



## The Impact of HRM Practices and Leadership Styles on Administrative-Office Staff Performance in Palestinian Universities

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### Abstract:

This study investigates the impact of HRM practices and leadership styles on administrative-office staff performance in traditional universities and university colleges in Palestine. A pilot study was conducted before data collection to check content validity and reliability, which was successfully achieved. The primary data were collected through questionnaires distributed to a purposive sample of administrative-office employees from nine Palestinian universities and university colleges across the West Bank area. A total of 256 questionnaires out of 270 were eligible for data analysis. The response rate was 0.94. The data analysis was carried out using SPSS version 24 utilizing the data analysis program: PLS-SEM version 3. The findings of this research study have reported that HRM practices (training and development, compensation and rewards, employee relations, and performance appraisal) are positively related to administrative-office staff performance. In contrast, leadership styles (transformational and transactional) were found to have no significant impact on administrative-office staff performance. The study's contribution is threefold: the "population gap" contribution, HRM Practices' theoretical-practical gap contribution, and leadership styles' theoretical-practical gap contribution, besides its practical significance. The study has reached several recommendations, the most important of which are the examined HRM practices should be reinforced and emphasized in order to increase administrative-office staff performance and boost their effectiveness and in case of future examination of the relationship between leadership styles and employee performance, the researchers may employ a mediator or focus on investigating different styles of leadership other than transformational and transactional.

**Keywords:** *HRM practices; Transformational leader; Transactional leader; In-role performance; Extra-role performance.*

## تأثير ممارسات إدارة الموارد البشرية وأنماط القيادة على أداء الموظفين الإداريين العاملين في الجامعات الفلسطينية

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### ملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة تأثير ممارسات إدارة الموارد البشرية وأنماط القيادة على أداء الموظف الإداري- المكتبي في الجامعات التقليدية والكليات الجامعية في فلسطين. لقد تم إجراء دراسة تجريبية قبيل البدء بعملية جمع البيانات للتأكد من صحة المحتوى والموثوقية والتي تم تحقيقها بنجاح. تم جمع البيانات الأولية من خلال استخدام الاستبانات التي وزعت على عينة قصدية من الموظفين الإداريين-المكتبيين في تسع جامعات تقليدية وكليات جامعية فلسطينية موزعة على منطقة الضفة الغربية. تم تحليل (256) استبياناً من أصل (270) حيث بلغ معدل الاستجابة (94%). وتم إجراء تحليل البيانات باستخدام النسخة الرابعة والعشرين من SPSS، والنسخة الثالثة من البرنامج التحليلي (PLS-SEM)، أفادت نتائج هذه الدراسة البحثية أن ممارسات إدارة الموارد البشرية (التدريب والتطوير، والتعويضات والمكافآت، وعلاقات الموظفين، وتقييم الأداء) ذات دلالة إحصائية وترتبط بشكل إيجابي بأداء الموظف الإداري-المكتبي، بينما تبين أن أنماط القيادة (التحويلية والتبادلية) ليس لها أي دلالة إحصائية أو أي تأثير على أداء الموظف الإداري-المكتبي. تُظهر الدراسة ثلاث مساهمات، تتبلور في: مساهمة الفجوة في مجتمع التطبيق، ومساهمة الفجوة النظرية والعملية لممارسات إدارة الموارد البشرية، ومساهمة الفجوة النظرية والعملية لأنماط القيادة، إلى جانب أهمية الدراسة من الناحية العملية. توصلت الدراسة إلى عدة توصيات أهمها: يتوجب تعزيز تطبيق ممارسات إدارة الموارد البشرية التي تم تناولها من خلال هذه الدراسة من أجل تحسين أداء الموظفين الإداريين-المكتبيين وتعزيز فعاليتهم. وفي حال إنشاء أي دراسة مستقبلية للبحث في العلاقة ما بين أنماط القيادة وأداء الموظف، فيُقتَرَحُ توظيف متغير وسيط في هذه العلاقة أو التركيز على التحقيق في أنماط مختلفة من القيادة بخلاف القيادة التحويلية والتبادلية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** ممارسات الموارد البشرية؛ القائد التحويلي؛ القائد التعملي؛ الأداء الأساسي؛ الأداء الإضافي.

## 1. Introduction

One of the most critical factors an organization can consider when it comes to achieving its goals is the availability of skilled and motivated employees. Employee performance is a critical resource for achieving the organization's goals (Karoso et al., 2022); it is defined as employee efficiency or job completion. Good performance refers to how well employees perform in a specific job. Also, employee performance can be described as how well employees carry out their work. (Lim & Ahmad, 2021). Employees do play a strategic function. They ought to interpret the customer orientation concept into factual information via service quality and service delivery process (Al Zeer et al., 2023). Typically, the employee who provides the service is the customer's first point of contact; thus, the customer's perception is formed after this connection (Ahn & Rho, 2021). Employee performance is regarded as the interaction between the service provider, the employee, and the organization's customers. Employee performance is an essential determinant of the perceived value of a service (Salahat, 2017). Organizations must concentrate on the factors that significantly improve employee performance since it is directly related to the achievement of the organization's goals. Employee performance indicates the degree of efficiency and productivity, which leads to accomplishing organizational goals through positive contribution, as employees' performance results in the organization's overall performance. Thus, organizations have recognized the significance of improved employee performance since organizational goals can only be met if employees perform to expectations (Dakhoul, 2018). For the reason of identifying the reality of the performance level of employees among universities, survey questions were designed to address some areas that influence employee performance, and the finding of the survey revealed that 78% of the tested staff do not receive any constructive comments from their managers, while 80% stated that managers do not treat everyone on the team fairly and equally. 60% answered that they do not feel connected to their colleagues, and 60% stated they are motivated to go the extra mile at work. In comparison, 63% stated that they are satisfied with the motivation programs, and 80% answered that they are not compensated relatively in relation to the market. More importantly, the problems mentioned earlier created the main objective of conducting this study. Employee performance can be understood based on the philosophy of resource-based view (RBV) theory; Employees are used as leverage in RBV theory to achieve the organization's sustainable competitive advantage. In other words, HRM practices, according to RBV, are believed to develop human capital, which results in achieving a distinguished organization performance. (Buller & McEvoy, 2012). Furthermore, the present study uses leadership styles and HRM practices as independent variables to predict employee performance.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 HRM practices

Human Resource Management (HRM) is developing and retaining competent employees through managerial tasks and responsibilities (Salahat & Halim, 2016). It is primarily concerned with an organization's personnel and how they contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization (Chieng et al., 2019). Scholars characterized HRM as a people-centered management practices combo that acknowledges employees as their assets and those that are aimed to create and maintain a skillful, committed working force for achieving the organizational goals (Easa & Orra, 2021). An organization's HRM function focuses on the management level. It includes practices that assist the organization in effectively managing employees during various stages of employment, such as the pre-hire, staffing, and post-hire phases (Abu-Mahfouz, 2019). HRM practices have a direct impact on employee motivation, behavior, and skill development in order to improve organizational

performance (Manzoor et al., 2019). Theoretically speaking, the RBV theory explains the organization regarding its resources; it is only natural that organizations differ based on integrating their own resources. Barney (2001) states that sustained competitive advantage is derived from the resources and capabilities a organization controls that are valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable. These resources and capabilities can be viewed as bundles of tangible and intangible assets; they include an organization's management skills, organizational processes and routines, and the information and knowledge it controls. Empirically, studies have shown a positive correlation between HRM practices and employee performance (Mira et al., 2019), leading to conclude that applying HRM practices improves employee performance. However, the survey findings have proved that the employee performance of the administrative staff is suffering due to the applied HRM practices. This contradiction between the RBV theory concept and empirical research results, on the one hand, and the actual situation of employee performance in Palestinian universities, on the other hand, has resulted in the first theoretical-practical gap; the contradiction between the literature reviews and the conducted empirical study addressing HRM practices and employee performance relationship. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap, and this study's second motive stands. Moreover, this study uses compensation and rewards, performance appraisal, training and development, and employee relations as HRM practices. Based on the previous discussion, the present study hypothesizes the following:

H<sub>1</sub>: HRM practices have a significant positive impact on administrative staff performance in Palestinian universities and university colleges.

H<sub>1a</sub>: Compensation and rewards system positively impacts administrative staff performance in Palestinian universities and university colleges.

H<sub>1b</sub>: Performance appraisal positively impacts administrative staff performance in Palestinian universities and university colleges.

H<sub>1c</sub>: Training and development positively impacts administrative staff performance in Palestinian universities and university colleges.

H<sub>1d</sub>: Employee relations positively impacts administrative staff performance in Palestinian universities and university colleges.

## 2.2 Leadership Styles

Leadership is a crucial focus of many activities, both in public and private organizations (Cortellazzo et al., 2019). Given the growing size and complexity of organizations, there appears to be a need for development and change to ensure excellence and continuity (Nadim & Singh, 2019). Furthermore, obtaining leadership skills can channel energies and direct efforts to achieve the highest accomplishment (Liu et al., 2019). According to Gandolfi and Stone (2018), a mix of five components results in a robust definition of leadership: (1) the presence of one or more leaders, (2) the presence of followers, (3) a legitimate action-oriented (4) an action plan, and (5) objectives and goals.

Leadership style is perceived as a set of characteristics, behaviors, and traits that leaders employ when interacting with subordinates (Salahat & Majid, 2016). Leadership style is a pattern attached to managerial behavior designed to merge personal or organizational interests with certain effects to achieve specific goals (Erwin et al., 2019). Researchers such as Harris and others proposed that a leadership style may be referred to as the type of relationship used by individuals to encourage others to work together toward a common goal or objective (Nguyen et al., 2020). Leadership styles can be classified as follows according to modern leadership styles: (1) transformational, (2) transactional, (3) culture-based, (4) charismatic, and (5) visionary leadership (Al Khajeh, 2018). A company's success or failure is determined by its leadership. Effective leadership can help the

organization overcome its challenges and improve its performance (Utin & Yosepha, 2019). Leadership style affects the organization's culture and performance (Maamari & Saheb, 2018). Klient and others approved this fact by employing the leadership four-factor theory aligned with the data gathered from 2,662 employees working in 311 organizations. The findings showed that leadership style influences organizational performance and culture. (Al Khajeh, 2018). Theoretically, leadership style is classified as a resource according to RBV theory (Salahat, 2021a). Using RBV, the collective learning, and behavior of employees may be affected by the type of leadership for resources that comply with the VRIN criteria. These underpin the ability of the organization to achieve superior performance (AlNuaimi et al., 2021). However, Barney was the one who framed the RBV into a theoretical context, in which he proposed that the human resources of the organization were made up of its leadership qualities, business skills, employees' experience, problem-solving skills, knowledge and relationships with others (AlNuaimi et al., 2021). Empirically, studies have shown a positive correlation between leadership styles and employee performance, and applying leadership styles improves employee performance (Ichsan et al., 2021). However, the survey findings have proved that the employee performance of the administrative staff is suffering due to the leadership styles applied. This contradiction has resulted in a theoretical-practical gap between literature reviews and the empirical study that addresses leadership styles and employee performance relationships. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap, and the study's third motive stands. Furthermore, the present study adopted transactional and transformational leadership styles to examine their effect on employee performance. Based on the previous discussion, the present study hypothesizes the following:

H<sub>2</sub>: Leadership styles have a significant positive impact on administrative staff performance in Palestinian universities and university colleges.

H<sub>2a</sub>: Transformational leadership style positively impacts administrative staff performance in Palestinian universities and university colleges.

H<sub>2b</sub>: Transactional leadership style positively impacts administrative staff performance in Palestinian universities and university colleges.

### **3. Research methodology**

The population of the study is represented in thirteen traditional universities and nine university colleges located in the area of the West Bank. The thirteen traditional universities listed in the table, employ the total number of 1,592 employees classified as administrative-office staff. Whereas, the nine university colleges employ the total number of 118 employees classified as administrative-office employees. Thus, the final total number of administrative-office staff employed in both types of targeted HE institutions equals 1,710. This number of 1,710 represents the population of the study. A survey questionnaire with a cover letter was personally distributed to the administrative employees of Palestinian universities of the following department: the finance department, admission and registration, communications and development, public relations, community services, library, information technology, students' affairs, fundraising, scientific research, quality assurance as well as all departments' admin assistants. The data collection process started on December 14, 2022, and lasted until February 10, 2023.

A total number of 270 questionnaires were distributed. However, 256 questionnaires were submitted and thus eligible for data analysis, reflecting a response rate of 0.94.

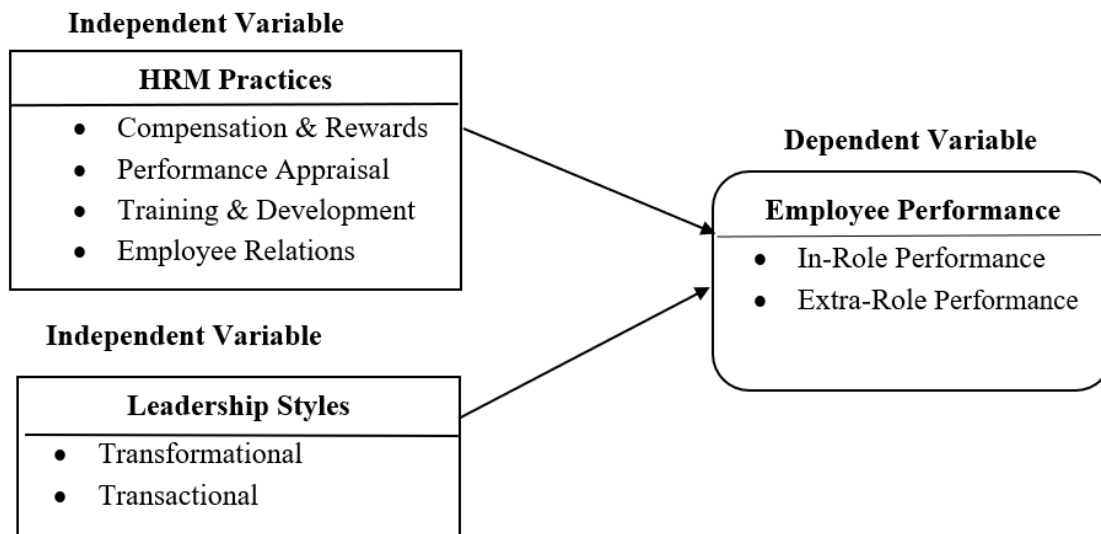


Figure 1: Theoretical framework

#### 4. Variables measurement

Based on the framework clarified in Figure 1 above, the present study used the descriptive analysis approach and has the following variables: employee performance (DV), was measured by using the instrument used by Salahat and Abdul Majid (2017) and Salahat (2021b). Respondents were asked to choose their preference from a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Leadership styles (IV) were measured by using items adopted from Amitay et al. (2005). Respondents were asked to choose their preference from a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Similarly, HRM practices (IV) were measured by using the items adopted from Omuya (2018). Respondents were asked to choose their preference from a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

#### 5. Data analysis and research results

Using Smart-PLS 4, the collected data were analyzed. Table 1 provides outer convergent validity statistics for all items concerning its variables. All factor loading of the research measurements exceeds the cutoff of 0.70, which reflects the consistency between construct items (Hair et al., 2010; Ajouz et al., 2020). Similarly, the reliability test of this study was implemented as all composite reliability values exceed the recommended cutoff of 0.70 and range between 0.852 to 0.953, as presented in Table 1. In addition, the recommended standard value of average variance extracted (AVE) was found to be greater than 0.50 in order to ensure that the latent variable can explain more than half of the variance of its indicator on average (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Ajouz & Abuamria, 2021). Latent variable correlation, which examines the correlations between the measures of potentially overlapping constructs, appears in Table 2. The table clearly shows that the values of all square root of AVE (Bold values) exceed the correlation with other constructs (elements in the rows and columns), which manifest the discriminant validity of this study (Ajouz & Abuamria, 2021; Alomary et al., 2023).



**Table 1: Outer model, convergent validity and composite reliability**

Construct	Items	Loading	CR	AVE
In-role performance	I achieve the objectives my job requires.	0.855	0.930	0.779
	I meet my work performance criteria.	0.894		
	I fulfill all of the job requirements and procedures.	0.903		
	I can take on more responsibilities than the normally assigned to me.	0.906		
	I am competent in all areas of my work, and I handle tasks efficiently.	0.853		
Extra-role performance	I assist my colleagues with their work when they are absent.	0.822	0.889	0.596
	I take the initiative in orienting new employees in the department even though this is not part of my job description.	0.783		
	I volunteer to do things that are not officially required from me.	0.874		
	I help others when their workload increases.	0.823		
	If I need to take a day off, I tend to notify my workplace in advance.	0.698		
	I assist my direct supervisor in carrying out his/her duties if required.	0.735		
	I am willing to take part in activities and events that improve my workplace overall image, even if it is not one of my job duties.	0.644		
Compensation and rewards	Compensation of employees, in my workplace, commensurate with the services and efforts they render.	0.789	0.871	0.646
	Performance-based compensation systems improve organizational performance.	0.880		
	Performance-based compensation systems enhance employee commitment.	0.867		
	Employees' efforts, in my workplace, are appreciated by offering special compensation packages, such as paid vacation, health insurance, retirement programs.	0.711		
	I believe that the compensation system has a significant impact on the university's performance.	0.760		
Performance appraisal	In my opinion, the performance appraisal system used in my workplace is objective and based on indisputable work evidence.	0.771	0.905	0.591
	The performance appraisal process, in my workplace, is governed by an effective control system.	0.819		
	I am satisfied with the current performance appraisal system conducted in my workplace.	0.811		
	I agree with the results I get from my performance evaluation.	0.813		
	The performance appraisal system, in my workplace, is used as a decision-making tool to determine the promotions' criteria.	0.742		

	My manager often communicates with me regarding my performance.	0.705		
	I often get feedback on my performance appraisal.	0.720		
	Performance appraisal positively affects my performance.	0.759		
Training and development	The training and development programs positively impact the workplace development.	0.768	0.852	0.627
	Training programs give me the feeling of job satisfaction.	0.709		
	From my point of view, training programs do indeed enhance performance.	0.857		
	Increasing the frequency of training and development programs has a positive impact on performance.	0.832		
	Training programs help in creating job satisfaction in the quality of the working life.	0.785		
Employee relations	Good relations between employees contribute to creating a high morale in the working environment.	0.882	0.923	0.665
	Good employee relations improve discipline at work.	0.756		
	Good employee relations promote teamwork.	0.852		
	Good employee relations reduce turnover rate (employees leaving their jobs) in the workplace.	0.602		
	Good employee relations lead to increased productivity at work.	0.843		
	Good employee relations result in effective communication channels in the workplace.	0.895		
	Good employee relations contribute to positive changes in the workplace.	0.843		
Transformational leadership style	Always looks for new opportunities for team members.	0.875	0.953	0.778
	Represents an ideal model to follow.	0.922		
	Encourages employees to be team players.	0.853		
	Supports, encourages and develops his/her employees individually.	0.837		
	Fosters trust, participation, and cooperation among team members.	0.889		
	Applies him/herself the values and principles he/she advocates in the workplace.	0.888		
	Instills pride and respect in others and inspires me to be highly competent.	0.907		
Transactional leadership style	Always gives me positive feedback when I perform well.	0.857	0.945	0.782
	Gives me a special recognition when my work is very good.	0.857		
	Compliments me when I perform better than the usual.	0.924		
	Praises me personally when I do an outstanding work.	0.898		
	Gives individual employees positive feedback when they perform well.	0.879		
	Actively shows appreciation to employees when they perform better than expected.	0.891		



Table 2: Correlation of Latent Variables & Square Root of AVE for First-Order Models

	IR	EXR	C&R	PA	T&D	ER	TFL	TL
<b>In-Role</b>	<b>0.882</b>							
<b>Extra-Role</b>	0.549	<b>0.772</b>						
<b>Compensation &amp; Rewards</b>	0.018	0.075	<b>0.804</b>					
<b>Performance Appraisal</b>	0.146	0.134	0.538	<b>0.769</b>				
<b>Training &amp; Development</b>	0.152	0.139	0.455	0.337	<b>0.792</b>			
<b>Employee Relations</b>	0.258	0.178	0.335	0.234	0.583	<b>0.816</b>		
<b>Transformational</b>	0.040	0.095	0.275	0.335	0.214	0.190	<b>0.882</b>	
<b>Transactional</b>	0.077	0.112	0.208	0.228	0.185	0.111	0.745	<b>0.884</b>

As this study assured its measurements validity and reliability, the present study preceded the bootstrapping approach to test research hypotheses. Path coefficient of the research hypotheses illustrated in Table 3. The first set of research hypotheses (H1-H1d) predicted that HRM practices are positively associated with employee performance. The coefficient on the path from HRM practice and employee performance (H1-H1d) was supported as the p-value is greater than 0.05. in particularly, **H<sub>1</sub>**: ( $H_1: \beta = 0.193; t = 2.453, P < 0.05$ ). **H<sub>1a</sub>**: ( $H_{1a}: \beta = 0.067; t = 2.532, P < 0.05$ ). **H<sub>1b</sub>**: ( $H_{1b}: \beta = 0.060; t = 2.514, P < 0.05$ ). **H<sub>1c</sub>**: ( $H_{1c}: \beta = 0.069; t = 2.433, P < 0.05$ ). **H<sub>1d</sub>**: ( $H_{1d}: \beta = 0.063; t = 2.381, P < 0.05$ ). This concludes that HRM practices and employee performance have positive and significant relationship.

Table 3: PLS-SEM Results: Path Coefficients of the Adjusted Model for HRM Practices

H <sub>x</sub>	Relationship	Std Beta	T-Value	P-Value	Decision
<b>H<sub>1</sub></b>	HRM Practices -> Employee Performance	0.193	2.453	0.014	Supported
<b>H<sub>1a</sub></b>	Compensation & Rewards -> Employee Performance	0.067	2.532	0.011	Supported
<b>H<sub>1b</sub></b>	Performance Appraisal -> Employee Performance	0.060	2.514	0.012	Supported
<b>H<sub>1c</sub></b>	Training & Development -> Employee Performance	0.069	2.433	0.015	Supported
<b>H<sub>1d</sub></b>	Employee Relations -> Employee Performance	0.063	2.381	0.017	Supported

Similarly, Table 4 summarizes the second set of the hypotheses of the present study (H2-H2b), which predicted that leadership styles are positively related to employee performance. The coefficient on the path from leadership styles and employee performance (H2-H2b) found not supported and therefore the following hypotheses were rejected, as follows: **H<sub>2</sub>**: ( $H_2: \beta = 0.037; t = 0.578, P > 0.05$ ). **H<sub>2a</sub>**: ( $H_{2a}: \beta = 0.020; t = 0.578, P > 0.05$ ). **H<sub>2b</sub>**: ( $H_{2b}: \beta = 0.020; t = 0.578, P > 0.05$ ). this conclude that leadership styles have no direct relationship with employee performance.

Table 4: PLS-SEM Results: Path Coefficients of the Adjusted Model for Leadership Style

H <sub>x</sub>	Relationship	Std Beta	T-Value	P-Value	Decision
<b>H<sub>2</sub></b>	Leadership Style -> Employee Performance	0.037	0.578	0.563	Not Supported
<b>H<sub>2a</sub></b>	Transformational -> Employee Performance	0.020	0.578	0.563	Not Supported
<b>H<sub>2b</sub></b>	Transactional -> Employee Performance	0.020	0.578	0.564	Not Supported

## 6. Discussion and conclusion

The findings imply that effective implementation of HRM practices in Palestinian universities and university colleges (particularly the four measured practices) can improve administrative staff

performance. HRM practices may motivate personnel expertise, manner, and attitude, which affects organizational and employee performance (Manzoor et al., 2019). From this point of view and in this research context, it is proposed that when a traditional university/ university college tends to invest in HRM practices, employees will most likely reciprocate such investments in positive ways and attitudes to meet their institution's interests, goals, and objectives. The employees perceive these investments as a commitment indication towards them, their well-being, their self-needs, and their career development, and thus employees will feel they are well-valued by their workplace. In return, they will do their best to boost their job performance.

Furthermore, the findings also demonstrate that the four investigated HRM practices positively impacted employee performance. As previously stated, training and development programs significantly impacted employee performance. It was the most impacting among the other examined practices. This result coincides with previous research. Training and development are crucial in improving employee performance and maintaining the academic institution's success. Since HE institutions are labeled as service providers, the researchers recommends that there should be more attention on specific training courses/programs, such as "quality management," to ensure that services are well performed, as expected.

Compensation and rewards were found to be the second most HRM practice that significantly impacts employee performance. This result matches (Mira et al., 2019). Compensation and rewards system can be beneficial system to both the institution and the employees when it is used systematically in motivating employees to outperform. However, this system might be complicated from the institutions' perspective as they always prefer to keep their expenditures within budget. On the other hand, since HE institutions ought to apply the unified Palestinian salary scale.

Employee relations is the third HRM practice that positively impacts employee performance. Institutions that possess well-structured employee relations enjoy higher productivity, revenues, and profits and happy, motivated, and highly committed employees. On this matter. The final HRM practice that significantly impacts employee performance is performance appraisal. The result is consistent with Salahat (2017). It is considered an essential tool in measuring past, present, and future employee performance levels. It is conducted to achieve the ultimate value and utilization of employees' interests, knowledge, and skills and to assure that all are efficiently and effectively well-employed. In regards to this HR practice.

The second (main and sub) research objective(s) was developed to investigate the impact of transformational and transactional leadership styles on administrative staff performance in Palestinian universities and university colleges. The findings indicated that path coefficients of leadership styles and their dimensions do not significantly impact administrative staff performance in traditional Palestinian universities and university colleges. The result is consistent with Baig et al. (2021), Emery and Barker (2007). Which noted that a leadership style that improves the quality of the subordinate-leader relationship affects employee performance (Ohemeng et al., 2018). Transformational leaders can improve their followers' performance by developing solid relationships with them (Siangchokyoo et al., 2020). Also, transactional leaders focus on the execution of work and depend on benefits and rewards to boost employee performance as it is based on a work-reward exchange (Wahyuni et al., 2020).

## **7. Recommendations for Future Research**

In accordance with the study findings, the present study recommended that: (1) HE institutions employ more "cross-training" programs, especially when offering promotions in the form of job enlargements (horizontal job expansion), where employees need to understand additional roles and

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responsibilities. (2) the researchers recommends that such institutions should reinforce the incentives programs while focusing on non-financial rewarding systems. (3) the researchers recommend associating HRM practices with "capacity building programs" and "development plans," which both can improve employee performance and can be measured by an employee performance appraisal system. (4) the researchers recommend establishing periodic informal workshops, including different departments on the structure, aiming to enhance morality, trust, team spirit, and communication. Sustaining positive employee relations enhances employee engagement, reduces conflicts, and reinforces the workplace culture. Furthermore, the following are some proposed suggestions to take into account for future research:

- (1) Examined HRM practices should be emphasized and reinforced. (Training and development: cross-training and quality assurance programs, compensation and rewards: non-financial rewarding system, employee relations: informal workshops, performance appraisal: associate it with capacity building programs and development plans).
- (2) A broader sample size of higher education institutions in Palestine should be considered to establish a broader understanding of the examined relationships.
- (3) Using a mediator, such as; employee well-being.
- (4) Using different leadership styles (other than transformational and transactional), such as strategic leadership style.

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