

Top Management Support Practices and Human Resource Management Effectiveness in Higher Education: A Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) Analysis in Tanzanian Universities

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how structural top management support practices such as leadership commitment, strategic guidance, timely feedback, and resource allocation affect human resource management effectiveness in higher education. Underpinning the study were the Upper Echelons Theory (UET) and the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) Theory. A cross-sectional survey was the study's research design. Data was gathered from academic staff to determine the various top management support initiatives and their role in enhancing human resource management effectiveness. Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) analysis was used. The findings show that top management support is a positive and significant contributor to human resource management effectiveness. Strategic guidance and resource allocation had the strongest significant effect, while timely feedback had the least but significant impact on HRM effectiveness. These findings support the significance of top management support for human resource management effectiveness. The study recommends that universities prioritise top management support to enhance human resource management effectiveness. Adopting a combination of top management support practices strengthens human resource management effectiveness. The study further recommends efficient allocation of resources and effective strategic guidance. Universities can fully implement human resource management efforts, such as staff recruitment, reward management, employee engagement, career advancement, and internal communication.

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1.0 Introduction

Academic institutions worldwide are increasingly under pressure to achieve much with limited resources (Ross & Locke, 2023). These pressures are intensified by shifts in population among students, declining state budgets, and rising expectations of excellent teaching, research contributions, consultancy, and community services (Ouwehand *et al.*, 2022). The way human resources are handled and the ultimate role of top management in the resource-constrained environment determine the effectiveness of the academic institutions (Harney & Nolan, 2023).

Top management support (TMS) is traditionally assumed as a key driver that impacts human resource management effectiveness (HRME) through offering the commitment of leadership, strategic direction, timely feedback, and relevant distribution of resources (Yu *et al.*, 2022). These support practices will help universities design and adopt HRM practices that ultimately encourage staff motivation, development, and retention (Fareed, 2023). Although the importance of TMS is widely recognised at an international level (Nyesemane, 2023), there is a lack of research on its influence on HRME at Tanzanian universities (Dimoso & Mabuga, 2022).

Efficient HRM in higher education learning institutions includes efficiency in recruitment, effective reward management, employee engagement, career advancement support, and internal communication, all of which are significant to the organisational performance of academic and administrative staff (Sirathanakul *et al.*, 2023; Abdullahi *et al.*, 2022). Efficient recruitment ensures that qualified personnel are attracted, an effective reward management system motivates employees and enhances job satisfaction, and increased employee engagement fosters commitment and reduces turnover (Masukume *et al.*, 2023). Moreover, career advancement opportunities support staff development, whereas effective internal communication facilitates collaboration, timely feedback, and alignment between HRM practices and institutional goals (Bos-nehles *et al.*, 2023; Muriithi, 2023). These dimensions form part of addressing the challenge of faculty deficits and lack of skills that limit university performance.

PLS-SEM is considered appropriate for analysing the complex relationship that exists between TMS and HRME, as it supports both latent variables as well as measurement errors (Kante & Michel, 2023). PLS-SEM applied in the context of Tanzanian universities enables a robust examination of how top management support practices impact staff recruitment efficiency, reward management effectiveness, employee engagement, career advancement support, and internal communication effectiveness, consequently shaping the general human resource management effectiveness.

The study is theoretically anchored on Upper Echelons Theory (UET) and the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) theory, which collectively explain the relationship between top management support practices and HRM effectiveness in higher education institutions. The integration of these theories offers a comprehensive framework for understanding how senior leadership behaviours shape HRM systems and translate into desirable employee outcomes at Tanzanian universities.

The Upper Echelons Theory, originally proposed by Hambrick and Mason (1984), argues that organisational performance is a reflection of the values, cognitive frameworks, and strategies of top managers. It further stipulates that senior leadership significantly influences organisational structures, processes, and performance through strategic decisions and behavioural orientations (White & Borgholthaus, 2022). In the higher education institutions context, the extent to which top leadership is committed to the strategic direction, timely feedback, and sufficient resources directly affects the effectiveness of HRM initiatives (Al-Jahwari & Alwi, 2023; Njenga *et al.*, 2023). When senior leaders are proactive in promoting HR initiatives, aligning HR policies with institutional strategies, and providing the required resources, HRM practices are more likely to be consistently applied and yield positive organisational results (Harney & Nolan, 2023).

Complementing UET, the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) theory posits that the performance and effectiveness of employees are maximised when HRM practices enhance employees' abilities, motivations, and

opportunities to exercise their skills and knowledge (Appelbaum *et al.*, 2000). In higher education institutions, HRM effectiveness can be evaluated through efficient staff recruitment, effective reward management, strong employee engagement, effective career advancement, and proper internal communication (Al Jahwari & Alwi, 2023; Abdullahi *et al.*, 2022), each corresponding directly with AMO's structure.

UET and AMO theories put together offer a robust explanation of the relationship between top management support practices and HRM effectiveness within higher education institutions. The reason as to why support of top management is important has been explained through Upper Echelons Theory, which points out the strategic role of senior leaders in creating HR systems, and AMO Theory, which explains how HRM effectiveness is attained by mechanisms that increase employee ability, motivation, and opportunity (Bos-Nehles *et al.*, 2023).

Furthermore, empirical literature on top management support (TMS) shows that it is widely recognised as a crucial structural mechanism that determines the effectiveness of human resource management systems within higher learning institutions (Hyde-Clarke, 2023). In university settings where resources such as time are constrained, the success of HRM systems has been found to be directly proportional to the level of commitment, strategic direction, timely feedback, and sufficient resources being given by senior leadership (Juan & Ortiz, 2023; Beerkens & Van der Hoek, 2022). TMS is looked at based on leadership commitment, strategic guidance, timely feedback, and resource allocation (Jasimee & Blanco-Encomienda, 2023; Ismail *et al.*, 2021; Mirata *et al.*, 2020).

The dimension of leadership commitment constitutes a foundational area of TMS, which indicates the level of visible support, accountability, and prioritisation of HRM initiatives by senior university leadership (Men *et al.*, 2023; Santos & Filner, 2023). This commitment signifies the strategic value of human resources and promotes an institutional environment that enhances successful implementation of HRM initiatives. Furthermore,

this study's TMS is anchored within the confines of strategic guidance. This concept refers to the coherence and alignment of direction by top leadership as it applies to the HR policies, priorities, and long-term workforce planning (Gandrita, 2023; Alfawaire & Atan, 2021). A viable strategic direction aligns institutional purposes and HRM practices and generally improves HRM performance (Breaz & Jaradat, 2023; Rana, 2022).

Furthermore, we view effective TMS in terms of timely feedback regarding its mandates. Timely feedback refers to the measure by which top management provides responsive feedback, communication, and correction on HR matters (Ngcamphalala, 2023; Watling & Ginsburg, 2023). Periodic and positive feedback supports learning and flexibility and constant improvement in HR systems (Grünke *et al.*, 2023). Moreover, allocation of resources entails the presence and sufficiency of financial, technological, and human resources allocated to HRM functions (Waititu, 2022). Even the most effective HRM strategies will not succeed in producing the desired impact without adequate resource support provided by top management (Mattos *et al.*, 2023).

Although the existing body of literature confirms the relevance of top management support for influencing HRM effectiveness, most of the evidence is context-specific, and its generalisation to higher learning institutions in the developing world is lacking. Tanzanian universities, in particular, have been persistently challenged with issues related to staffing capacity, reward system, and employee engagement (Mtebe & Raphael, 2023; Komba & Mwakabenga, 2022), and the role of top management support is particularly timely. Subsequently, the observed contextual gaps initiated this empirical study that examines how distinct practices of top management support influence HRM effectiveness in Tanzanian universities. Thus, hypothesising as follows:

H1: Leadership commitment significantly influences HRM effectiveness in universities.

H2: Strategic guidance significantly influences HRM effectiveness in universities.

H3: Timely feedback significantly influences HRM effectiveness in universities.

H4: Resource allocation significantly influences HRM effectiveness in universities.

Accordingly, this study examined how structural top management support practices such as leadership commitment, strategic guidance, timely feedback, and resource allocation affect human resource management effectiveness in Tanzanian universities.

2.0 Materials and Methods

2.1 Ethics Statement

This study followed and adhered to ethical research principles. All the study's respondents voluntarily participated and provided informed consent. The researcher obtained all the necessary permits to undertake the study. Research permits from the Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) and the Zanzibar Research Committee were obtained to collect data from the Tanzanian mainland and Zanzibar universities, respectively.

2.2 Study Area

This study was conducted in Tanzania, covering both the mainland and Zanzibar. It included the 28 full-fledged universities listed by the Tanzania Commission for Universities, of which 11 were public and 17 were privately owned (TCU, 2023; UNESCO, 2022). These universities were accredited, fully registered, and chartered institutions authorised to enrol students and operate as full universities. Tanzania was selected as the study's ideal context due to ongoing challenges and opportunities in enhancing top management support practices and improving human resource management effectiveness within universities (Balandya *et al.*, 2022). Studying both public and private universities provided a comprehensive representation, enabling a broader generalisation of the study findings (Ibrokhimov *et al.*, 2023).

2.3 Research Design

The study employed a cross-sectional survey research design, chosen because data were collected at a single point (Cornell, 2024). This design is well-suited for examining relationships among variables and testing hypotheses in organisational social research (Sheraba *et al.*, 2022). The cross-sectional approach enabled the

researcher to capture current trends in top management support practices and their impact on human resource management effectiveness across different universities without altering the study setting.

2.4 Population, Sample, and Sampling Techniques

The target population of this study included all the academic staff members, estimated to be 8,507 individuals, working across 28 universities in mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar (TCU, 2023). The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula for studies involving a known and finite population (Yamane, 1967). This calculation was performed at a 95% confidence level with a 0.05 margin of error, and a sample size of 382 respondents was determined.

Additionally, the study employed proportionate stratified sampling based on university ownership and academic staff categories for ensuring proportionate representation. The sample to be used in each stratum was determined using the proportionate allocation formula: $n_h = (N_h/N) * n$, where n_h = sample size for stratum h , N_h = population size of stratum h , N = total population, and n = total sample size. As determined earlier in this study, $N = 8,507$ and $n = 382$. Therefore, proportional allocation for public universities was calculated as $(5,709/8,507) \times 382 = 256$, while for private universities it was $(2,798/8,507) \times 382 = 126$. The calculations yielded a final sample size of 256 and 126 respondents in the public universities and the private universities, respectively, which are similar to their respective population proportions of 67.11% and 32.89%, respectively.

The ranks of academic staff, i.e., tutorial assistants, assistant lecturers, lecturers, senior lecturers, associate professors, and professors, also steered proportional stratification. These categories were taken to ensure that respondents that were selected were representative of the academic staffing setup of Tanzanian universities and not to consider academic staff a homogeneous group. As a result, proportional representation was maintained for both university ownership and academic staff ranks. This ensured that no subgroups in the population were under-represented, thereby

enhancing the accuracy and reliability of the findings (Karan, 2023; Lopez, 2023).

Subsequently, to obtain participants from each stratum, a simple random sampling was conducted. This technique provides an opportunity for all members to be selected to constitute the sample, and it minimises bias and ensures impartiality in the sampling process (Nuzha, 2023). Specifically, a basic lottery method was used, wherein respondents' numbers were selected at random to constitute the final sample (Sarfo *et al.*, 2022). These sampling techniques, combined, strengthen the methodological rigour and make it possible to come up with generalisable conclusions.

2.5 Data Collection and Management

The study used a structured, self-administered questionnaire consisting of closed-ended Likert-scale items to collect empirical primary data from participants. This method is of wider preference by social science researchers due to its flexibility, ease of preparation and administration, time efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and its comprehensiveness in broad scope (Ranganathan & Caduff, 2023). Considering the demanding engagements of academic staff, a self-administered questionnaire was particularly appropriate, facilitating data collection within a constrained timeframe of three (3) months, from May through August 2023.

Prior to participation, the study's participants provided written informed consent after being fully informed on the study's objectives (Manandhar & Joshi, 2020; Xu *et al.*, 2020). Participation was voluntary, confidential, and purely anonymous. Respondents were assured of exclusively using their data for academic purposes only and that their identities would remain undisclosed throughout the research process and afterwards.

Moreover, the study's constructs were developed based on a review of relevant theoretical and empirical literature to ensure content validity. Top management support (TMS) constituted the independent variable and was measured along the practices of leadership commitment, strategic guidance, timely feedback, and resource allocation. The dependent variable, human resource management effectiveness, was

assessed using five indicators/domains of staff recruitment efficiency, reward management effectiveness, employee engagement effectiveness, career advancement effectiveness, and internal communication effectiveness. TMS practices were measured using three (3) items each, whereas HRME was specified as a reflective latent construct represented by five indicators: recruitment efficiency (HRME1), reward management effectiveness (HRME2), employee engagement effectiveness (HRME3), career advancement effectiveness (HRME4), and internal communication effectiveness (HRME5).

All the measurement items were based on previous empirical studies and were contextually adjusted to achieve construct validity and conceptual consistency (Al Jahwari & Alwi, 2023; Njenga *et al.*, 2023; Bos-nehles *et al.*, 2023; Kantola *et al.*, 2023; Breaz & Jaradat, 2023). Specifically, two HRM/management scholars and one higher-education practitioner reviewed the questionnaire for item relevance, construct coverage, wording clarity, and contextual suitability before the main data collection. However, face validity was checked through a pilot study conducted with the academic staff outside the main sample, who confirmed that the items were understandable and suitable for the Tanzanian university context. Furthermore, minor wording refinements were made before the main survey.

Furthermore, the questionnaire items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, whereby 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree) and 5 (Strongly Agree) (Koo & Yang, 2025). A total of 382 questionnaires were distributed to the study's identified sample. Nonetheless, 306 questionnaires were completed and returned, which gave a response rate of approximately 80%. This exceeded the minimum threshold recommended for social sciences survey research (Taherdoost & Madanchian, 2024). This response rate is also considered adequate to support robust and reliable statistical analysis (Graglia, 2026).

2.6 Analytical Approach

The study data were processed by both descriptive and inferential statistics. Data was summarised using descriptive statistics in terms

of means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages, which gave a general picture of the profile of respondents and important variables in the study. To conduct the inferential analysis, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to investigate the relationships that exist between the constructs of the study. The use of PLS-SEM in social science research is generally relevant when the study is based on prediction, uses complex models, and data is non-normative (Angelelli *et al.*, 2025).

3.0 Results

3.1 Respondents' Demographics

Table 1 summarises the demographic characteristics of the 306 respondents whose responses were recorded. Sex of respondents' results indicated that the majority were male (68.6%) and females were 31.4%, indicating a male-dominated academic workforce (Kigotho, 2025). Age-wise, the largest proportion of respondents fell within the 30- to 39-year-old age group (40.2%), while the smallest proportions were observed among respondents aged over 60 (3.3%). This age distribution indicates that most respondents are in their mid-career stages, therefore, constituting an important group needing top management support for their performance and advancement (Elrayah & Mirzaliev, 2024). The smallest group of senior academics suggests proper HRM exit strategies such as ensuring new staff recruitment, effective reward management systems, employees' engagement, career advancement, and internal communication are needed from top management (Al Jahwari & Alwi, 2023; Matagi, 2023).

With respect to the education level of respondents, the majority held a master's degree (42.5%), followed by those with a PhD (38.9%). Respondents with a bachelor's degree were 17.0%, while those with a postgraduate diploma were fractionally at 1.6%. This high level of academic qualifications among respondents is consistent with the requirements for teaching, research, and consultancy roles in universities (TCU, 2023; UNESCO, 2022). Accordingly, this tallies perfectly with efficiency in staff recruitment, reward management effectiveness, employee engagement effectiveness, career

advancement, and internal communication effectiveness, which are indicators of HRM effectiveness and result from top management support, as the study suggests.

Moreover, in terms of academic ranks, assistant lecturers formed the majority of respondents (35.6%), followed by lecturers (23.5%) and tutorial assistants (19.1%). However, senior lecturers accounted for 16.3% of the respondents, while professors turned out as the smallest represented group (1.6%). Overall, the lower and mid-level academic ranks dominating the study indicate a youthful, dynamic, and growing academic workforce, with implications for top management support within higher learning institutions (Davidovitch & Cohen, 2024).

Table 1
Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Demography	Frequency	Per cent
Sex		
Male	210	68.6
Female	96	31.4
Total	306	100.0
Age		
20-29 Years	71	23.3
30-39 Years	123	40.2
40-49 Years	78	25.5
50-59 Years	24	7.8
60+ Years	10	3.3
Total	306	100.0
Education level		
PhD	119	38.9
Master's Degree	130	42.5
Postgraduate Diploma	5	1.6
Bachelor's Degree	52	17.0
Total	306	100.0
Academic ranks		
Professor	5	1.6
Associate Professor	12	3.9
Senior Lecturer	50	16.3
Lecturer	72	23.5
Assistant Lecturer	109	35.6
Tutorial Assistant	58	19.1
Total	306	100.0

Source: Field Data (2023)

3.2 Measurement Model Assessment

3.2.1 Constructs' Reliability and Validity

The measurement model was assessed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to evaluate indicators' internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and collinearity. In PLS-SEM, factor loadings are used to examine an

indicator's reliability (Guenther *et al.*, 2025). Findings in Table 2 exhibit that all measurement items' factor loadings were above the recommended threshold of 0.70, ranging from 0.708 to 0.895, thereby satisfactorily confirming indicator reliability (Hair *et al.*, 2024). Also, the variance inflation factor (VIF) was used to assess collinearity between indicators. The results indicate that all VIF values ranged between 1.175 and 2.244, which was below the recommended value of 3.3 (Block *et al.*, 2026; Kock, 2023); hence, there was an absence of multicollinearity problems, confirming the unique contribution of each indicator to its corresponding construct (Piduguralla, 2023). Nonetheless, internal consistency reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR). As shown in Table 2, Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.735 to 0.828, exceeding the minimum acceptable

threshold of 0.70 (Volk-Jesussek, 2026), while composite reliability values ranged from 0.804 to 0.884, which is way above the recommended minimum of 0.70 (Arthur, 2026). These results show adequate internal consistency and reliability across all constructs. As per PLS-SEM methodological recommendations, composite reliability is prioritised and considered a more reliable measure of internal consistency compared to Cronbach's alpha (Almansour, 2026).

Nevertheless, convergent validity was evaluated using variance extracted (AVE). The values of the AVE of all constructs were 0.579 to 0.718, which exceeds the recommended value of 0.50. This indicates that each construct explains more than 50% of the variance in its indicators, thereby establishing satisfactory convergent validity for the measurement model (Alanazi *et al.*, 2026).

Table 2
Constructs' Reliability and Validity Test

Item	Factor loadings	VIF	α	CR	AVE
LPC					
LPC1	0.722	1.204	0.734	0.850	0.655
LPC2	0.866	1.926			
LPC3	0.833	1.929			
SGC					
SGC1	0.756	1.458	0.803	0.884	0.718
SGC2	0.895	2.244			
SGC3	0.885	2.040			
TYF					
TYF1	0.784	1.331	0.735	0.804	0.579
TYF2	0.788	1.293			
TYF3	0.708	1.175			
REA					
REA1	0.853	1.688	0.772	0.868	0.687
REA2	0.872	1.997			
REA3	0.756	1.438			
HRME					
HRME1	0.787	1.654	0.828	0.879	0.592
HRME2	0.775	1.778			
HRME3	0.772	1.682			
HRME4	0.764	1.662			
HRME5	0.750	1.564			

Notes: Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), Cronbach's alpha (α), Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

3.2.2 Constructs' Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT), as summarised in Table 3. The Fornell-Larcker results indicate that the

square root of the average extracted variance (AVE) for each construct is greater than its corresponding inter-construct correlations. Specifically, the square roots of AVE for LPC (0.809), SGC (0.847), TYF (0.761), HRME (0.769),

and REA (0.829) were all greater than the square roots of other constructs, which is a requirement of the Fornell-Larcker discriminant validity assessment (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

In addition, discriminant validity was further examined using the HTMT criterion. As shown in Table 3, all HTMT values were below the recommended threshold of 0.90, ranging from 0.436 to 0.860, providing further support for discriminant validity across the constructs (Shah *et al.*, 2019).

Collectively, results presented in Tables 2 and 3 satisfy all reliability and discriminant validity criteria. These findings supported the quality of the constructs and offered a high psychometric justification to continue with structural model analysis.

Table 3
Assessment of Discriminant Validity

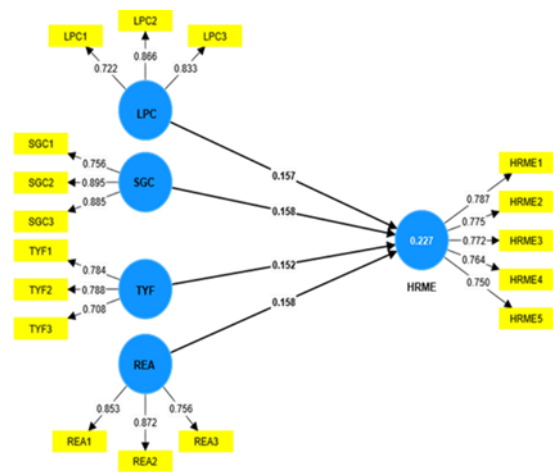
Construct	LPC	SGC	TYF	HRME	REA
Fornell-Larcker criterion					
LPC	0.809				
SGC	0.358	0.847			
TYF	0.329	0.570	0.761		
HRME	0.367	0.365	0.345	0.769	
REA	0.651	0.405	0.323	0.373	0.829
Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT)					
LPC					
SGC	0.453				
TYF	0.483	0.789			
HRME	0.464	0.436	0.469		
REA	0.860	0.511	0.453	0.460	

3.2.3 Structural Model Assessment

As presented in Figure 1, the structural model accounts for a significant portion of the variance in human resource management effectiveness (HRME), with an R² value of 0.227. This indicates that the combined effects of leadership commitment (LPC), strategic guidance (SGC), timely feedback (TYF), and resource allocation (REA) explain 22.7% of the variance in HRME. Moreover, the remaining 77.3% of the variance

in HRME is explained by other factors not included in this study's model. The path coefficients further reveal that LPC ($\beta = 0.157$), SGC ($\beta = 0.158$), TYF ($\beta = 0.152$), and REA ($\beta = 0.158$) each affect HRME positively. These findings suggest that the four practices of top management support significantly contribute to enhancing human resource management effectiveness.

Figure 1
Path Analysis of LPC, SGC, TYF, and REA on HRME



3.3 Hypotheses Testing

3.3.1 Direct Path Analysis

The direct path analysis was conducted using the bootstrapping technique. Bootstrapping is a resampling method that enhances the statistical inference through the estimation of the sampling distribution of the path coefficients (Curran & Bauer, 2025). It helps test the stability and significance of the relationship between constructs but requires no strict data normality assumptions and provides reliable results (Jack, 2023). Bootstrapping is normally presented using path coefficients, t-statistics, and their corresponding p-values as shown in Table 4. Scores from these statistical measurements form the confirmation base as to whether the proposed relationship among the constructs was statistically significant or not.

Table 4
Direct Path Analysis

Hypotheses	Paths	Path coefficients (β)	t-statistics	p values	Decision
H1	LPC->HRME	0.157	2.305	0.021	Supported
H2	SGC->HRME	0.158	2.730	0.006	Supported
H3	TYF->HRME	0.152	2.216	0.027	Supported
H4	REA->HRME	0.158	2.005	0.045	Supported

As shown in Table 4, all four hypothesised paths from the practices of top management support (TMS) to human resource management effectiveness (HRME) were statistically significant at the 5% level. Specifically, leadership commitment (LPC->HRME) exhibited a positive path coefficient ($\beta = 0.157$, $t = 2.305$, $p = 0.021$). The results support *H1*, indicating that committed leadership significantly enhances HRM outcomes such as staff recruitment efficiency, reward management effectiveness, employee engagement effectiveness, career advancement effectiveness, and internal communication effectiveness.

This finding agrees with Rawis *et al.* (2024), who assert that leadership commitment is a pivotal driver for effective HRM in academic institutions. Similarly, Riza *et al.* (2024) establish that leadership commitment influences HRM effectiveness and leads to enhanced organisational performance in higher education. Moreover, strategic guidance (SGC->HRME) showed a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.158$, $t = 2.730$, $p = 0.006$), confirming *H2*. The results stress the significance of clear strategic direction in aligning HR practices with organisational goals. These results are supported by Gede and Huluka's (2023) study that reported strategic guidance and alignment from top management are essential for HRM success in higher learning institutions.

Furthermore, results indicate that timely feedback (TYF->HRME) also significantly influences HRM effectiveness in universities ($\beta = 0.152$, $t = 2.216$, $p = 0.027$), hence affirming *H3*. The findings signify that timely feedback exhibited by top management is essential in influencing HRM initiatives in higher learning institutions. These findings are consistent with recent studies in higher education, reporting that timely feedback as a top management support practice is instrumental in influencing HRM effectiveness (Martin *et al.*, 2025).

Additionally, results on resource allocation (REA->HRME) exhibited a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.158$, $t = 2.005$, $p = 0.045$), hence supporting *H4*, that when top management allocates sufficient resources in universities, HRM effectiveness is enhanced. This is in agreement

with Shigali and Shitseswa's (2023) study, which reported that efficient resource allocation by top management significantly influences HRM effectiveness through enhanced public service delivery in organisations. Similarly, Liefner (2023) established that sufficient allocation of resources improves HRM effectiveness in higher education. Generally, the bootstrapping direct path analysis results affirm that top management support practices such as leadership commitment, strategic guidance, timely feedback, and resource allocation are significant predictors of human resource management effectiveness.

4.0 Conclusion

Based on the empirical evidence and the analysis of structural top management support practices, namely leadership commitment, strategic guidance, timely feedback, and resource allocation and their effect on human resource management effectiveness in higher learning institutions, this study concludes that top management support practices significantly and positively influence human resource management effectiveness within universities.

5.0 Recommendations

The study recommends that university administrators and policymakers should prioritise fostering committed and engaged leadership to enhance human resources initiatives. Also, strategic guidance must be highlighted to ensure alignment between human resource practices and institutional objectives. Furthermore, universities should implement structured and timely feedback mechanisms for the purpose of motivating and enhancing HRM initiatives. Moreover, the study recommends consistent efficient resource allocation in universities. This will enable HRM initiatives such as staff recruitment, reward management, employee engagement, career advancement, and internal communication to be effective and ultimately enhance the performance of higher education institutions.

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