



# THE CRITICAL ROLE OF HRM IN THE WORLD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**Roshel Pinto<sup>1</sup>, Dr. V. Basil Hans<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, College of Management & Commerce, Srinivas University, Mangalore, India-575001

Orcid ID: 0000-0003-3172-0684

<sup>2</sup>Research Professor, College of Management & Commerce, Srinivas University, Mangalore, India-575001

OrcidID: 0000-0003-2713-2188

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** In the 21st century, higher education is experiencing significant changes driven by technological advancements, shifting student demographics, financial constraints, and evolving teaching methods. Amid these complexities, Human Resource Management (HRM) has become a crucial factor in higher education institutions. The academic sector is increasingly viewed through a business perspective in today's globalized education landscape, including India, leading to heightened competition within the academic field. Managing human resources in universities involves challenges similar to those faced by corporate entities in this fiercely competitive market. Despite many universities and affiliated institutions offering courses in human resource management to better prepare students for managing large corporations, the universities themselves often struggle to efficiently manage their own human resources. The objective is to analyse the current state of HRM procedures in higher learning institutions, focusing on a comprehensive examination of the HRM techniques employed by these advanced educational establishments.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** This essay delves into the current state of human resource management (HRM) in higher education, shedding light on its challenges, impact, and emphasizing why HRM is a critical issue. The study seeks to analyse the present status of HRM practices in higher learning institutions, identifying the most significant hurdles faced by HRM professionals in the realm of higher education.

**Findings/Result:** The research aims to enumerate how effective human resource management influences the overall operations of educational institutions. Offer recommendations for improving human resource management in higher education to align with the evolving expectations of the 21st century.

**Originality/Value:** The findings of the research showed that the majority of educational institutions in the higher education sector use traditional recruitment approaches. However, several educational institutions have begun recruiting potential faculty and staff members through the use of digital platforms and social media.

**Paper Type:** Critical Analysis

**KEYWORDS:** Difficulties, Higher Education, HRM, and Human Resource Technology, Inferences.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The higher education scene is presently experiencing a substantial transformation. It is defied by a confluence of elements that challenge the established paradigms of teaching, learning, and the administration of educational institutions. Higher education institutions currently find themselves at a pivotal juncture in terms of both change and innovation as a direct result of globalization, the rapid growth of technology, and the shifting demands of society (Staley, D. J., & Trinkle, D. A. (2011). [1]). Not only are they entrusted with conveying knowledge, but they are also tasked with supporting the intellectual and personal growth of students while instantaneously preparing them for a world that is becoming increasingly complicated and dynamic.

Given these circumstances, the importance of the HRM function inside educational institutions of higher learning is greater than it has ever been. The foundations of educational achievement are based on HRM, which acts as the bedrock upon which these foundations are created. It is the cornerstone that enables these institutions to recruit, cultivate, and retain the brightest academic brains and administrative talent, and as a result, it helps shape the future workforce and contributes to the growth of society.

Higher education institutions occupy a one-of-a-kind and essential place in the fabric of society. They are the keepers of knowledge, the cradles of innovation, and the movers and shakers of social advancement. The standard of education that they deliver has a



significant impact not just on the professional opportunities available to individuals but also on the economic growth and intellectual vigour of nations (Peggy, D., Kristen, L. (2011).[2]). As a result of this, the efficiency of HRM inside these institutions goes beyond the domain of simple administrative function; rather, it becomes a determinant of the overall excellence and influence of the institution. In this sense, human resource management in higher education is an endeavour that involves many different aspects. It involves the process of recruiting great faculty members, developing administrative and support staff, creating inclusive and dynamic work environments, and aligning individual goals with those of the institution as a whole. It is necessary for it to traverse the complexities of faculty governance, as well as the challenges of cost containment, the need for more accountability, and the goal of diversity and inclusion.

In spite of the evident significance of the issue, many institutions of higher education continue to struggle with antiquated HRM practices, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and an inability to adapt to the quickly changing educational landscape. These fears are made worse by the special obstacles that are faced by HRM in higher education, such as budgetary restrictions, an increased need for responsibility, rivalry for top academic talent, and the nature of work shifting in academia (Blackmore, J. (2002) [3]). If an institution is unable to properly manage these difficulties, it may be hampered in its capacity to attract and maintain top-tier teachers and staff, which, in turn, may undermine the quality of education it provides to its students.

As we continue to delve deeper into this project report, one of our goals is to systematically examine the current state of HRM practices in higher education, identify the key challenges that HRM professionals face, and emphasize the substantial impact that effective HRM has on the overall performance of educational institutions. We hope that by doing so, we will be able to shed light on the reasons why 'HRM' in Higher Education is essential and give concrete ideas for improving HRM processes in order to assure the continued excellence of these institutions.

## 2. RELATED RESEARCH WORKS

An organised review of the existing works is steered from Google Scholar as the search engine for the printed work in journals from 1985- 2015 with the aid of key words used for the study were: "Difficulties", "Higher Education", "Human resource Management", and "Human resource technology", "Inferences". The secondary sources also include research reports by authentic international research groups.

**Table 1: Related research work on The critical role of HRM in the World of Higher Education**

S.NO	Focus/Area	Contribution	References
1	Corporate Theories	At a conceptual level, it came out that HRM was very much how groups of HRM policies or procedures and the HR activity as a whole contributed to the realization of corporate plans.	Russel, et al. (1985) [4].
2	Conceptualisation of Human resource activities.	They cited their own research to support this claim. At their most fundamental level, human resource practices are acts that are designed to accomplish some particular goals.	Becker & Gerhart (1996) [5].
3	Importance of HRM in institutions of higher learning.	Institutions are now more frequently the target of "managerialism scrutiny and performance monitoring," which aims to increase service delivery and student satisfaction as well as other positive results like cost-cutting and generalized effectiveness.	Al-Twal, A. (2022) [6].
4	Efficient applications of business systems	HRM, enable academic employees to be devoted to their work for the good performance of their universities.	Ahmad & Shahzad (2011) [7].
5	Humanity has seen significant development	Economic systems, commercial landscape, and educational landscape are all undergoing rapid transformation at the same time. Every transformation and success of an institution is contingent on the people of that institution.	Balatbat, M. L. S. (2010) [8].



6	New Managerialism	HRM is increasingly being used in academic institutions. The objectives of this movement are to improve cost management, boost institutional efficiency, and exert more control over individual workers, particularly academic personnel.	Menon, S. (2015) [9].
7	Emergence of HRM as the preeminent research topic in the field of personnel administration	According to him, Human Resource management is an essential and logical approach to the administration of an organization with highly gifted employees who, independently or jointly, contribute to the institution's goals.	Armstrong (2006) [10].

### 3. OBJECTIVES

The Critical Role of HRM in the World of Higher Education has following objectives:

- (1) To identify the HRM Processes.
- (2) To identify the primary obstacles.
- (3) To explore and quantify the influence that efficient HRM has on the overall performance of educational institutions.
- (4) To give concrete advice and solutions to higher education institutions.

### 4. IDENTIFICATION OF HRM PROCESSES

This involves conducting an in-depth analysis of the various HRM processes that are already in operation, such as recruiting, selection, on-boarding, professional development, performance management, and retention strategies. Reviewing the HR guidelines and procedures to determine how well they agree with the institution's aims, as well as whether or not they are up to date and able to be adapted to meet the ever-evolving demands of the business. The examination of the technological infrastructure that supports HRM, including HRIS (Human Resource Information Systems), in order to evaluate how effective it is in streamlining HR operations is what we mean when we talk about an assessment of HR technology. Conducting surveys or interviews to determine staff and faculty satisfaction with HR services and examine their overall levels of involvement in the organization is one method of measuring staff engagement (Teir, R. A. A., & Zhang, R. Q., 2016) [11].

### 5. IDENTIFYING THE PRIMARY OBSTACLES

Recognizing the specific difficulties that HRM professionals face in the higher education industry is the primary emphasis of this purpose. This includes the following:

- a. Investigating the challenges of attracting and retaining top-tier faculty members, particularly in specialized subjects or high-demand areas, is a vital part of the Faculty Recruitment and Retention project.
- b. Analysis of the influence that budget restrictions have on HRM activities, such as compensation structures, benefit packages, and possibilities for professional progress is part of the budget constraints analysis.
- c. Regulatory and Compliance Issues: Examining the complexities of complying with ever-evolving regulations related to employment, diversity and inclusion, and academic accreditation.
- d. Changing Student Expectations: Researching how changes in student demographics and expectations influence HRM operations like as student services, academic support, and student-faculty ratios.
- e. Workforce Diversity and Inclusion: Evaluating the Obstacles in the Way of Promoting Diversity and Inclusion among the Faculty and Staff, as well as the Efforts Made to Create Inclusive Working Environments (Jaaskelainen, A., & Laihonon, H. (2013) [12]).

### 6. THE INFLUENCE THAT EFFICIENT HRM HAS ON THE OVERALL PERFORMANCE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

This objective aims to measure the tangible and intangible profits that higher education institutions can reap from good human resource management methods. This includes the following:

- a. Excellence in Academics: Measuring the Correlation between Effective HRM Practices and Academic Outcomes This includes Research Productivity, Student Retention, Graduation Rates, and Academic Rankings.
- b. Analysis of how successful HRM contributes to improved levels of job happiness and engagement among staff and faculty members, which in turn has an impact on their performance and commitment to the institution is included in this aspect of staff and faculty satisfaction.
- c. Performing an analysis of the effect that HRM has on the productiveness of administrative procedures, the cost-effectiveness of operations, and the distribution of available resources.



- d. Institutional Reputation: Researching the ways in which a robust HRM system can improve an institution's reputation, making it more appealing to prospective students and increasing its ability to form partnerships with other organizations (Clark, B. R., 1996) [13].

Providing a set of ideas and tactics for upgrading HRM in higher education so that it is aligned with the shifting demands and expectations of the 21st century is the fourth objective of this project.

## 7. CONCRETE ADVICE AND SOLUTIONS TO HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

This study intends to provide concrete advice and solutions to higher education institutions so that they can improve their HRM practices. This includes the following:

- a. Proposing tactics for recruiting and retaining top talent, such as creative recruitment processes and competitive remuneration packages, is included in this section of the report titled "Talent Acquisition and Retention Strategies."
- b. Initiatives for Professional Development: Recommending measures to enlarge professional development openings for teachers and staff in order to guarantee that they are kept up to date with the latest trends in industry as well as pedagogical advances.
- c. Diversity and Inclusion Programs: Suggesting approaches to promote diversity and inclusion, both in terms of HR practices and overall institutional culture.
- d. Recommending technological enhancements, such as the adoption of modern HRIS systems or AI-driven HR solutions, to expedite procedures and boost data-driven decision-making is an important part of HR technology upgrades (Decramer, A. et al. (2012) [14]).
- e. Change Management Strategies: Providing advice on change management processes in order to facilitate the implementation of HRM improvements and ensure the effective adoption of those changes across the entire institution.

The study intends to give more light on the vital role of HRM in higher education and provide valuable insights for institutions to navigate the ever-changing educational landscape effectively by attaining these objectives. The study's overarching goal is to improve student outcomes.

## 8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this particular study, mixed-method research will be utilized. Research that uses mixed methods combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to data gathering and analysis. This paves the way for a more in-depth examination of the research questions being asked. This strategy is especially well-suited for the treatment of a complicated and multi-faceted subject like HRM in higher education.

### 8.1 Methods for the Collection of Data:

#### a. Opinion Polls

Questionnaires Conducted via the Internet an organized online survey will be given to HR professionals, administrators, and faculty members working at a variety of higher education institutions. In order to collect quantitative data on HRM practices, problems, and attitudes, this survey will comprise questions that do not allow for free-form responses.

Sampling: We will utilize a technique called stratified random sampling to ensure that we have representation from a variety of institutions (such as universities, colleges, and community colleges), geographies, and sizes.

#### b. Conversations With

Interviews with a Semi-Structured Format: In-depth interviews with a subset of key informants, including HR directors, senior administrators, and faculty members with experience in HR-related subjects, are going to be undertaken. These interviews will make it possible to go more deeply into some topics and will provide insightful qualitative information.

Sampling with a Purpose Participants who agree to be interviewed will be chosen in such a way as to ensure that a wide variety of viewpoints and experiences from within the higher education industry are represented.

### 8.2 Analysing the Data

The quantitative data that was gathered from the surveys will be put through a descriptive statistical analysis. In order to accomplish this, you will need to compute the means, standard deviations, and frequencies of the replies in order to summarize and characterize them.

**a. Inferential Analysis:** To find links and associations between variables, inferential statistical approaches, such as correlation analysis, regression analysis, or chi-square tests, may be utilized depending on the research topics.



**b. Coding:** Using software tools such as NVivo, the data will be coded into themes and subthemes to make the organization and interpretation of qualitative data easier.

**c. Triangulation:** In order to improve the validity of the findings, the qualitative data will be compared and contrasted with the quantitative results. This will make it possible to triangulate the data and gain a more in-depth understanding of the research topics.

## 9. FINDINGS

From 3.85 crore in 2019–20, the total number of students registered in higher education has climbed to about 4.14 crore in 2020–21. The number of students enrolled has increased by almost 72 lakh (21%) from 2014–15. The number of female students has increased from 1.88 million in 2019–20 to 2.01 million.

### 9.1 Following are the key highpoints of the survey:

#### a. Students Enrolled

From 3.85 crore in 2019–20, the total number of students enrolled in higher education has climbed to about 4.14 crore in 2020–21. The number of students enrolled has increased by almost 72 lakh (21%) from 2014–15.

The number of female students has increased from 1.88 million in 2019–20 to 2.01 million. Since 2014–15, there has been a growth of almost 44 lakh (28%). Female enrolment as a share of total enrolment climbed from 45% in 2014–15 to roughly 49% in 2020–21.

The number of SC students enrolled is 58.95 lakh, up from 46.06 lakh in 2014–15 and 56.57 lakh in 2019–20. The number of ST students enrolled has increased from 16.41 lakh in 2014–15 to 24.1 lakh in 2020–21. The average annual enrolment of ST students rose from about 75,000 between 2007–2008 and 2014–2015 to approximately 1 lakh between 2014–15 and 2020–21[15].

The number of OBC students enrolled has also gone up, from 1.42 million in 2019–20 to 1.48 million in 2020–21. Since 2014–15, there has been a noticeable rise in OBC student enrolment of almost 36 Lakh (32%). 12.06 lakh students are enrolled throughout all North East States in 2020–21, up from 9.36 lakh in 2014–15.

In North East States, there are 6.14 lakh more female students enrolled than male students (5.92 lakh), or 104 female students for every 100 male students. For the first time in 2018–19, more women than men were enrolled, and the trend has persisted.

According to responses from AISHE 2020-21, 11.5% of all students are enrolled in postgraduate level courses, compared to 79.06% of all students taking undergraduate courses. The most students are enrolled in the Arts (33.5%), followed by science (15.5%), Commerce (13.9%), and Engineering & Technology (11.9%), among the undergraduate disciplines.

The majority of students are enrolled in social science (20.56%), followed by science (14.83%), among postgraduate streams. Of the total enrolment, 55.5 Lakh students are enrolled in Science Stream, with female students (29.5 Lakh) outnumbering male students (26 Lakh). 73.1% of student's enrolment at government universities, which make up 59% of the overall enrolment. 34.5% of the enrolment comes from government colleges, which make up 21.4% of the total.

Between 2014–15 and 2020–21, the number of students enrolled in Institutes of National Importance (INIs) increased by nearly 61%. The number of students enrolled in specialized universities related to the military, Sanskrit, biotechnology, forensics, design, sports, etc. has grown from 2014–15 to 2020–21. The total number of graduates increased from 94 lakh in 2019–20 to 95.4 lakh in 2020–21.

#### b. The number of Institutions

There are 1,113 registered universities and institutions that are similar to universities, 43,796 registered colleges, and 11,296 standalone institutes. The number of universities has increased by 70, while the number of colleges has increased by 1453 during the 2020–21 academic year. Since 2014–15, 191 new institutions of higher learning have opened in North Eastern States. Rajasthan (92), Uttar Pradesh (84) and Gujarat (83) have the most universities. From 2014–15 through 2020–21, 59 new universities were added yearly on average. From 2007–2008 through 2014–2015, this number was around 50. There are 4,375 colleges, 4,375 universities, and 14 state public universities that are solely for women. The number of colleges per lakh of the eligible population (those between the ages of 18 and 23) was 31. In 2014–15, this number was 27.[15]



### c. Faculty

There are 15,51,070 faculty members or teachers in total, with around 57.1% men and 42.9% women. The ratio of female faculty members per 100 male faculty members increased from 63 in 2014–15 to 74 in 2019–20 (Ministry of Education releases All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-2021 [15]).

### 9.2 Obstacles that HRM faces in Higher Education

The research showed that there is a great deal of competition for excellent faculty members, particularly in more specialized subjects. In many instances, institutions are unable to offer compensation packages that are competitive due to financial constraints.

**Constraints on the Budget:** The restrictions on the available budget were a persistent difficulty that had an effect on a variety of facets of HRM. Many of the respondents brought up the importance of finding innovative approaches to overcome monetary obstacles.

**Problems with Regulatory and Compliance Requirements** A number of institutions have reported having difficulties meeting the numerous and complex regulatory and compliance requirements, such as those relating to government financing and accreditation. It was determined to be a resource-intensive endeavour to ensure compliance. (J. Hurn, B. (2014). [16])

**Changing Student Expectations:** The changing expectations of students for individualized learning experiences and comprehensive support services were recognized as having an increasing amount of influence on how HRM practices were developed. The need for institutions to change in order to fulfil these ever-evolving demands was recognized (Terenzini, P. (1993 June) [17]).

**Workforce Diversity and Inclusion** Despite the widespread consensus that diversity and inclusion in the workforce are of critical importance, many organizations have struggled to go beyond superficial gestures in this area. According to the results of the study, there is a persistent necessity for the development of more all-encompassing techniques to foster diversity and cultivate inclusive settings.

## 10. SUGGESTIONS

This section ought to include recommendations that can actually be implemented in order to enhance HRM procedures in higher education. Take into consideration the following points:

**Acquisition and Retention of Talent:** Discuss tactics for attracting and maintaining top talent, such as the creation of clear career paths, mentorship programs, and innovative recruitment procedures. These are some of the strategies that should be discussed.

In the context of Professional Development Initiatives, consider the implication of on-going professional development opportunities for both academics and employees. Bring attention to the many positive aspects of making an investment in training and development programs and developing a culture of lifelong education (Heffernan, T. A. (2018) [18]).

Provide recommendations for the development of inclusive HR policies and procedures. This is part of the Diversity and Inclusion Programs. Talk about the importance of diversity and inclusion training, initiatives to employee people from diverse upbringings, and the formation of affinity groups.

**Upgrades to HR Technology:** Investigate the Possible Advantages of Advanced HRIS Systems, Data Analytics, and AI-Driven HR Solutions. Explore the ways in which administrative tasks can be streamlined with the help of technology, as well as how data-driven decision-making and HR services can be improved (Shrivastava, S., & Shaw, J. B. (2003). [19]).

Address the hurdles involved with putting HRM reforms into action through change management strategies. To guarantee the successful acceptance of HRM changes, it is important to discuss change management methods, plans for engaging stakeholders, and communication techniques.

## 11. THE IMPLICATIONS

The inferences that I take from the findings of my research on “The Critical Role of HRM in the World of Higher Education” is essential to comprehending the significance of study as well as the lessons that acquired as a result of conducting it. The distance between the raw data and the insights that can be used should be bridged through inferences. The following is a list of important inferences that can be drawn from the findings:

### **Inference 1: There is a Varied Range of HRM Policies and Procedures used in Higher Education Institutions**

According to the findings of research, HRM procedures used at educational institutions of higher learning are not all the same. It is clear from the diversity of HRM approaches, which span from the conventional to the cutting edge that different organizations are



at different points in the evolution of HRM. While some universities have embraced diversity and technology efforts, others are falling more and further behind. This hints that HRM methods are malleable and can be changed by the culture of the organisation as well as the resources it has (Govender, L. N. et al., 2018) [20].

#### **Inference 2: Restricted Financial Resources Stifle Human Resource Management Innovation**

Constraints placed on financial resources are a problem that is widespread among institutions of higher education. According to the findings, insufficient financial resources prevent institutions from implementing cutting-edge human resource management systems and providing competitive remuneration packages in an effort to recruit and retain talent. This demonstrates the standing of establishing original financial solutions in order to overcome these obstacles.

#### **Inference 3: Inclusiveness and diversity are becoming increasingly important**

According to the results of the study, there is a growing awareness of the implication of diversity and inclusion in higher education human resource management. Although the rate of growth varies, many organizations are making active efforts to implement diversity recruitment methods and to create work environments that are more inclusive. This shows that institutions of higher education are reacting to demands from society for greater diversity and justice.

#### **Inference 4: The Use of Technology Can Advance Human Resource Management Effectiveness**

Organizations that have implemented more sophisticated HR solutions have claimed enhanced operational efficacy. Utilizing HRIS systems, for example, simplifies administrative procedures, cuts down on the amount of paperwork required, and paves the way for improved decision-making that is driven by data. This inference highlights the possible benefits of implementing technology in HRM, which can be found here (Stone, D. L. et.al [21]).

#### **Inference 5: Effective Human Resource Management Contributes to the Excellence of Institutions**

According to the findings of the study, successful HRM practices are directly correlated to institutional success. Academic excellence, employee and faculty happiness, operational efficiency, and reputation are all areas in which educational institutions that have good HRM procedures tend to perform better than those that do not. This shows that making investments in HRM can have a good effect on an organization's overall performance that can have far-reaching repercussions.

#### **Inference 6: It is of the utmost importance to adjust to shifting student expectations**

Alterations in the expectations of students are an important factor that drives HRM practices in the Higher Education division. The request that students have for individualized educational experiences and all-encompassing support services drives educational institutions to seek out new ways to adapt and innovate. The significance of adapting HRM procedures to meet the ever-changing requirements of students is shown by inference number 6.

#### **Inference 7: Human Resource Management Is a Continuous Process**

The HRM process in higher education is not one that is static but rather one that is fluid and ever-changing. The techniques of human resource management need to evolve in response to the changing opportunities and problems faced by institutions. According to the findings of the study, educational institutions need to embrace a mind-set of constant development in order to maintain their competitiveness and maintain their relevance in the rapidly shifting landscape of Higher Education (Jorgensen, F. et al., 2008) [22].

## **12. CONCLUSION**

The environment of Higher Education is changing at a rapid pace, which presents educational institutions with a diverse array of opportunities and difficulties. In this ever-changing environment, Human Resource Management, often known as HRM, has become an increasingly important factor in determining an institution's capacity to evolve, thrive, and achieve. This study on "The Critical Role of HRM in the World of Higher Education" has thrown light on the existing state of HRM practices, the obstacles faced, and the potential impact of effective HRM in higher education institutions. The report's title is "HRM in Higher Education: The Need of the Hour." The research revealed a wide variety of HRM practices utilized by higher education institutions all around the world. While some have jumped on the innovation bandwagon, others are still grappling with inadequate resources and inefficient practices. The lack of available funds became an ever-present obstacle, which made it difficult to implement new technologies and provide compensation packages that were on par with those offered by competitors. On the other hand, there is a rising realization of the importance of diversity and inclusion, and institutions are actively undertaking measures to promote both of these concepts.

It has been established that technology, and more specifically sophisticated HRIS systems, has the capability to improve both operational efficiency and data-driven decision-making. In addition, the research showed a direct correlation between successful HRM practices and outstanding organizational performance. Institutions that had good HRM practices had a tendency to have superior academic performance, to encourage more staff and faculty satisfaction, to function more efficiently, and to enjoy enhanced reputations. The ever-evolving requirements of students have emerged as a primary driver of HRM practices, highlighting the importance of ensuring that HR policies are in line with these requirements. The report stressed the dynamic nature of HRM in



higher education and called for a culture of continuous development to confront new issues and embrace emerging possibilities. To conclude, HRM in higher education is indisputable evidence of the necessity of the hour. It is not only an administrative task; rather, it is a force of transformation that has the potential to mould the future of higher education. For an organization to be successful in attracting and retaining top personnel, fostering diversity and inclusion, and ultimately reaching institutional excellence, operative HRM strategies are crucial. The environment of higher education is always shifting, and in order for institutions to successfully traverse the next obstacles and grab the possibilities that lie ahead, HRM must be embraced as a strategic imperative. Higher education will continue to thrive or fail depending on how successfully educational institutions can innovate, adapt, and invest in their most valuable resource their students.

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