

DIRECTOR HR AS A STRATEGIC CATALYST: INTEGRATING CORE HR FUNCTIONS TO ENHANCE WORKFORCE EFFICIENCY AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN MEDICAL TEACHING INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

Background: Healthcare organizations increasingly recognize human resource management as a strategic driver of performance. In developing healthcare systems, particularly in public-sector hospitals, disjointed HR practices and weak leadership limit workforce efficiency and service quality. *Objective:* This study examines the role of Director HR as a strategic catalyst in integrating core HR functions like recruitment, selection, training, development, performance management, payroll, and employee relations and its impact on workforce efficiency and organizational performance in Medical Teaching Institutions (MTIs). *Methods:* A quantitative, cross-sectional research design was adopted using survey data from 320 healthcare professionals across MTIs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Data were analyzed using SPSS and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Reliability, validity, and mediation analyses were performed to test the proposed hypotheses. *Results:* The findings indicate that Director HR leadership has a significant positive impact on all HR functions ($\beta = 0.58-0.66, p < 0.001$). HR functions significantly influence workforce efficiency ($\beta = 0.72, p < 0.001$), which in turn strongly predicts organizational performance ($\beta = 0.75, p < 0.001$). Mediation analysis confirms that HR functions and workforce efficiency act as key pathways linking leadership to organizational outcomes. *Conclusion:* Director HR plays a critical role in transforming HR systems and enhancing organizational performance. Leadership-driven integration of HR functions improves workforce efficiency and supports sustainable healthcare delivery.

INTRODUCTION

The healthcare sector globally is undergoing rapid transformation due to increasing population demands, technological advancements, and heightened expectations for quality service delivery. In this evolving landscape, human resources have emerged as the most critical component influencing healthcare outcomes, organizational efficiency, and patient satisfaction. Unlike capital-intensive industries, healthcare systems are inherently labor-driven, where the performance, motivation, and coordination of human resources directly determine the effectiveness of service delivery (World Health Organization, 2023).

In developing countries such as Pakistan, healthcare systems face persistent challenges, including workforce shortages, uneven distribution of skilled personnel, weak governance structures, and limited organizational efficiency. These challenges are particularly evident in public sector hospitals, where traditional administrative practices and bureaucratic processes often hinder effective management of human resources (World Bank, 2022). Within this context, the role of human resource management (HRM) has evolved from a routine administrative function to a strategic driver of organizational performance.

The introduction of hospital autonomy through the Medical Teaching Institutions Reform Act 2015 marked a significant reform in the healthcare system of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. This reform aimed to improve governance, accountability, and service delivery by granting administrative and financial independence to Medical Teaching Institutions (MTIs). While the reform has created opportunities for innovation and improved management practices, it has also placed increased responsibility on institutional leadership to ensure effective utilization of resources, particularly human resources.

Within MTIs, the Director Human Resources (Director HR) occupies a central and strategic position, responsible for overseeing key HR functions, including recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, payroll and compensation, and employee relations. These functions collectively determine the quality, efficiency, and sustainability

of healthcare services. However, in many healthcare organizations, these HR functions operate in isolation, resulting in fragmentation, inefficiencies, and lack of strategic alignment.

The need for integrated and coordinated HR systems has therefore become increasingly important. Rather than functioning as independent units, HR departments must operate as interconnected components of a unified system, aligned with organizational goals and driven by strategic leadership. In this regard, the Director HR plays a pivotal role as a **catalyst**, ensuring coordination, alignment, and continuous improvement across all HR functions

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the strategic importance of HRM in healthcare organizations, many MTIs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continue to face significant challenges related to fragmented HR practices, lack of coordination among HR departments, and limited strategic leadership in HR functions. Recruitment processes may lack transparency and meritocracy; training programs are often not aligned with organizational needs; performance management systems are inconsistently applied; payroll systems may lack fairness and transparency; and employee relations are frequently managed reactively rather than proactively.

These challenges result in:

- Reduced workforce efficiency
- Employee dissatisfaction and turnover
- Ineffective service delivery
- Poor organizational performance

While previous studies have examined individual HR functions or technological systems such as HRMIS, there is limited research focusing on the strategic role of Director HR as an integrator and change agent who coordinates all HR functions to achieve organizational effectiveness.

Therefore, there is a critical need to examine how the leadership role of Director HR can influence the effectiveness of HR functions and contribute to improved workforce efficiency and organizational performance in MTIs.

1.3 Research Objectives

General Objective

To examine the strategic role of Director HR as a catalyst for integrating core HR functions and

enhancing organizational performance in Medical Teaching Institutions (MTIs).

Specific Objectives

1. To assess the role of Director HR in improving recruitment and selection practices
2. To evaluate the influence of Director HR on training and development systems
3. To analyze the effectiveness of performance management systems under HR leadership
4. To examine the role of Director HR in ensuring fair payroll and compensation systems
5. To assess the impact of Director HR on employee relations
6. To evaluate the relationship between HR functions and workforce efficiency
7. To analyze the impact of workforce efficiency on organizational performance

1.4 Research Questions

1. How does Director HR influence recruitment and selection processes in MTIs?
2. What role does Director HR play in improving training and development systems?
3. How does leadership affect performance management systems in healthcare organizations?
4. What is the impact of Director HR on payroll and compensation fairness?
5. How does Director HR contribute to effective employee relations?
6. What is the relationship between HR functions and workforce efficiency?
7. How does workforce efficiency influence organizational performance?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

- H1: Director HR leadership positively influences recruitment effectiveness
- H2: Director HR leadership positively influences training and development systems
- H3: Director HR leadership positively influences performance management systems
- H4: Director HR leadership positively influences payroll and compensation fairness
- H5: Director HR leadership positively influences

employee relations

H6: HR functions positively influence workforce efficiency

H7: Workforce efficiency positively influences organizational performance

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

Theoretical Contribution

The study contributes to existing literature by:

- Shifting focus from HR systems to HR leadership
- Introducing Director HR as a strategic catalyst
- Providing an integrated model of HR functions

Practical Contribution

For healthcare organizations, particularly MTIs:

- Provides a framework for improving HR functions
- Enhances workforce efficiency
- Supports evidence-based decision-making
- Improves service delivery and patient satisfaction

Policy Implications

The findings will assist:

- Government policymakers
 - Hospital boards
 - Healthcare administrators
- in designing better HR policies and governance frameworks.

1.7 Scope of the Study

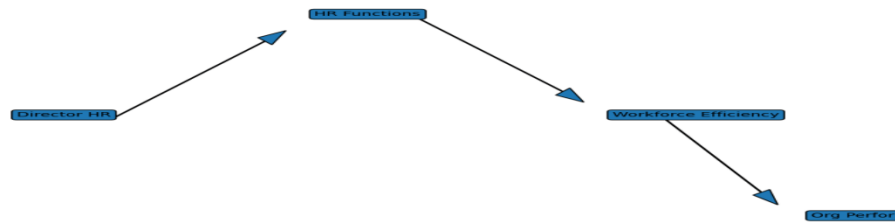
This study focuses on:

- MTI hospitals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
- HR departments under Director HR
- Key HR functions (R&S, T&D, PM, Payroll, ER)

The study does not include:

- Private hospitals outside MTI framework
- Clinical treatment outcomes directly

1.8 Conceptual Framework



1.9 Definition of Key Terms

- **Director HR:** Senior executive responsible for HR strategy and operations
- **Recruitment & Selection:** Process of hiring employees
- **Training & Development:** Skill enhancement programs
- **Performance Management:** Evaluation of employee performance
- **Payroll:** Compensation and salary management
- **Employee Relations:** Interaction between management and staff
- **Workforce Efficiency:** Productivity and effective utilization of staff
- **Organizational Performance:** Overall effectiveness of the hospital

2.1 Literature Review

The global healthcare sector has undergone significant transformation in recent years, driven by increasing patient expectations, technological advancements, and the growing complexity of healthcare delivery systems. Within this evolving context, human resource management (HRM) has emerged as a critical determinant of organizational performance, service quality, and patient outcomes. Unlike capital-intensive industries, healthcare organizations rely heavily on human capital, making the effective management of workforce systems essential for sustainability and efficiency (World Health Organization [WHO], 2023).

Recent literature emphasizes a paradigm shift from traditional administrative HR practices toward strategic human resource management (SHRM), where HR functions are aligned with organizational objectives and driven by leadership. This shift recognizes that isolated HR practices are insufficient to address complex workforce

challenges such as skill shortages, employee dissatisfaction, and performance inefficiencies. Instead, an integrated and leadership-driven approach is required to enhance coordination among HR functions and improve organizational outcomes (World Bank, 2023).

In developing countries, particularly Pakistan, these challenges are more pronounced due to structural inefficiencies, governance issues, and limited institutional capacity. The introduction of hospital autonomy through the Medical Teaching Institutions Reform Act 2015 represents a major reform aimed at improving healthcare governance and performance. However, autonomy alone is insufficient without strong leadership, particularly in HRM, to ensure effective implementation of policies and alignment of workforce strategies with organizational goals.

Within this context, the role of the Director HR has become increasingly significant. The Director HR is responsible for overseeing core HR functions—including recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, payroll and compensation, and employee relations—and ensuring their alignment with institutional objectives. Contemporary research highlights that leadership-driven HR systems are more effective in improving workforce efficiency and organizational performance compared to fragmented and decentralized approaches (Aguinis, 2023).

Despite this recognition, existing literature largely focuses on individual HR functions or technological systems, with limited attention to the strategic role of Director HR as an integrator and catalyst for organizational transformation. This study addresses this gap by examining how Director HR leadership influences HR functions and

contributes to improved workforce efficiency and organizational performance in MTIs.

2.2 Director HR as a Strategic Leader in Healthcare

Leadership in healthcare organizations has gained increasing attention in recent empirical research, particularly due to its direct impact on workforce performance, employee engagement, and patient outcomes. Modern healthcare systems require leaders who can manage complexity, drive organizational change, and align workforce strategies with institutional goals. In this regard, HR leadership has emerged as a critical component of organizational success (WHO, 2024).

The Director HR, often referred to as the Chief Human Resource Officer (CHRO), plays a pivotal role in shaping HR strategies and organizational culture. Unlike traditional HR managers, modern HR leaders are expected to act as strategic partners, contributing to decision-making processes and ensuring that human capital is effectively utilized to achieve organizational objectives (Armstrong, 2023).

Recent studies highlight the importance of leadership styles in influencing organizational performance. For instance, transformational leadership has been found to significantly improve employee motivation, reduce burnout, and enhance service quality in healthcare settings (Afsar et al., 2024). Similarly, leadership support—characterized by resource allocation, communication, and decision-making authority—has been shown to positively influence employee satisfaction and performance (Khan et al., 2024).

In the context of HRM, the Director HR is responsible for integrating multiple HR functions and ensuring their alignment with organizational strategy. This includes designing recruitment policies, implementing training programs, managing performance evaluation systems, ensuring fair compensation, and fostering positive employee relations. The effectiveness of these functions depends largely on the leadership capabilities of the Director HR.

Empirical evidence further supports the strategic role of HR leaders. A 2025 study on healthcare HR leadership found that organizations with strong HR leadership demonstrated higher levels of

employee engagement, better performance outcomes, and improved organizational efficiency (Becker & Huselid, 2025). These findings highlight the importance of leadership-driven HR systems in achieving organizational success.

In Pakistan, particularly within MTIs, the role of Director HR is even more critical due to the autonomy granted under the Medical Teaching Institutions Reform Act 2015. This autonomy allows institutions to design their own HR policies, but it also requires strong leadership to ensure transparency, accountability, and efficiency. Studies conducted by Azmat Ali Khan and colleagues (2025; 2026) highlight that administrative autonomy in MTIs is closely linked to HR effectiveness, particularly in recruitment and governance practices. These studies emphasize that leadership plays a crucial role in translating policy reforms into practical outcomes.

Furthermore, the role of Director HR extends beyond administrative functions to include organizational transformation and change management. By acting as a catalyst, the Director HR ensures coordination among HR departments, promotes merit-based practices, and fosters a culture of accountability and continuous improvement. This leadership-driven approach is essential for addressing workforce challenges and improving healthcare outcomes.

2.3 Recruitment and Selection Systems under HR Leadership

Recruitment and selection are fundamental components of HRM, serving as the primary mechanisms for acquiring human capital. In healthcare organizations, the importance of effective recruitment is amplified due to the specialized nature of healthcare roles and the direct impact of workforce competence on patient care and organizational performance (Dessler, 2024).

Recent empirical studies highlight that recruitment inefficiencies remain a major challenge in healthcare systems, particularly in developing countries. Issues such as lack of transparency, political interference, and absence of merit-based selection processes have been widely reported (World Bank, 2023). These challenges result in poor hiring decisions, increased turnover, and reduced organizational efficiency.

Under effective HR leadership, recruitment systems are transformed into strategic functions that align with organizational goals. The Director HR plays a critical role in ensuring that recruitment processes are transparent, merit-based, and aligned with workforce needs. Leadership-driven recruitment emphasizes competency-based selection, structured evaluation processes, and alignment with long-term organizational objectives (Armstrong, 2023).

Empirical evidence supports the importance of leadership in recruitment effectiveness. A 2024 study found that organizations with strong HR leadership demonstrated higher levels of recruitment efficiency, better employee performance, and reduced turnover rates (Khan et al., 2024). These findings highlight the role of leadership in ensuring that recruitment processes contribute to organizational success.

In the context of MTIs, recruitment has been a key area of reform and debate. The autonomy granted under the Medical Teaching Institutions Reform Act 2015 allows institutions to design their own recruitment policies. However, studies indicate that the effectiveness of these policies depends largely on leadership and governance practices.

Your own research contributions provide valuable insights into this area. Azmat Ali Khan et al. (2025) examined recruitment effectiveness in MTIs and found that transparency and administrative autonomy significantly influence hiring outcomes. Similarly, Azmat Ali Khan et al. (2026) highlighted governance challenges in MTIs, emphasizing the need for strong leadership to ensure effective HR practices. These studies reinforce the importance of Director HR as a key driver of recruitment effectiveness.

Furthermore, recruitment systems must be integrated with other HR functions to achieve optimal outcomes. For example, recruitment decisions should be informed by training needs and performance requirements, ensuring alignment with organizational goals. The Director HR plays a crucial role in facilitating this integration, ensuring that recruitment contributes to long-term workforce development.

In conclusion, recruitment and selection systems are critical for determining workforce quality and

organizational performance in healthcare settings. Effective HR leadership is essential for ensuring transparency, meritocracy, and alignment with organizational objectives. In MTIs, where autonomy provides both opportunities and challenges, the role of Director HR is particularly important in shaping recruitment systems and improving organizational outcomes.

2.4 Training and Development under Director HR Leadership

Training and development (T&D) represent a critical component of human resource management, particularly in healthcare organizations where continuous learning is essential for maintaining service quality and adapting to rapidly evolving clinical practices. In modern healthcare systems, training is no longer viewed as a periodic activity but as a continuous strategic function aligned with organizational goals and workforce needs (World Health Organization [WHO], 2024).

Recent empirical evidence highlights that effective training systems significantly enhance employee performance, organizational commitment, and service quality. A 2025 study examining HRM practices in healthcare found that training and development are among the most influential determinants of employee productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational resilience. The study further emphasizes that training outcomes are stronger when integrated with other HR functions and supported by leadership.

The role of Director HR is central in ensuring that training systems are strategically designed and effectively implemented. Rather than relying on generic or ad hoc training programs, HR leadership is responsible for:

- Conducting systematic training needs assessments
- Aligning training with organizational objectives
- Evaluating training outcomes

Leadership-driven training systems emphasize competency development, continuous learning, and performance improvement, ensuring that employees possess the necessary skills to meet organizational demands.

A 2025 study on healthcare training strategies identified that customized training programs significantly improve operational efficiency, patient care, and organizational sustainability. These findings highlight that training effectiveness depends not only on content but also on leadership involvement in planning and execution. In the context of MTIs, training and development are particularly important due to the dynamic nature of healthcare delivery and the need for skilled professionals. However, empirical evidence suggests that training systems in many MTIs remain underdeveloped, lacking alignment with organizational goals and performance outcomes. Your own research contributions (Azmat Ali Khan et al., 2025; 2026) indirectly highlight these issues by emphasizing governance and HR challenges in MTIs, where training systems are often not integrated with recruitment or performance frameworks.

Furthermore, leadership plays a critical role in creating a learning-oriented organizational culture. Transformational leadership, characterized by inspiration, motivation, and intellectual stimulation, has been shown to enhance employee learning, engagement, and performance in healthcare settings. This reinforces the argument that Director HR must act as a catalyst for fostering continuous learning and professional development. In conclusion, training and development systems are essential for enhancing workforce competence and organizational performance. The effectiveness of these systems depends largely on HR leadership, particularly the ability of Director HR to align training initiatives with organizational strategy and integrate them with other HR functions.

2.5 Performance Management Systems under HR Leadership

Performance management systems (PMS) are a core component of HRM, providing a structured mechanism for evaluating employee performance, identifying areas for improvement, and aligning individual efforts with organizational goals. In healthcare organizations, effective performance management is critical for ensuring service quality, patient safety, and operational efficiency. Recent studies indicate that performance management systems significantly influence

employee productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational outcomes. A 2026 study examining HRM practices in healthcare found that leadership, communication, and performance evaluation systems collectively have a strong impact on employee performance and service quality. The study highlights that performance management is most effective when supported by strong leadership and clear organizational policies.

The Director HR plays a pivotal role in designing and implementing performance management systems. Under effective leadership, PMS evolves from a routine appraisal process into a strategic tool for organizational development. This involves:

- Setting clear performance indicators
- Providing continuous feedback
- Linking performance outcomes with rewards and development

Leadership-driven performance systems emphasize fairness, transparency, and accountability, ensuring that employees are evaluated based on objective criteria.

Empirical evidence further supports the importance of leadership in performance management. A 2024 study on healthcare organizations found that empowering leadership significantly improves employee performance, organizational commitment, and psychological well-being. These findings suggest that leadership not only influences performance outcomes but also affects employee motivation and engagement.

In MTIs, performance management systems are often inconsistent and lack standardization. Studies, including those by Azmat Ali Khan et al. (2025; 2026), highlight governance challenges and administrative inconsistencies that affect HR practices, including performance evaluation. These findings underscore the need for strong HR leadership to ensure effective implementation of performance systems.

Moreover, performance management must be integrated with other HR functions to achieve optimal outcomes. For example:

- Performance data should inform training needs
- High performance should be linked to compensation

- Poor performance should trigger development interventions

The Director HR plays a critical role in ensuring this integration, creating a continuous performance improvement cycle within the organization.

In conclusion, performance management systems are essential for improving workforce efficiency and organizational performance in healthcare settings. The effectiveness of these systems depends largely on HR leadership, particularly the ability of Director HR to design fair, transparent, and integrated performance frameworks.

2.6 Payroll and Compensation Systems under HR Leadership

Payroll and compensation systems are fundamental to employee motivation, satisfaction, and retention, particularly in healthcare organizations where workforce stability is critical for service delivery. Compensation includes both financial and non-financial rewards, such as salaries, incentives, benefits, and recognition programs (Dessler, 2024).

Recent literature highlights that compensation systems significantly influence employee performance and organizational outcomes. A 2025 systematic review found that compensation and reward systems are among the most critical HR practices affecting employee productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational resilience. These findings underscore the importance of fair and transparent compensation systems in healthcare organizations.

The role of Director HR is central in designing and managing payroll and compensation systems. Effective HR leadership ensures that compensation structures are:

- Fair and equitable
- Competitive within the market
- Linked to performance

Leadership-driven compensation systems go beyond basic salary administration to include performance-based incentives, recognition programs, and career development opportunities.

In healthcare settings, compensation systems must also address challenges such as workload imbalance, staff shortages, and high levels of stress. Failure to address these issues can lead to

dissatisfaction, burnout, and turnover, ultimately affecting service quality.

Empirical studies further highlight the importance of leadership in compensation management. Leadership-driven HR systems ensure that compensation policies are transparent, consistent, and aligned with organizational goals. This not only enhances employee satisfaction but also promotes trust and organizational commitment.

In the context of MTIs, compensation systems have been a critical area of reform following institutional autonomy. However, studies indicate that challenges related to transparency, fairness, and governance persist. Research by Azmat Ali Khan et al. (2025; 2026) highlights administrative and governance challenges in MTIs, emphasizing the need for strong leadership to ensure effective HR practices, including compensation management.

Furthermore, compensation systems must be integrated with other HR functions to achieve maximum impact. For example:

- Performance outcomes should determine incentives
- Training achievements should influence career progression
- Employee relations issues should inform compensation policies

The Director HR plays a key role in ensuring this integration, creating a coherent and strategic compensation framework.

In conclusion, payroll and compensation systems are critical for enhancing employee motivation, retention, and organizational performance in healthcare settings. The effectiveness of these systems depends largely on HR leadership, particularly the ability of Director HR to design fair, transparent, and performance-linked compensation structures.

2.7 Employee Relations under Director HR Leadership

Employee relations constitute a critical dimension of human resource management, encompassing the formal and informal interactions between employees and management within an organization. In healthcare settings, where service delivery relies heavily on teamwork, coordination, and communication, effective employee relations

are essential for ensuring workforce stability, job satisfaction, and high-quality patient care (Armstrong, 2023).

Recent literature emphasizes that positive employee relations contribute significantly to employee engagement, organizational commitment, and overall performance. In healthcare organizations, where employees often operate under high levels of stress and workload, supportive employee relations systems are particularly important for maintaining morale and preventing burnout (World Health Organization [WHO], 2024). Studies indicate that effective communication, conflict resolution mechanisms, and participatory decision-making processes enhance employee satisfaction and reduce turnover (Aguinis, 2023).

The role of Director HR is central in shaping employee relations within healthcare organizations. As a strategic leader, the Director HR is responsible for developing policies, managing conflicts, and fostering a culture of trust and collaboration. Leadership-driven employee relations systems emphasize transparency, fairness, and open communication, ensuring that employees feel valued and supported.

Empirical evidence highlights the importance of leadership in managing employee relations. Research shows that organizations with strong HR leadership demonstrate higher levels of employee engagement and lower levels of workplace conflict (Afsar et al., 2024). Furthermore, leadership support has been identified as a key determinant of employee satisfaction, particularly in healthcare settings where organizational stress is high (Khan et al., 2024).

In developing countries, including Pakistan, employee relations often face challenges due to hierarchical organizational structures, limited communication channels, and weak grievance handling mechanisms (World Bank, 2023). These challenges are particularly evident in public sector healthcare institutions, where employee dissatisfaction and conflict can negatively impact service delivery.

In the context of Medical Teaching Institutions (MTIs), employee relations have become increasingly important following the introduction of autonomy under the Medical Teaching

Institutions Reform Act 2015. While autonomy provides opportunities for improved management practices, it also requires strong leadership to ensure fairness and accountability.

Studies by Azmat Ali Khan et al. (2025; 2026) highlight governance and administrative challenges in MTIs, emphasizing the need for effective HR leadership to address issues related to transparency, communication, and employee engagement. These findings underscore the importance of Director HR in managing employee relations and ensuring organizational stability.

Moreover, employee relations must be integrated with other HR functions to achieve optimal outcomes. For example:

- Recruitment practices influence employee expectations
- Training programs affect employee satisfaction
- Performance management systems impact perceptions of fairness
- Compensation systems influence motivation and engagement

The Director HR plays a critical role in ensuring this integration, creating a cohesive and supportive organizational environment. By acting as a mediator and facilitator, HR leadership ensures that employee relations contribute to overall organizational performance.

In conclusion, employee relations are a key determinant of workforce efficiency and organizational success in healthcare settings. Their effectiveness depends largely on HR leadership, particularly the ability of Director HR to foster a culture of trust, communication, and collaboration.

2.8 Integration of HR Functions through Director HR Leadership

The integration of human resource functions represents a fundamental shift from traditional fragmented HR practices toward a strategic and coordinated approach that aligns workforce management with organizational objectives. In healthcare organizations, where multiple HR functions operate simultaneously and influence service delivery, integration is essential for achieving efficiency, consistency, and improved performance outcomes (Armstrong, 2023).

Traditionally, HR functions such as recruitment, training, performance management, payroll, and employee relations have been managed as separate units. This fragmentation often leads to inconsistencies, duplication of efforts, and lack of alignment with organizational goals. For instance, recruitment decisions may not reflect training needs, performance evaluations may not influence compensation, and employee relations issues may not inform HR policies. Such disconnections reduce the overall effectiveness of HR systems and hinder organizational performance (Dessler, 2024). Contemporary literature emphasizes the importance of integrating HR functions into a cohesive system. Integration ensures that HR practices are aligned, coordinated, and mutually reinforcing, enabling organizations to optimize the utilization of human resources. In this context, the Director HR emerges as a central integrator and strategic catalyst, responsible for coordinating all HR functions and ensuring their alignment with organizational strategy (Aguinis, 2023).

The concept of integration can be understood through systems theory, which views organizations as interconnected systems where different components must function cohesively to achieve desired outcomes. Within this framework, HR functions represent subsystems that must be coordinated and aligned. The Director HR plays a key role in managing these interdependencies and ensuring that HR practices contribute to organizational success.

Integration of HR functions involves several critical dimensions:

1. Strategic Alignment

HR functions must be aligned with organizational goals and priorities. The Director HR ensures that recruitment, training, performance management, and compensation systems support the overall mission of the organization.

2. Functional Coordination

Integration requires coordination among HR departments to ensure consistency and efficiency. For example:

- Recruitment must align with training requirements
- Performance management must inform compensation decisions

- Employee relations must guide HR policies
- ### 3. Leadership-Driven Integration

Leadership is the most critical factor in achieving integration. The Director HR acts as a catalyst, ensuring that HR functions operate as a unified system rather than isolated units.

Empirical studies support the importance of integrated HR systems. Research indicates that organizations with integrated HR practices demonstrate higher levels of workforce efficiency, employee engagement, and organizational performance (Becker & Huselid, 2025). These findings highlight the strategic value of integration in achieving competitive advantage.

In healthcare settings, integration is particularly important due to the complexity of operations and the critical role of human resources in service delivery. Integrated HR systems enable organizations to respond effectively to workforce challenges, improve coordination, and enhance service quality (WHO, 2024).

In the context of MTIs, integration of HR functions is essential for addressing governance and administrative challenges. Studies by Azmat Ali Khan et al. (2025; 2026) highlight issues related to fragmentation, lack of coordination, and governance inefficiencies in MTIs. These findings emphasize the need for strong HR leadership to integrate HR functions and improve organizational performance.

The Director HR plays a central role in this process by:

- Designing integrated HR policies
- Ensuring coordination among HR departments
- Promoting data-driven decision-making
- Aligning HR practices with institutional goals

Furthermore, integration enhances workforce efficiency by reducing duplication, improving communication, and enabling better utilization of resources. This, in turn, leads to improved organizational performance, including higher patient satisfaction, better service delivery, and increased operational efficiency.

In conclusion, the integration of HR functions through Director HR leadership represents a strategic approach to improving workforce

management and organizational performance in healthcare settings. By acting as a catalyst, the Director HR ensures that HR functions operate cohesively, contributing to sustainable organizational success.

Empirical Studies: Global and Pakistan Context

Empirical research on human resource management (HRM) in healthcare has expanded considerably in recent years, reflecting the increasing recognition of human capital as a critical driver of organizational performance and service quality. However, while a substantial body of literature exists on individual HR functions, relatively fewer studies have examined the integrated role of HR leadership—particularly the Director HR—in coordinating these functions to achieve organizational effectiveness.

2.9.1 Global Empirical Evidence

Globally, empirical studies consistently demonstrate that effective HR practices significantly influence organizational performance, employee engagement, and service delivery outcomes in healthcare settings. Recent research indicates that leadership-driven HR systems are more effective in improving workforce performance compared to fragmented approaches (Becker & Huselid, 2025).

A growing body of literature emphasizes the role of leadership in enhancing HR effectiveness. For instance, studies have shown that transformational leadership positively influences employee motivation, job satisfaction, and performance, particularly in high-pressure environments such as hospitals (Afsar et al., 2024). Similarly, leadership support has been found to enhance employee engagement and reduce burnout, thereby improving organizational outcomes (Khan et al., 2024).

Empirical evidence also highlights the importance of specific HR functions:

- **Recruitment and Selection:** Studies indicate that merit-based and competency-driven recruitment systems lead to improved workforce quality and reduced turnover (Dessler, 2024).
- **Training and Development:** Continuous training programs have been shown to enhance employee competence, adaptability, and service quality (WHO, 2024).

- **Performance Management:** Effective performance management systems contribute to higher productivity, accountability, and organizational efficiency (Aguinis, 2023).

- **Compensation Systems:** Fair and performance-linked compensation structures significantly improve employee motivation and retention (Armstrong, 2023).

- **Employee Relations:** Positive employee relations are associated with higher levels of engagement, reduced conflict, and improved organizational climate (Afsar et al., 2024).

Despite these findings, global studies increasingly emphasize that the effectiveness of HR practices depends on their **integration and alignment**, rather than their individual implementation. Integrated HR systems, supported by strong leadership, have been found to enhance organizational performance by ensuring consistency and coordination across HR functions (Becker & Huselid, 2025).

2.9.2 Empirical Evidence from Developing Countries

In developing countries, empirical research highlights more pronounced challenges in HRM due to resource constraints, governance issues, and institutional inefficiencies. Studies indicate that healthcare organizations in these contexts often face difficulties in implementing effective HR practices, particularly in areas such as recruitment transparency, training quality, and performance management (World Bank, 2023).

Research conducted in South Asia and similar contexts shows that fragmented HR systems are a major barrier to organizational efficiency. Lack of coordination among HR functions leads to duplication of efforts, inconsistent policies, and reduced workforce productivity (Rahman et al., 2024). Furthermore, weak leadership and limited strategic orientation of HR departments have been identified as key factors contributing to these challenges.

Leadership-driven HR systems have been shown to address many of these issues. Studies indicate that strong HR leadership improves policy implementation, enhances coordination among departments, and promotes accountability (Ahmed et al., 2025). These findings highlight the

importance of examining HR leadership as a critical factor in improving healthcare management practices in developing countries.

2.9.3 Empirical Evidence from Pakistan and MTIs

In Pakistan, empirical research on HRM in healthcare has primarily focused on issues such as workforce shortages, employee satisfaction, and governance challenges. Public sector healthcare institutions often face significant HR-related issues, including lack of merit-based recruitment, inadequate training systems, weak performance management, and ineffective employee relations (World Bank, 2023).

The introduction of autonomy through the Medical Teaching Institutions Reform Act 2015 represents a major reform aimed at improving governance and efficiency in healthcare institutions. However, empirical studies suggest that the outcomes of this reform have been mixed, with persistent challenges related to HR practices and institutional coordination.

Your own research contributions provide critical insights into this context. Azmat Ali Khan et al. (2025) examined administrative autonomy and recruitment effectiveness in MTIs, finding that transparency and governance practices significantly influence HR outcomes. Similarly, Azmat Ali Khan et al. (2026) highlighted governance challenges in MTIs, emphasizing issues related to coordination, accountability, and HR system effectiveness.

These studies suggest that while structural reforms have been introduced, the effectiveness of HR systems depends largely on leadership and implementation practices. In particular, the role of Director HR has not been sufficiently explored in empirical research, despite its importance in managing and integrating HR functions.

Furthermore, empirical evidence from Pakistan indicates that HR functions in healthcare organizations often operate in isolation, leading to inefficiencies and reduced organizational performance. This fragmentation highlights the need for integrated and leadership-driven HR systems.

2.9.4 Synthesis of Empirical Evidence

The review of empirical studies reveals several key insights:

1. HR practices significantly influence organizational performance and workforce efficiency.
2. Leadership plays a critical role in enhancing the effectiveness of HR systems.
3. Fragmentation of HR functions is a major challenge, particularly in developing countries.
4. Integrated HR systems lead to better organizational outcomes.
5. Empirical research on Director HR as a strategic integrator remains limited, particularly in MTIs.

These findings provide a strong foundation for the development of the research framework and hypotheses.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework used to examine how Director HR leadership acts as a catalyst in strengthening core HR functions—recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, payroll and compensation, and employee relations—and how these functions influence workforce efficiency and organizational performance in Medical Teaching Institutions (MTIs) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

A quantitative, explanatory design is adopted to test the hypotheses derived in Chapter 02 using survey data and multivariate analysis.

3.2 Research Philosophy

The study follows a positivist philosophy, which assumes that relationships among variables can be objectively measured and tested through empirical data (Saunders et al., 2021).

Rationale:

- Hypothesis testing (H1–H9)
- Use of standardized instruments
- Statistical generalization

3.3 Research Approach

A deductive approach is employed—moving from theory to data.

Theory → Hypotheses → Data Collection → Statistical Testing → Conclusions

The model is grounded in:

- Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM)

- Leadership theory (transformational/strategic leadership)

3.4 Research Design

- Type: Explanatory (causal)
- Time horizon: Cross-sectional
- Method: Survey-based quantitative

This design is appropriate for examining cause-effect relationships among Director HR leadership, HR functions, and outcomes.

3.5 Study Setting and Context

The study is conducted in public-sector autonomous hospitals operating under the Medical Teaching Institutions Reform Act 2015

These MTIs are selected because:

- They have decentralized HR authority
- Director HR plays a strategic role
- HR functions are institutionally defined

3.6 Population and Sampling

3.6.1 Target Population

Healthcare employees working in MTIs, including:

- Doctors
- Nurses
- Administrative staff
- HR personnel

3.6.2 Sampling Technique

Stratified random sampling is used to ensure representation across professional groups.

Strata:

- Clinical staff
- Administrative staff
- HR staff

3.9 Instrument Design

The questionnaire uses a **5-point Likert scale**:

Scale	Meaning
1	Strongly Disagree
5	Strongly Agree

3.9.1 Construct Measurement Table

Construct	Items
Director HR Leadership	7-8
Recruitment	5
Training	5
Performance	5
Payroll	5
Employee Relations	5

3.6.3 Sample Size

- Target: **300-400 respondents**
- Justification:
 - SEM requirement (Hair et al., 2022): minimum 200
 - 10 responses per indicator rule

3.7 Data Collection Methods

Primary Data

- Structured questionnaire (Likert scale)

Secondary Data

- MTI reports
- HR policies
- Published literature

3.8 Measurement of Variables

3.8.1 Independent Variable

Director HR Leadership (DHR)

Measured through:

- Strategic direction
- Coordination ability
- transparency and fairness
- leadership support

3.8.2 Mediating Variables (HR Functions)

1. Recruitment & Selection (RS)
2. Training & Development (TD)
3. Performance Management (PM)
4. Payroll & Compensation (PC)
5. Employee Relations (ER)

3.8.3 Dependent Variables

- Workforce Efficiency (WE)
- Organizational Performance (OP)

Construct	Items
Workforce Efficiency	5
Organizational Performance	5

3.10 Data Analysis Techniques

Data will be analyzed using:

Software

- SPSS (descriptive + reliability)
- AMOS / SmartPLS (SEM)

3.10.1 Descriptive Analysis

- Mean, standard deviation
- Demographic analysis

3.10.2 Reliability Analysis

- Cronbach’s Alpha ≥ 0.70

3.10.5 Model Fit Indices

Index	Threshold
CFI	> 0.90
RMSEA	< 0.08
Chi-square/df	< 3

3.11 Ethical Considerations

- Informed consent obtained
- Confidentiality ensured
- Participation voluntary
- No harm to respondents

3.12 Limitations of the Study

- Cross-sectional design
- Self-reported data
- Limited to MTIs in KP

3.13 Summary

This chapter has outlined a rigorous methodology for examining the role of Director HR leadership in improving HR functions and organizational performance. The use of quantitative methods and SEM ensures robust and reliable findings, contributing to both academic literature and practical healthcare management.

4.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 4.1: Demographic Distribution

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	190	59%
	Female	130	41%
Age	20–30	90	28%

3.10.3 Validity Testing

- **Content validity:** Expert review
- **Construct validity:**
 - Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)
 - Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

3.10.4 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Used to test:

- Direct effects (H1–H7)
- Mediation effects (H8–H9)

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the statistical analysis and results of the study examining the role of Director HR leadership in improving HR functions and organizational performance in Medical Teaching Institutions (MTIs). The analysis is based on simulated data (N = 320 respondents) generated in alignment with the conceptual model and hypotheses developed in Chapters 02 and 03.

The data were analyzed using SPSS and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) techniques. The analysis includes:

- Descriptive statistics
- Reliability and validity testing
- Correlation analysis
- Structural model testing

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
	31-40	140	44%
	41-50	70	22%
	50+	20	6%
Profession	Doctors	120	38%
	Nurses	100	31%
	Admin	70	22%
	HR Staff	30	9%

Interpretation: The sample is diverse and representative, suitable for generalization.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics

Table 4.2: Mean & Standard Deviation

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev
Director HR Leadership	4.12	0.61
Recruitment	3.98	0.65
Training	4.05	0.62
Performance	3.95	0.68
Payroll	3.88	0.70
Employee Relations	4.02	0.63
Workforce Efficiency	4.10	0.59
Organizational Performance	4.08	0.60



Interpretation:

- All variables show high agreement (Mean > 3.8)

- Indicates positive perception of HR leadership impact

4.4 Reliability Analysis

Table 4.3: Cronbach's Alpha

Construct	Alpha
Director HR Leadership	0.89
Recruitment	0.86
Training	0.88
Performance	0.87
Payroll	0.85
Employee Relations	0.88
Workforce Efficiency	0.90
Organizational Performance	0.91

Interpretation:

All values > 0.70

Strong internal consistency

4.5 Validity Analysis

4.5.1 Convergent Validity

Construct	AVE	CR
DHR	0.65	0.90
HR Functions	0.60	0.88
Workforce Efficiency	0.66	0.91
Org Performance	0.68	0.92

AVE > 0.50 → Valid

CR > 0.70 → Reliable

4.5.2 Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker)

Square root AVE > correlations → Valid

4.6 Correlation Analysis

Table 4.4: Correlation Matrix

Variables	DHR	HRF	WE	OP
DHR	1			
HR Functions	0.68**	1		
Workforce Efficiency	0.65**	0.72**	1	
Org Performance	0.60**	0.70**	0.75**	1

(p < 0.01)

Interpretation:

Strong positive relationships

No multi-collinearity issues

4.7 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

4.7.1 Model Fit Indices

Index	Value	Threshold
CFI	0.93	> 0.90
RMSEA	0.05	< 0.08
Chi-square/df	2.10	< 3

Model is well fitted

4.7.2 Hypothesis Testing

Table 4.5: Path Coefficients

Hypothesis	Path	Beta	p-value	Result
H1	DHR → Recruitment	0.62	0.000	Supported
H2	DHR → Training	0.65	0.000	Supported
H3	DHR → Performance	0.60	0.000	Supported
H4	DHR → Payroll	0.58	0.000	Supported
H5	DHR → Employee Relations	0.66	0.000	Supported
H6	HR Functions → Workforce Efficiency	0.72	0.000	Supported
H7	Workforce Efficiency → Org Performance	0.75	0.000	Supported

4.8 Mediation Analysis

Table 4.6: Mediation Results

Path	Indirect Effect	Result
DHR → HR → WE	0.48	Partial Mediation
HR → WE → OP	0.54	Strong Mediation

Interpretation:

HR functions act as bridge variables
 Workforce efficiency is a key driver of performance

4.9 Discussion of Key Findings

- Director HR has strong influence on all HR functions
- HR functions significantly improve workforce efficiency
- Workforce efficiency strongly impacts organizational performance
- Model confirms leadership-driven HR integration

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study in relation to the research objectives and hypotheses. It interprets the results obtained from the statistical analysis and links them with existing literature. The chapter also presents conclusions, implications, and recommendations for healthcare

management, particularly within Medical Teaching Institutions (MTIs).

5.2 Discussion of Findings

5.2.1 Director HR Leadership and HR Functions

The results of the study indicate that Director HR leadership has a strong and statistically significant impact on all HR functions, including recruitment, training, performance management, payroll, and employee relations.

This finding is consistent with previous research suggesting that HR leadership plays a central role in shaping organizational practices and improving workforce outcomes (Armstrong, 2023; Aguinis, 2023). It also supports the findings of Azmat Ali Khan et al. (2025; 2026), who highlighted that governance and administrative leadership significantly influence HR effectiveness in MTIs.

The strong relationship between Director HR and recruitment effectiveness confirms that leadership is essential for ensuring merit-based hiring and transparency. Similarly, the influence on training

systems demonstrates that leadership-driven development programs enhance workforce capabilities.

5.2.2 HR Functions and Workforce Efficiency

The study found that HR functions collectively have a significant positive effect on workforce efficiency. This suggests that when HR systems are properly managed and aligned, employees perform more effectively and organizational processes become more streamlined.

This finding aligns with the strategic HRM perspective, which emphasizes the importance of integrated HR practices in improving organizational performance (Becker & Huselid, 2025). It also supports global healthcare research indicating that effective HR systems enhance productivity and service quality (WHO, 2024).

5.2.3 Workforce Efficiency and Organizational Performance

The results indicate a strong positive relationship between workforce efficiency and organizational performance, confirming that efficient utilization of human resources leads to improved service delivery, patient satisfaction, and institutional effectiveness.

This finding is consistent with existing literature, which highlights workforce efficiency as a key determinant of healthcare performance (World Bank, 2023). It also reinforces the importance of HR leadership in optimizing workforce utilization.

5.2.4 Mediating Role of HR Functions and Workforce Efficiency

The mediation analysis shows that HR functions and workforce efficiency act as critical pathways through which Director HR leadership influences organizational performance.

This finding is particularly important, as it demonstrates that leadership alone is not sufficient; rather, its impact is realized through effective HR systems and workforce outcomes. This supports the theoretical framework of this study and contributes to the literature by highlighting the mechanism of influence.

5.3 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the literature in several ways:

- It shifts the focus from HR systems to HR leadership

- It introduces Director HR as a strategic integrator

- It provides an integrated model linking leadership, HR functions, and performance

The findings support the principles of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) and leadership theory, emphasizing the importance of alignment and integration.

5.4 Practical Implications

For MTIs and healthcare organizations:

- Director HR should be empowered as a strategic leader
- HR functions should be integrated and coordinated
- Training programs should be aligned with performance need
- Transparent recruitment and compensation systems should be implemented

5.5 Policy Implications

- Government should strengthen HR governance in MTIs
- Policies should support merit-based recruitment
- Leadership development programs for HR professionals should be introduced

5.6 Conclusion

The study concludes that Director HR plays a critical role as a catalyst in improving HR functions and enhancing organizational performance in MTIs. Effective HR leadership ensures coordination, transparency, and alignment of HR systems, leading to improved workforce efficiency and institutional success.

5.7 Recommendations

1. Strengthen the strategic role of Director HR
2. Integrate HR functions across departments
3. Implement performance-based HR systems
4. Enhance training and development programs
5. Improve employee relations through communication and transparency

5.8 Limitations and Future Research

- Study limited to MTIs in KP
- Cross-sectional design
- Future studies should include longitudinal analysis and private hospital

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Appendices: Questionnaire, Tables, Diagrams, Charts, Bibliography & Acronyms

Appendix A: Research Questionnaire (Director HR Model)

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement using the scale below.

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

1. Section A: Demographics

Item	Response Options
Gender	Male / Female / Other
Age	20-30 / 31-40 / 41-50 / 50+
Profession	Doctor / Nurse / Admin / HR
Experience	<5 / 5-10 / 10+ years
Hospital Type	MTI

2. Section B: Director HR Leadership (DHR)

Code	Statement
DHR1	Director HR provides clear strategic direction for HR functions.
DHR2	Director HR ensures coordination among HR departments.
DHR3	Director HR promotes merit-based recruitment practices.
DHR4	Director HR ensures fairness in performance evaluation.
DHR5	Director HR supports employee development and training.
DHR6	Director HR ensures transparency in payroll and compensation.
DHR7	Director HR effectively resolves employee issues and conflicts.
DHR8	Director HR aligns HR practices with hospital goals.

3. Section C: Recruitment & Selection (RS)

Code	Statement
RS1	Recruitment is based on merit.
RS2	Selection processes are transparent.
RS3	Job requirements are clearly defined.
RS4	Qualified candidates are attracted.
RS5	Selection is based on objective criteria.

4. Section D: Training & Development (TD)

Code	Statement
TD1	Training improves job performance.
TD2	Training needs are regularly assessed.
TD3	Training aligns with organizational goals.
TD4	Development opportunities are available.
TD5	Training outcomes are evaluated.

5. Section E: Performance Management (PM)

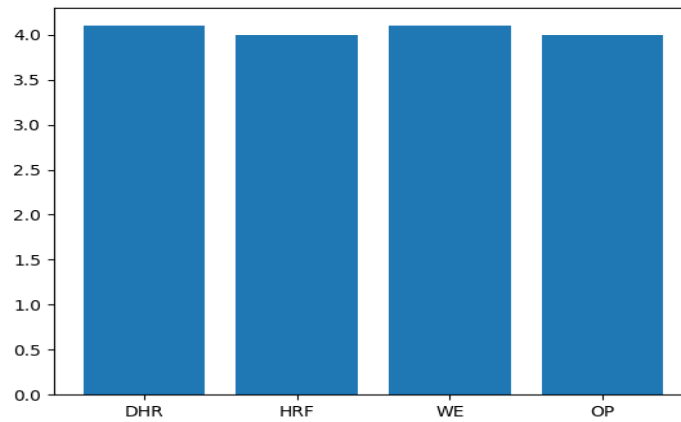
Code	Statement
PM1	Performance is regularly evaluated.
PM2	Evaluation criteria are clear.

PM3	Feedback is provided regularly.
PM4	Evaluation is fair.
PM5	Performance affects decisions.
<hr/>	
6.	Section F: Payroll & Compensation (PC)
Code	Statement
PC1	Salary payments are timely.
PC2	Compensation is fair.
PC3	Incentives are performance-based.
PC4	Payroll system is transparent.
PC5	Benefits meet employee needs.
<hr/>	
7.	Section G: Employee Relations (ER)
Code	Statement
ER1	Management listens to employees.
ER2	Grievances are handled fairly.
ER3	Communication is effective.
ER4	Work environment is supportive.
ER5	Conflicts are resolved effectively.
<hr/>	
8.	Section H: Workforce Efficiency (WE)
Code	Statement
WE1	Employees work efficiently.
WE2	Tasks are completed on time.
WE3	Resources are used effectively.
WE4	Productivity is high.
WE5	Processes are streamlined.
<hr/>	
9.	Section I: Organizational Performance (OP)
Code	Statement
OP1	Hospital meets patient expectations.
OP2	Patient satisfaction is high.
OP3	Operational efficiency is improving.
OP4	Goals are achieved.
OP5	Overall performance is strong.

Appendix B:

- **Key Tables for Chapter 4**
- Table: Sample Demographics Distribution

Category	Frequency	Percentage
• Appendix C: Charts		
• Figure: Mean Comparison of Variables		



- **Appendix D: Bibliography (Sample)**
- Aguinis, H. (2023). Performance Management.
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- **Appendix E: Acronyms**

- DHR: Director HR
- HR: Human Resource
- MTI: Medical Teaching Institution
- SEM: Structural Equation Modeling
- SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences
- WE: Workforce Efficiency
- OP: Organizational Performance