Designing a Human Resource Performance Model with a Thematic-Based Strategic Value Development Approach

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Abstract

The present study aims to design a human resource performance model with a thematic-based strategic value development approach. The research method is exploratory-applied in terms of purpose, cross-sectional in terms of data collection time, inductive-deductive in terms of philosophical orientation, and survey-based in terms of data collection method and research nature. The statistical population consists of knowledge-based companies in Iraq. A sample of relevant experts (10 individuals) was selected for qualitative analysis and interviews. The statistical sample for this part of the study was chosen purposively based on the principle of theoretical saturation. The sampling method was snowball sampling. The research instrument was a semi-structured interview. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis. The research findings indicate that the proposed model comprises five dimensions: setting goals and standards, enhancing work performance, providing regular feedback and evaluation, developing a reward and incentive system, and improving skills and knowledge. This study recommends that knowledge-based companies utilize performance management tools and software to facilitate data collection, goal tracking, and performance evaluation. Such systems can provide precise information for strategic decision-making.

Keywords: human resources, strategic value, workforce, strategic approach

1. Introduction

When talented individuals join the board of directors, the role of human resources expands to include attracting skilled employees, optimizing training, and developing human capital. By providing comprehensive onboarding programs and continuous learning opportunities, human resources ensure that employees are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in their roles. Effective training and development initiatives not only enhance individual employee performance but also contribute to overall organizational productivity and profitability. Furthermore, human resources play a crucial role in fostering employee engagement. Engaged employees are more committed, motivated, and productive, leading to improved organizational performance (Vashishtha et al., 2023). Human resource professionals implement strategies to create a positive work environment, promote open communication, recognize and reward employee achievements, and provide career growth opportunities. By cultivating a culture of engagement and empowerment, human resources enhance employee satisfaction, retention, and ultimately, organizational profitability (Naachimuthu et al., 2022; Parsakia et al., 2022).

Additionally, human resource management and talent management work together to establish a culture of continuous improvement. Human resource professionals facilitate performance management systems that define clear performance expectations, provide regular feedback, and align individual goals with organizational objectives. By integrating performance management with talent management initiatives, human resource professionals ensure that high-potential individuals receive the necessary guidance and recognition for their contributions, thereby encouraging them to excel in their roles (Kolachina et al., 2024).

Although relevant research is relatively scarce, previous studies on this question have followed three different approaches. First, researchers have examined the relationship between the presence or absence of human resource performance and company performance. This approach has yielded weak findings to date. These studies have used varying definitions of human resource performance effectiveness (increasing concerns about structural clarity) and have failed to address which specific human resource performance activities should be engaged in to achieve effectiveness. The third research approach has attempted to address this limitation by evaluating specific human resource performance activities and their relationship with company performance. However, nearly all studies following this approach have only considered the role of human resource performance in corporate strategic decision-making. Under this approach, studies have produced mixed findings, including both positive effects and insignificant impacts on company performance (Budiarto et al., 2024).

Since the ultimate goal of management activities and value creation is to enhance organizational performance by facilitating the effective utilization of human capital resources, these activities can be considered part of the broader strategic activities of human resource performance. Essentially, strategic human resource performance activities can be either technical or relational. Technical activities involve the development and implementation of formal human resource policies and practices by the human resource function, while relational activities involve providing stakeholders with consultations and relevant human resource information (Yashomandira et al., 2024). The former pertains to the role of human resource performance as the designer of formal human resource practices, whereas the latter relates to its role as a provider of human resource-related information and consultations (Bannya et al., 2022).

Rapid technological changes have shifted the basis of competition in many industries away from traditional physical and financial resources. The challenge is to ensure that companies can identify, attract, compensate, and retain human capital in the form of talented individuals who can lead a global organization that is both responsive to its customers and attuned to emerging technological opportunities. Thus, a company competing in the global environment faces a multitude of new demands, manifested as external and internal pressures that often push the organization and its members in multiple, contradictory directions simultaneously (Catherine & Emma, 2024; Chali & Lakatos, 2024).

On the other hand, strategic value in knowledge-based companies is crucial to their success. The concept of value creation is fundamental in organizations, with activities aimed at achieving economic goals in knowledge-based companies. Value-driven organizations play a significant role in enhancing value creation and improving stakeholder relationships through ethical values and work ethics, ultimately strengthening the organization's future (Tarba et al., 2023). Strategic agility in knowledge-based companies is influenced by organizational and environmental factors, inherent characteristics, and contextual conditions, leading to the development of effective strategies and practices that generate positive outcomes at various levels within the organization. Furthermore, the shift toward intangible assets such as knowledge and information in modern economies underscores the importance of organizational culture in creating competitive advantages for knowledge-based companies (Kiilu et al., 2023).

The review of the literature highlights various perspectives on human resource performance management and its strategic implications. Fakhr Hosseini et al. (2023) conducted a study on prioritizing employee performance evaluation indicators in strategic human resource management using the MCDM approach, focusing on the fire department in Alborz province. Their findings emphasized the importance of evaluation system implementation for performance improvement, with ethical compliance ranking highest among sub-criteria (Fakhr Hosseini & Kaviani, 2023). Shafiei et al. (2023) explored the impact of green intellectual capital on service performance, demonstrating a positive influence mediated by strategic human resource capabilities, particularly in educational institutions in Mashhad (Shafiei & Mazroei, 2023). Acho Elendu and Nelson (2024) examined strategic human capital management and organizational performance in Nigeria, identifying training and

development as crucial drivers of corporate profitability and shareholder returns, underscoring the significance of effective talent acquisition and reward systems (Acho Elendu & Nelson, 2024). Ogbeibu et al. (2024) investigated the role of smart technology, artificial intelligence, robotics, and algorithmic capabilities in green human resource management and environmental sustainability. Their findings indicated that while these technological advancements positively predict green HRM initiatives, they also reduce the positive relationship between green training, engagement, and sustainability (Ogbeibu et al., 2024). Pimenta et al. (2024) studied how socially responsible human resource management enhances work engagement, with perceived organizational support and emotional commitment acting as sequential mediators. Their results confirmed that socially responsible HRM fosters higher perceived support, strengthens emotional bonds with employers, and ultimately enhances employees' energy, dedication, and engagement levels (Pimenta et al., 2024). These studies collectively underscore the growing importance of strategic HRM approaches, technological advancements, and sustainability considerations in shaping workforce management and organizational performance.

The present study aims to address these limitations by proposing a model for human resource performance with a strategic value approach. Given that human resource performance may have stakeholders beyond executives, this study offers a broader conceptualization of human resource activities based on strategic value, extending beyond its role in strategic decision-making. To this end, various related works are utilized to identify key internal stakeholders of knowledge-based human resource performance and define the most prioritized human resource activities for each stakeholder group. Specifically, the proposed model revolves around human resources and human resource performance supporting internal stakeholders such as managers, employees, and senior executives, assisting them in achieving their goals and needs by providing relevant human resource information and consultations.

Therefore, this study raises the following research question:

- What is the human resource performance model with a thematic-based strategic value development approach?

2. Methods and Materials

Given that the aim of this study is to design a human resource performance model with a thematic-based strategic value development approach, the research method is classified as exploratory-applied in terms of purpose. In terms of data collection time, it is cross-sectional, while from a philosophical perspective, it follows an inductive-deductive approach. Regarding data collection method and research nature, it is a survey-based study.

Thematic analysis was employed as the research method. Thematic analysis involves a qualitative approach aimed at identifying, classifying, and extracting concepts based on the perspectives of relevant experts and professionals.

The statistical population comprises knowledge-based companies in Iraq. A sample of experts (10 individuals) was selected for qualitative analysis and interviews. The statistical sample for this section of the study was chosen purposively based on the principle of theoretical saturation. The sampling method used was snowball sampling, meaning that individuals selected as participants were specialists and key figures in this field.

Data collection for the qualitative section was conducted through semi-structured interviews. To ensure validity and reliability, Creswell's eight strategies for verifying research findings were applied.

3. Findings and Results

The analysis of the average age of the surveyed experts revealed that university professors and academic experts had the highest age category, with a mean age of 55.33 years, while managers of knowledge-based companies had the lowest age category, with a mean age of 42.66 years. An examination of the average work experience indicated that university professors and academic experts had the highest level of professional experience, with an average of 18.33 years, whereas managers of knowledge-based companies had comparatively less work experience, averaging 15.25 years. Among the participants in the present study, eight individuals held a Ph.D. degree, while two individuals had a master's degree.

In thematic analysis, secondary codes serve as indicators that help researchers identify patterns and similar themes within the text, facilitating a more comprehensive analysis of the data. The secondary codes derived from the primary codes and re-extracted from the conducted interviews in this study are reported in Table 1.

Table 1. Extracted Secondary Codes

No.	Extracted Secondary Codes	Primary and Re-Extracted Codes
1	Measurability of Goals	Setting measurable goals - Direct alignment of goals with business strategy - Performance analysis and evaluation based on goals - Motivation and commitment to more specific and assessable goals
2	Goal Achievement Scheduling	Defining realistic and achievable goals - Precise and reasonable scheduling - Achieving goals within a specified timeframe - Commitment to strategic activities with precise scheduling - Monitoring and evaluating performance based on accurate scheduling
3	Alignment of Goals with Organizational Processes	Compatibility between goals and organizational processes - Improving performance and efficiency by aligning goals with organizational processes - Close alignment with macro strategies through the adaptation of human resource goals - Continuous assessment and improvement through goal alignment with organizational processes
4	Ensuring Transparency and Fairness in Goal and Standard Setting	Enhancing trust and motivation through transparency and fairness in goal and standard setting - Facilitating performance measurement with transparent standard-setting - Organizational ethics and justice by ensuring transparency and fairness in goal setting - Reducing ambiguities through clarity in goals and standards - Commitment to organizational goals with transparent goal setting - Reducing errors associated with misunderstandings of objectives
5	Setting Constraints and Conditions for Organizational Goals	Defining direction and priorities - Balancing individual and organizational performance through goal constraints and conditions - Encouraging innovation and creativity through limitations - Enhancing productivity and efficiency by defining constraints for goals - Continuous evaluation and improvement through goal constraints and conditions
6	Enhancing Employee Commitment and Motivation	Improving performance and productivity through employee commitment and motivation - Increasing participation and responsibility with greater commitment - Boosting job satisfaction and organizational commitment - Attracting and retaining talent - Developing a successful organizational culture through employee commitment and motivation
7	Employee Personal and Professional Development	Enhancing capabilities and skills through personal and professional development - Promoting leadership and management skills - Strengthening collaboration and teamwork - Increasing motivation and commitment - Adapting to changes through personal and professional growth
8	Skill and Expertise Development Among Employees	Improving performance and productivity through skill and expertise development - Enhancing service and product quality - Increasing employee satisfaction and commitment - Encouraging innovation and creativity - Strengthening the ability to tackle challenges through skill development
9	Developing Resource Management Capabilities	Improving managerial processes and systems - Defining priorities and optimizing resource allocation - Strengthening planning and forecasting abilities - Effective performance evaluation and feedback - Facilitating an effective organizational culture
10	Evaluating Employee Performance Quality	Encouraging performance improvement through quality assessment - Defining performance standards - Supporting strategic decision-making through performance evaluation - Commitment to organizational goals through employee performance assessment
11	Providing Regular and Constructive Employee Feedback	Boosting motivation and commitment through regular and constructive feedback - Adding value through performance improvement - Enhancing skills and capabilities via continuous feedback - Strengthening communication through structured feedback - Supporting continuous improvement with frequent feedback
12	Creating an Environment for Employee Participation	Increasing motivation and commitment by involving employees in decision-making - Strengthening communication and organizational cohesion - Enhancing skills and abilities through participation in decision-making - Facilitating decision-making processes with employee involvement - Commitment to implementation through participatory decision-making
13	Utilizing 360-Degree Feedback	Increasing transparency and accurate performance measurement through 360-degree feedback - Enhancing skills and competencies - Strengthening motivation and commitment - Facilitating individual development through 360-degree feedback - Supporting continuous improvement through comprehensive feedback
14	Work-Life Balance for Employees	Enhancing job satisfaction and commitment by fostering work-life balance - Boosting productivity and efficiency - Reducing stress and burnout - Attracting and retaining skilled employees - Strengthening a healthy organizational culture
15	Performance Savings Assessment	Setting objectives and priorities through performance savings assessment - Identifying skills and abilities - Encouraging continuous improvement - Strengthening motivation and internal drive - Refining performance management through savings assessment
16	Providing Employee Development Opportunities	Increasing satisfaction and commitment by offering development opportunities - Strengthening organizational communication - Enhancing motivation and internal drive - Improving skills and abilities - Encouraging innovation and creativity through development programs
17	Designing an Incentive System Aligned with Organizational Strategies	Aligning rewards with strategic goals - Encouraging desired behaviors - Strengthening organizational interactions - Linking incentives with individual motivations - Adding value to the organization through an effective incentive system
18	Offering Financial and Non-Financial Rewards to Employees	Motivating employees through financial and non-financial rewards - Encouraging desirable behaviors - Facilitating personal and professional growth - Strengthening motivation and connection with the organization - Creating organizational value through rewards
19	Promotion and Career Advancement	Increasing employee motivation and commitment through career advancement - Enhancing job satisfaction - Improving skills and competencies - Cultivating a positive organizational culture - Attracting and retaining key talent through promotion opportunities
20	Encouraging Healthy Competition Among Employees	Boosting motivation through healthy competition - Improving efficiency and productivity - Enhancing skills and abilities - Fostering innovation through competition - Strengthening a positive organizational culture
21	Developing Employee Flexibility	Increasing adaptability to change - Facilitating engagement with new processes and technologies - Strengthening teamwork and collaboration - Enhancing interpersonal skills - Promoting a flexible organizational culture
22	Encouraging Learning and Innovation Among Employees	Developing skills and knowledge through continuous learning - Encouraging innovation and idea generation - Transforming organizational culture with a learning mindset - Enhancing responsiveness to challenges - Supporting professional growth through continuous learning

| 23 | Knowledge Sharing Within the Organization | Improving efficiency and productivity through knowledge sharing - Accelerating learning processes - Strengthening communication skills - Encouraging innovation - Reinforcing a knowledge-sharing organizational culture |
| 24 | Developing Knowledge Sustainability | Enhancing organizational stability - Facilitating decision-making processes - Strengthening employee competencies - Supporting training and learning initiatives - Driving cultural transformation through knowledge sustainability |

This table presents the extracted secondary codes and their corresponding primary and re-extracted codes, providing a structured framework for understanding key themes in human resource performance and strategic value development.

Table 2. Extracted Dimensions from Secondary Codes

No.	Research Dimensions	Extracted Secondary Codes
1	Goal and Standard Setting	Goal measurability
2		Goal achievement scheduling
3		Alignment of goals with organizational processes
4		Ensuring transparency and fairness in goal and standard setting
5		Defining constraints and conditions for organizational goals
6	Work Performance Development	Enhancing employee commitment and motivation
7		Employee personal and professional development
8		Skill and expertise development among employees
9		Developing resource management capabilities
10		Evaluating employee performance quality
11	Regular Feedback and Evaluation	Providing regular and constructive feedback to employees
12		Creating an environment for employee participation
13		Utilizing 360-degree feedback
14		Establishing work-life balance for employees
15		Assessing employee performance savings
16	Reward and Incentive System Development	Providing development opportunities for employees
17		Designing an incentive system aligned with organizational strategies
18		Offering financial and non-financial rewards to employees
19		Promotion and career advancement
20		Encouraging healthy competition among employees
21	Skill and Knowledge Development	Enhancing employee flexibility
22		Encouraging learning and innovation among employees
23		Knowledge sharing within the organization
24		Developing knowledge sustainability

This study identified five main dimensions: goal and standard setting, work performance development, regular feedback and evaluation, reward and incentive system development, and skill and knowledge development. Additionally, a total of 142 primary codes were extracted from 10 interviews, from which 24 secondary codes were derived. The final research model is presented in Figure 1.
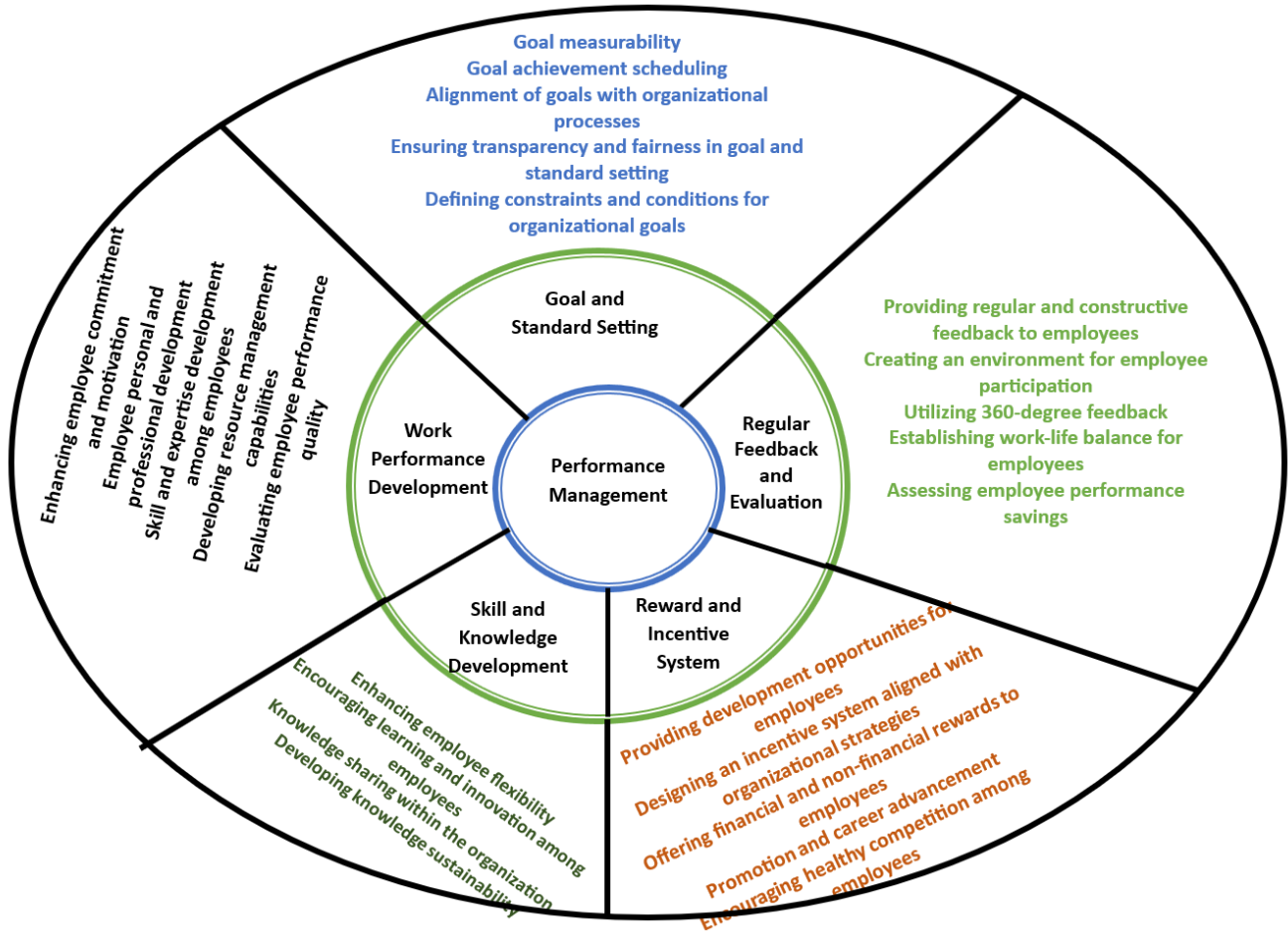
Figure 1. Final Conceptual Model

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study was conducted with the aim of designing a human resource performance model with a thematic-based strategic value development approach. Using thematic analysis, the study sought to answer the following research question: How is the human resource performance model structured with a thematic-based strategic value development approach? The thematic analysis resulted in the identification of five dimensions: goal and standard setting, work performance development, regular feedback and evaluation, reward and incentive system development, and skill and knowledge development.

In explaining the findings, it can be stated that human resource performance management is a strategic process that contributes to improving organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Regular feedback and evaluation play a crucial role in this context. Systematic feedback and performance assessment help identify employees' strengths and weaknesses, enabling managers to design appropriate training and development programs. Providing positive and constructive feedback can enhance employee motivation and reinforce their sense of value. Continuous access to performance-related information allows employees to feel that they are progressing. This finding aligns with the study by Fakhr Hosseini et al. (2023) (Fakhr Hosseini & Kaviani, 2023).

Furthermore, it can be argued that human resource performance management and work performance development have a reciprocal and vital relationship. Human resource performance management helps define clear goals and criteria for employees, ensuring that they are guided toward work performance development and understand what is expected of them. A key aspect of performance management is providing continuous feedback to employees, helping them identify their strengths and weaknesses and make necessary improvements. This finding is consistent with the study by Shafiei et al. (2023) (Shafiei & Mazroei, 2023).

Additionally, human resource performance management and skill and knowledge development are closely and mutually linked. Performance management helps identify employees' strengths and weaknesses, enabling organizations to determine training needs and develop essential skills. For instance, if evaluations indicate deficiencies in a particular area, the organization can design and implement appropriate training programs. Performance management processes typically focus on continuous improvement, providing employees with opportunities to work on new skills and capabilities. Highlighting this developmental path, particularly in feedback and evaluation sessions, can encourage employees to advance their skills. Human resource performance management can also foster an organizational culture that promotes learning and development. This finding is in line with the study by Pimenta et al. (2024) (Pimenta et al., 2024).

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that the design of a human resource performance management model with a strategic value development approach in knowledge-based companies adopt a comprehensive and adaptable framework that enhances overall organizational performance and strengthens competitive positioning. In this regard, the following suggestions are proposed:

1. Clearly define the company's key objectives and outcomes and use them as a basis for evaluating human resource performance. Establish the connection between individual and organizational goals to ensure that employees recognize the importance of their roles.
2. Implement structured and targeted training programs to enhance employee skills and knowledge in business-related and emerging technology fields. These training programs can be delivered through in-house workshops, online education, or partnerships with universities.
3. Promote a culture of continuous feedback within the organization. This culture should encourage employees to express their opinions and constructive criticisms freely while benefiting from feedback provided by others.
4. Utilize performance management tools and software to facilitate data collection, track goals, and evaluate performance. These systems can provide precise information to support strategic decision-making.

Ethical Considerations

All procedures performed in this study were under the ethical standards.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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