) through an evaluation of its application and development. The research is based on a systematic literature review and a content analysis of 18 peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2000 and 2018. The findings show that the role of HRM is constructive, yet traditional, operational, and underdeveloped in its application. This study also identified a range of unexplored areas of research that call attention to future context-related studies in the field of HRM.

Keywords: HRM, Higher Education, Systematic Literature Review, Jordan

INTRODUCTION

The educational sector plays a significant role in the economic growth of a country's society (Waring, 2013). Consequently, the HE and its associated institutions have been the center of governments' focus in many countries around the globe. Higher education institutions (HEIs) are facing many challenges such as globalization, diversity, advancing technology and higher demands of service quality (De Waal and Kerlaan, 2015). Also, there is a growing rise and tension of calls to be more agile, competitive and business-like due to rising accountability to students and greater control by management (Cook and Daunton 2014; Cook et al. 2009). As a result, HEIs have been required to think about different ways of operating (Smeenk et al., 2009), especially with the pressure of the need to compete with an ever-rising number of universities and greater competition for students (Mah'd 2010; Vossensteyn 2004). HE management is looking for ways to improve the performance of employees and academics alike to become more business-like (Mah'd, 2014). It is claimed, this requires systematic and strategic approaches to building capabilities for future success, focusing on the management of people and resources, including human resources, as a key determinant of business success (Holbeche 2012; Knight 2012).

Research on HRM within the context of HE is underdeveloped within the Middle East (Allui and Sahai, 2016) including the Jordanian context. The purpose of this work is to explore the role of HRM

plays in the context of Jordanian HE by evaluating its positioning concerning the implementation of processes and policies and general management.

The next section considers background literature to the research topic followed by a consideration of the rationale for the study. The methodology of systematic literature and data collection is considered. There follows analysis, discussion, conclusions and recommendations for ongoing research within this context.

BACKGROUND LITERATURE

Managing HR in any organization is critical, as it is the 'human' element that is purported to be the most important asset and therefore the backbone of organizations (Deo, 2014). Managing HR is a necessity in all types of organizations including HEIs (Smeenk et al. 2009; Guest and Clinton 2007). HEIs have been subject to rising 'managerialism', scrutiny and performance monitoring, to not only improve service provision and student satisfaction (Gornall et al., 2014) but also to obtain better outcomes such as cost-cutting and improving effectiveness in general (Mansour et al., 2015).

HRM is the management of human resources within an organization (Farnham, 2010). There is a considerable amount of literature explaining, exploring, and exemplifying how to manage HR, the potential benefits of managing people, and how it can create competitive advantage (Dessler 2015; Farnham 2010; Chang and Huang 2005; Wright et al. 2001). Dessler (2015) explains that HRM helps managers hire the right person for the job, get the best out of them, and reduce turnover. Equally important, it can influence how employees work, perform and become productive (Menon, 2015). Within academic institutions, HRM is increasingly applied as part of 'New Managerialism', aiming at improving the effectiveness of the institution, managing costs, and exerting more control over the work of individuals, including academic employees (Mansour et al. 2015; Forrester 2011). Smeenk et al. (2009) argue HRM application in HEIs can influence the behavior of individuals, their job quality and therefore the performance of the entire institution. According to Edgley-Pyshorn and Huisman (2011), the effective management of HR within a university can aid in the creation of knowledge-intensive institutions able to meet the challenges of the external environment. Waring (2013) claims it helps management monitor and directs the work of academic employees, thus, ensuring consistency in delivery and standards of educational services. Based on this, the application of HRM has the potential to help manage and control the work performance of employees, assisting in improving general institutional outcomes.

Jordanian higher education is facing many critical challenges, which are similar to some extent to those faced by higher education generally. The university system has been moving towards privatization with claims it will enhance competency and make universities more accountable (Mah'd, 2014). The introduction and application of HRM practices, such as those introduced in the West, is perhaps inevitable. The understanding of HRM and the role it plays is growing in importance, especially in the context of HE (Allui and Sahai, 2016). On the practical side, however, developing and applying HRM within HEIs is a key challenge, which involves changing attitudes and behaviors of individuals (Dubosc and Kelo, 2011). Within HEIs, there exists a professional ethos formed by autonomy and academic freedom, making it difficult to apply HRM tools that may affect these strongly possessed and deeply ingrained values (Kallio et al. 2015; Edgley-Pyshorn and Husiman 2011; Smeenk et al. 2009). Furthermore, its' application also affects work which has in the past, been carried out through goodwill, feelings of professionalism, pride and status (De Vita and Case, 2016).

It is widely acknowledged that HRM plays an important role in managing the work of supporting employees, yet the case of implementation for academics may be more challenging. Managing their work, unlike support staff, is not widely acknowledged in the field of HRM (Kallio et al., 2015). Academics have traditionally managed and controlled their work, being on traditional 'professional contracts'. This may explain why Deans of Faculties handle HR processes in a 'traditional' form of offering basic and supporting roles (Arslan et al., 2013). HEIs are self-governing in nature, and academics are intrinsically motivated, keeping their focus on their research and/or teaching and other scholarly activities (McCormack et al. 2014; Middlehurst 2004). That is, the ability to implement a culture of change seems

difficult as its nature is characterized by freedom and autonomy, and academics themselves tend to stick to their values (Smeenk et al. 2009) and reluctant to accept change (Edgley-Pyshorn and Huisman, 2011).

Although there are some concerns regarding the application of HRM, it is acknowledged, it plays a significant role in influencing and supporting institutional outcomes, such as improving research (Jaskiene, 2015), developing staff (Nguyen, 2016) and of course, student retention. Conducting further research exploring the role HRM plays in the context of HE is essential. This research study focuses on exploring the HRM role in the context of Jordanian HE.

STUDY RATIONALE

The Ministry of Higher Education controls all universities (Badran, 2014) and HE is open to everyone following the credit hour system (Sabri, 2011). HEIs in Jordan, like other countries, is facing many challenges. These include globalization, increasing competition, the rapid growth of technology, demographic changes such as the constant increases in the youthful population and greater demands for higher education (Al-Zwaylif, 2012). From a different perspective, Jordan is 'famed' for its exceptional education service provision (El-Sheikh et al., 2012). Education in the country is the fastest-growing in the region (Barsoum and Mryyan, 2014). However, with the constant increase of HE demands, there is pressure on the Government to absorb large numbers of students whilst ensuring high-quality education, as well as preserving the 'shiny image' it has when compared to the rest of the region (El-Sheikh, 2012). With all the challenges faced, education and its quality remain a top priority in the country.

The Ministry of Higher Education places much emphasis on developing quality and excellence within the HE sector by developing strategies to develop and manage HR (Mah'd 2014; 2010). However, Jordanian HEIs are not fully equipped to deal with environmental challenges and compete favorably, especially private institutions (Turgay and Alhawamdeh, 2013). Considering the significant positive influence of HRM application on HEIs' outcomes, researching its role in Jordanian HE is fundamental. This research is significant, as implications and findings improve and assist HEIs' in responding to external challenges and attain positive outcomes (Stredwick 2013; Jain et al. 2009) such as improving the quality of services provided (Waring, 2013; Decramer et al. 2012). This study explores the role HRM plays in the context of Jordanian HE and considers answering the following research questions, all within the context of Jordanian higher education: 1. What role does HRM play? How is it 'applied'? What are the research gaps?

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach
A systematic literature review was 'undertaken' to explore, evaluate and analyze relevant articles within this area of research. A systematic literature review is a process of reviewing literature in a systematic and organized way to enhance the quality of research outcomes (Jesson et al., 2011). It enables the researcher to locate, consider and synthesize the best evidence relating to specific research questions, which can then provide information and evidence-based answers (Boland et al., 2017). Following this approach allows conducting comprehensive research to evaluate an extensive amount of literature without bias of selection (Booth et al., 2016), providing a literature background of the research, and informing research questions and focus.

The Review Process and Data Collection
Two sources of data were used; 'Scopus' and 'Google Scholar'. Scopus is one of the most comprehensive databases for peer-reviewed articles in social sciences, and Google Scholar is one of the largest search engines available. Using more than one source of data aids the researcher in locating articles related to their inquiry (Jesson et al., 2011). To meet the aim, the following steps took place: firstly, identification filtered according to the inclusion criteria, to include only articles relevant to this study. Secondly, relevant articles reviewed utilizing content analysis and finally, a summary of each paper

was developed (considering main arguments) and given a general theme for discussion and analysis purposes.

Inclusion Criteria

The systematic review first considered papers published between 2000 and January 2018. Only those peer-reviewed were included to increase the validity of research results (Boland et al. 2017; Podsakoff et al. 2005). Only papers written in the English language were included as well as those that specify Jordan and related directly to the field of HRM in the context of Jordanian HE. Book chapter, dissertations were excluded.

The following keywords and phrases were used in each data source: *'Human Resources management in Jordan', 'Universities in Jordan', 'Jordanian Universities', 'HRM', 'Higher Education in Jordan', 'Human Resources management',* and *'Human Resources Management Practices'.* Whilst these keywords and phrases were utilized, they were combined using 'AND' and 'OR' operators. The use of keywords and phrases between the two search engines was consistent for filtering purposes. Research papers that consider aspects that influence specific HR function(s) and/or practice(s) were also included (e.g. commitment and promotion; satisfaction and pay; ability to evaluate and evaluation; engagement and performance feedback).

Data Extraction and Selection Procedure

To check for redundant data for content analysis, abstracts of papers reviewed considered the inclusion criteria and research questions asked. If the paper was relevant, then a full paper review took place. This enabled the identification of the focus of the study as well as its methodological approach. Data extraction and selection procedure followed the following steps:

Step 1: Keyword search. A total number of 487 articles identified using the keywords in both search engines.

Step 2: Eliminating redundancies. The sample size reduced to 48 articles after excluding redundancies (unrelated articles) from both search engines.

Step 3: Excluding duplicates. The number reduced to 21 after duplicated excluded in each database and the removal of three (3) duplications across both databases.

Eighteen (18) left for content analysis.

Sample Analysis Procedure and Description

To ensure papers included are consistent and related to the aim of the study, every paper was reviewed and summarised considered article area(s) of focus, general discussion, methodological approach, and conclusions. A summary of each article considering general themes for analysis and discussion purposes also took place. General themes were identified which allowed further exploration of the evolution of HRM over the time of this research. These themes were; 1) Factors influencing academic institutions and employees' outcomes; 2) The role HRM functions and practices play in academic institutions; 3) Factors influencing HRM application and its effectiveness in academic institutions, and 4) The importance of developing and applying HRM in academic institutions (See Table 1).

Due to the small number of papers (18) identified for full content analysis, it is clear that research in the area of HRM in the context of Jordanian HE is not as prevalent as in other types of industry sectors. Although this study considered papers published during 2000 and 2018, the results show that the first published article about HRM in the HE sector is 2010. Following this, the number of papers increased gradually but not intensively. Furthermore, the 18 papers identified published within 18 different journals. It is evident from the small number identified and their general research focus that research in this context is underdeveloped.

TABLE 1
RESULTS OF CONTENT ANALYSIS

Themes	Author(s)
1) Factors influencing academic institutions and employees' outcomes	Altarawneh and Al-Shqairat (2010) Al-Hussami et al. (2011) Al-Rfou (2012) Al-Khasawneh (2013) Badah (2013) Al-Shuaibi et al. (2013)
2) The role HRM functions and practices play in academic institutions	Al Azzam and Jaradat (2014) Al-Mzary et al. (2015) Al-Kasasbeh (2016) Dua'a et al. (2017) Al Hawary and Nusair (2017)
3) Factors influencing HRM application and its effectiveness in academic institutions	Ababneh and Avramenko (2016) Taamneh et al. (2017)
4) The importance of developing and applying HRM in academic institutions.	Abu-Jarour (2014) Alzyoud et al. (2014) Rabee (2014) Al-Maaitah et al. (2015) Ensour et al. (2017)

Factors Influencing Academic Institutions and Employees' Outcomes

Research under this theme focuses on factors that influence the work of employees and/or the general outcomes of academic institutions. None considered specific HRM functions or practices to assess or evaluate their influence on universities' general outcomes.

Altarawneh and Al-Shqairat (2010) conducted a study into the adoption of HRM information systems, its use, benefits and barriers to implementation in public universities in Jordan. The study revealed the use of these systems is far from being about strategic decision-making, but instead, a mechanistic approach based on procedural processes. They purported that having a developed and advanced HRM system may positively influence general outcomes of academic institutions, although some challenges may incorporate its use. Their study concludes that although human resource information systems exist within HEI's, their adoption focused on operating daily administrative routines such as absenteeism, payroll services, and employment information. This study indicates that HRM exists in Jordanian universities, but operates supported by information systems. It is operative, simple and lacks advancement in nature.

The focus on factors that influence employee outcomes at work can be categorized as a) *'Commitment';* considering what influences work commitment and how commitment influences behaviors at work (Al-Rfou 2012; Al-Hussami et al. 2011). b) '*Employee Evaluation'* informed by student evaluation, however, it has to be questioned how effective these tools are (considering students' ability to evaluate and how they affect decision making about work of the academic (Al-Khasawneh, 2013). c) *'transparency'* in administrative decision-making as viewed by heads of departments, which considers how it influences the work of administrative and academic cadres within universities and the culture of the whole institution (Badah, 2013). Finally, d) '*cyber-loafing'* at work, its consequences, how it can be mitigated by proper and effective HR practices (Al-Shuaibi et al., 2013).

Al-Khasawneh's (2013) study investigated the influence of using and depending on student evaluation techniques in Jordanian universities to evaluate academic staff by exploring students' ability to evaluate academics' performance. The focus of the study did not consider the practice of evaluation itself from managerial perspectives, focusing instead on the influence of student evaluation on fairness

regarding decisions made upon academic staff, such as tenure, reward, and general job advancement. However, the study did not look at how implementing this type of evaluation would influence the work of academic staff or general outcomes of HEIs in Jordan. Many factors need considering when investigating this issue, along with students' ability to evaluate and any general value that these evaluations.

Performance appraisal, in addition to student evaluation is common and applied in many countries around the globe such as the UK (Field 2015; Waring 2013; Wilson 2002), and the background and value of this has been studied by various commentators, such as Hannay et al. (2003) who looks at Canada, and Elliot (2015) who explores Australia. More research in this area in the context of Jordan will help to extend the scope of the narrow research focus identified in this review. Successful and appropriate performance appraisal can determine the HRM success of organizations, yet, there is little research carried out in Jordan and the Middle East (Aladwan et al., 2014). There is also a lack of studies exploring other types of evaluation and their value to the organization, such as peer review, management by objective and 360-degree feedback.

The Role of Human Resource Management Function Within HEI's

Following 2013 research does start to focus on specific HRM practices within Jordanian HE and the role they play. The influence of HRM functions on general outcomes of HEIs is explored. For example, Al Azzam and Jaradat (2014) investigated the influence of recruitment processes on organizational effectiveness of public universities. They concluded that recruitment has a positive influence on universities' effectiveness. Yet, the authors of this study recommend universities diversify recruitment resources, especially the external ones, to reach equality and justice for applicants and increase the effectiveness of academic institutions through recruiting qualified applicants (Al Azzam and Jaradat, 2014).

Dua'a et al. (2017) considered the importance of recruitment functions and its influence on achieving organizational change in public universities with an in-depth analysis of a single case study. They argued that having an effective recruitment function would aid in targeting qualified employees, thus assisting in achieving any desired organizational change. These two studies focused on recruitment functions, arguably giving an indication there is an awareness of the benefits of effective recruitment to academic institutions. There is a lack of research in this area, particularly on how to attract talented employees and to limit 'brain drain', which is considered a major challenge within Jordan (Batarseh, 2011).

Al Mzary et al (2015) explores attitudes of administrative leaders and employees towards training courses within public universities and influences of the training on job performance. This work concluded that training has positive relationships with performance and attitudes toward training. However, they concluded that there are insufficient training programs and more be considered. Although this study sheds light on the importance of training, it did not examine barriers to effective training, such as culture and societal attitudes. Training in Middle Eastern HEI's is a 'cost'. The value is not recognized (Budhwar and Mellahi, 2006), considered leisure time for employees and offered to family and friends (Bhanugopan et al., 2012). Although this is recognized, the role 'Wasta' plays within decision-making and organizational life do not feature in research. 'Wasta' is a term used in Jordan and the Middle East generally and represents connections between people, being the Arabic word for relation (Loewe et al., 2007) or 'who you know' (Smith et al. 2011; Mohamed and Mohamad 2011). It is the main feature of the Arabic culture in general (Tlaiss and Kauser, 2011) and is common in Jordan (Cunningham and Sarayrah, 1994). Literature suggests it influences and shapes HRM practices within organizations in various sectors (Aldossari and Robertson 2016; Whiteoak et al. 2006). For this reason, it is significant to build on and extend research, which explores this 'cultural feature' from an HRM perspective. The work of Budhwar and Mellahi (2006) would suggest a negative side to 'Wasta', although researching 'Wasta' and its role within academic institutions and how it shapes practices, could shed light on the positive influences of 'Wasta'.

When considering papers that pay attention to specific HRM functions, Al Kasasbeh's (2016) work considers employee retention, concluding there is a positive relationship between flexible working time arrangements and satisfaction of faculty members as well as aiding in positive retention. This research

was in a private university, where 'tenure' of academic staff is not expected, is based on contracts, unlike public universities' where tenure is a privilege after several years' service (Sabri, 2011). Further work in this area will inform policy on academic staff performance and work outcomes.

Finally, a study by Al-Hawary and Nusair (2017) focuses on researching HR strategies and practices and their effect on perceived organizational support of administrative staff working within multiple public universities within the northern region of Jordan. This study reveals that many HRM practices, especially human resource planning, selection and performance appraisal, have a positive influence on organizational perceived support due to its influence on employees' work-related behaviors. They interestingly describe HRM as an advanced ideological 'methodology', which would demand the organization to invest and develop its HR energies towards training, developing, rewarding and leading. Whilst taking a holistic approach to research, they point out that there is a lack of research within the Jordanian universities, which explores the understanding and implementation of HRM and related practices and benefits to the organization.

It is evident there is a lack of research on the functions of HRM such as employee selection, performance appraisal, and compensation. Besides, there is a need to explore the roles and characteristics of effective HRM practices in HEIs, which have their unique characteristics compared to other types of organizations. For this reason, applying HRM tools or practices may be challenging, especially if it affects the strongly possessed values of academic staff within the institutions (Edgley-Pyshorn and Husiman 2011; Smeenk et al. 2009). Acknowledging this in research will enable better formulation and implementation of HRM practices in what is a unique context. Equally important, considering academic's views and perspectives may assist HEIs better understand their needs and expectations; thus, reflect on the services provided to the country.

Factors Influencing HRM Application and Its Effectiveness

Three factors were identified that influence HRM application. Ethics and ethical conduct, culture, and religion. The work of Taamneh et al. (2017) revealed ethical and cultural influences. They argue that the application of HRM needs good ethical conduct. They further add that ethical conduct in Jordanian universities is generally good, and for this reason, the engagement of administrators is driven. However, they suggest some concerns that the culture of society plays a role in influencing the conduct of administrators when it comes specifically to performance practice (Taamneh et al., 2017). This again suggests further research is needed in the area of cultural and societal norms and how they influence the formulation and application of HRM practices in HEIs.

Ethics and culture are not the only influencers of HRM practices in Jordanian HEIs. A study by Ababneh and Avramenko (2016) revealed that religion also plays a role. Islamic values embedded in the working lives of university participants; yet, accounts suggest it is moderate and varies in extent between universities. This study raises the question as to the extent to which practicing religion influences the formulation and implementation of HRM policies and practices by policy and/or decision-makers. This is a sensitive area of research, yet worth recognition.

The Importance of Developing and Applying HRM

Some studies paid attention to the importance of HRM development and application in HEIs, yet, few of these state it explicitly. They stress the need to consider, develop, and invest in HRM and its application. For example, Al-Maaitah et al. (2015) argue there is a need to consider HRM development as a means of improving performance. Unlike other studies, this work does explicitly specify the importance of having a developed HRM system as a means and capacity to monitor and improve performance.

From a different viewpoint, a study by Ensour et al. (2017) focuses on women academic employees working in some universities in Jordan and the challenges they face in career development. They identify different factors of influence such as culture, religion, and institutional pressures. Again, they argue how HRM applications in HEIs are underdeveloped, expressively stating the importance of having effective and proper HRM policies and practices that ensure equality in career development opportunities in Jordanian HE.

Two studies by Rabee (2014) and Abu-Jarour (2014) explore the use of 'innovation processes in HRM' concluding the possibility exists and that it can become successful in the long run, Both commentators suggest that academic staff's resistance to change needs more research. Both studies recognize the subject of concern, the importance of HRM application and development, as a means of improving the general outcomes of academic institutions. Whilst benefits are recognized, 'resistance to change' was a barrier to any meaningful changes to how HRM application is developed. On the same level, a study by Alzyoud et al. (2014) considered work engagement in public universities focusing mainly on academic employee engagement. This work examined relationships between job resources (autonomy, social support, and performance feedback) and work engagement. The findings were positive, concluding that academic employees are willing to go that 'extra mile' at work if important job resources were available to them. This study does not state explicitly the importance of HRM application in academic institutions; however, it recommends that HEIs pay attention to providing relevant and essential resources to staff. Although this study focused on performance measurements and evaluation, which may be critical when it comes to the development of HRM systems, the results cannot be generalized to all academic institutions in both the public and private sectors. This applied to the rest of the articles reviewed for content analysis. There are many differences between private and public universities within Jordan. These are in terms of the degree of autonomy and control executed from the Ministry of Higher Education over operations as well as in decision-making processes (Sabri 2011; Kanaan et al. 2011). Therefore, results may well vary between the two sectors.

DISCUSSION

Effective HRM supports and enables better performance and therefore competitive advantage (Stredwick, 2013; Jain et al. 2009). Yet, there are challenges and limitations associated with its application and development in a Jordanian context. Due to characteristics and values that differ from other types of industrial organizations (Kallio et al. 2015; Edgley-Pyshorn and Husiman 2011) and societal and organizational norms, customs and practice (Bhanugopan et al. 2012; Tlaiss and Kauswer 2011; Aldossari and Robertson, 2016). Therefore, there is a need to explore drivers and constraints to the HRM application.

Predominately, the reviewed articles and associated research took a quantitative approach focusing mainly on identifying the relationship between two variables. Following a quantitative approach gives a better chance for generalization (Bryman and Bell, 2015). However, the scope of generalization may not be applicable in both sectors. As long as HRM research within this sector remains underdeveloped and suffering from inconsistency, a more varied understanding of its application, benefits, and challenges, cultural awareness and employee and employer is needed (Creswell and Poth, 2018). However, following a quantitative approach enables consideration of past studies and their focus. The 18 studies reviewed varied in their focus; administrative staff (support staff) working in HEIs (4), academic staff (7), a combination of both (4), students (1) and HR managers (1). Focusing more firmly on academic employees is of importance, as their work is critical and becoming more challenging to HEIs (Türk, 2016), as managing the work of academics is a major concern due to difficulties and complexities associated with it. Academic staff have strong possessed values (Smeenk et al., 2009) and seem reluctant to accept change (Edgley-Pyshorn and Husiman, 2011). How much of this is the inability or unwillingness to change, or the organizational and social culture in which they operate? Therefore, considering employees' views and perceptions is essential and can lead to a better understanding of factors that influence their work as well as the performance of academic institutions.

This study identified four themes central to HRM research in the context of Jordanian HE. Discussions suggest the role of HRM is generally constructive and has a positive influence on general outcomes of academic staff and therefore the academic institutions; yet, it is traditional, operative, and supportive in its nature and application. The field of HRM and its organizational and cultural context has to feature in future research. The evolution of HRM started almost a decade ago focusing mainly on factors influencing academic institutions and employees' general outcomes. The research considered did

not specifically discuss and evaluate directly the role HRM plays in influencing employees and institutional outcomes, although there is an awareness of possible benefits.

Research has evolved to acknowledge specific functions and factors influencing its application and role in influencing academic institutional outcomes. After evaluating the content and results of articles in this area, it is evident that the application of HRM functions is traditional and lacks strategic thinking. For example, the evaluation of academic staff is predominately informed by student evaluation (Al-Khasawneh, 2013), and this raises concerns about the validity and capability of students to make informed decisions, in what, to them, is an emotional rollercoaster of endeavoring to achieve in their academic endeavors. This practice is traditional and lacks strategic thinking. It does not take into consideration other sources of feedback that can inform effective decision-making. This suggests HEIs within Jordan are not fully aware of and exposed to the benefits of implementing different and arguably more effective evaluation methods in parallel with student evaluation.

It is not clear what processes applied in recruitment from the articles reviewed. The only consideration is that not all recruitment strategies exist (Al Azzam and Jaradat, 2017). For this reason, the application of the recruitment function is also arguably traditional and underdeveloped.

Very little research considers the nature of the training functions. Although Al-Mzary et al.'s (2015) study considered this aspect; they did not consider factors that shape employees' views of training programs. There is also a lack of research on employees' specific needs when formulating training programs.

When considering employee retention, the results of Al-Kasasbeh (2016) indicates that it is one of HEIs major concerns. However, few studies consider factors, from a holistic perspective, on academic employees' needs that can influence their staying or leaving. This result became evident when looking at Ensour et al.'s (2017) work, examining barriers to the career development of women academics within the country. It suggests there should be more research with attention to HRM functions and practices, evaluating how they work in reality. Also, there is a need to study how these assist HEIs in achieving desired organizational outcomes. Reviewed research failed to consider this, but all indicate an interest to develop HRM in Jordanian higher education.

CONCLUSION

The present study conducted a systematic review of the literature to explore the role HRM plays in the context of Jordanian higher education. The results have shown that HRM research is limited and underdeveloped. The role of HRM is considered positive and constructive. However, it is perceived as traditional, operational, and underdeveloped in its application. The articles identified for content analysis in this study have considered the importance of HRM and the criticality of the development of its functions and capability, yet there has been little attention paid to challenges that incorporate its implementation and development. A range of research areas have been identified and calls for the attention of researchers. This study recommends conducting further research on HRM application in private universities due to the critical challenges they are facing. It also suggests paying attention to academic employees' views and perceptions to develop a deeper understanding of how different HRM practices need to be conducted and applied in different higher education institutions. The practicalities of carrying out such research within a context that is highly influenced by culture can be challenging but worthwhile for the future development of higher education institutions in the country.

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