GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OF UZBEKISTAN: OWNER–MANAGER ALIGNMENT, FACULTY MOTIVATION AND INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

Background: The expansion of private higher education has increased the importance of governance and human resource management. Private institutions may involve owners, governing bodies, professional managers and academic staff whose responsibilities need to be coordinated.

Purpose: This study examines the conceptual relationship between governance practices, owner–manager alignment, faculty motivation and institutional performance in private higher education institutions in Uzbekistan.

Methods: The study uses a qualitative conceptual approach based on agency theory, strategic human resource management, higher-education governance literature and official information. No primary statistical results are claimed.

Results: Clear allocation of responsibilities between owners and professional managers can support accountability and strategic consistency. Faculty motivation may provide an organizational mechanism through which management practices influence institutional outcomes.

Conclusion: Governance and human resource management should be treated as interconnected elements of private higher education management.

Keywords: governance, human resource management, owner–manager alignment, faculty motivation, institutional performance, private higher education, Uzbekistan.

1. Introduction

According to the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 74 non-state universities were operating among 207 higher education institutions in Uzbekistan in 2025. This expansion increases the importance of effective organizational governance and human-resource management.

Governance is particularly relevant in private institutions because ownership structures can influence strategic priorities, resource allocation, leadership appointments and operational decision-making. Jensen and Meckling's foundational 1976 article explains agency costs in the context of separation between ownership and control. Applied cautiously to private higher education, this perspective can help analyse situations in which owners and professional managers have different information, incentives or priorities.

Faculty members are central organizational resources because teaching, research, student support and academic development depend substantially on their knowledge and commitment. Strategic HRM therefore connects recruitment, development, performance management, motivation and retention with institutional objectives.

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Faculty motivation is not limited to financial compensation. Professional development, recognition, career opportunities, supportive leadership, autonomy and participation can also shape employees' work experience.

In 2026, the Ministry reported a governance programme involving university leaders and governing-board members and emphasized modern governance principles and strategic management culture. This makes the relationship between governance and HRM particularly relevant to Uzbekistan.

2. Research Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative conceptual research design. It synthesizes agency theory, strategic human resource management, motivation theory, higher-education governance research and official information.

Four dimensions are considered: (1) governance practices — ownership, accountability, transparency, leadership responsibilities and decision-making; (2) owner–manager alignment — clarity of roles, shared objectives, autonomy, communication and monitoring; (3) faculty motivation — compensation, recognition, development, career opportunities, participation, autonomy and leadership support; and (4) institutional performance — educational quality, retention, student satisfaction, organizational efficiency, reputation and achievement of strategic objectives.

The framework assumes that governance arrangements shape the environment in which managers make decisions and HR policies are implemented. Faculty motivation is treated as a potential mechanism connecting management practices with institutional outcomes.

Because the study is conceptual, it does not claim statistical causality or report survey-based percentages.

3. Results and Discussion

Governance and human resource management should be examined together rather than as isolated functions.

Owner–manager alignment is relevant to strategic consistency. Owners can define broad institutional priorities and exercise oversight, while professional managers translate these priorities into operational decisions. Clear allocation of authority can reduce ambiguity and support accountability.

Transparency and communication can support alignment through documented responsibilities, regular strategic reviews, measurable indicators and structured reporting.

Faculty motivation may represent an important link between management practices and institutional outcomes. Management systems that combine fair evaluation with recognition, development opportunities, professional autonomy and supportive leadership may create conditions conducive to faculty engagement.

Performance management should be aligned with institutional strategy. If evaluation focuses only on teaching load or administrative compliance, research, student development, innovation and institutional service may receive insufficient attention.

The conceptual model can be represented as:

Governance Practices → Owner–Manager Alignment → Strategic HRM Practices → Faculty Motivation → Institutional Performance

This is not presented as a tested linear causal chain. The relationships may be reciprocal. Faculty retention is also relevant because turnover can increase recruitment and training requirements and affect continuity of programmes and institutional knowledge.

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These relationships are consistent with broader higher-education governance concerns identified by the OECD and with Uzbekistan's current attention to modern governance and strategic management.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that governance and human resource management are closely connected components of institutional performance in private higher education.

1. Clearly define owner, governing-body and professional-manager responsibilities.
2. Establish transparent reporting, performance indicators and regular strategic reviews.
3. Connect recruitment, professional development, performance evaluation, promotion and retention with institutional strategy.
4. Combine financial incentives with recognition, professional development, career opportunities, autonomy and participation.
5. Develop balanced faculty performance evaluation covering relevant teaching, research, student-support, professional-development and institutional-service contributions.
6. Monitor faculty turnover and identify organizational factors associated with retention.
7. Conduct empirical research using surveys and interviews with owners, managers and faculty members to test the proposed relationships in Uzbekistan's private higher education sector.

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