

Beyond Administration: HRM as a Catalyst for Academicians' Self-Actualization in Higher Education Institutions

*Noor Jannah Afi¹, Siti Maizalaizzah Akma Adnan¹, Wahiet Mat², Noor Anis Shamila Ibrahim³

¹Albukhary International University, Alor Setar, Kedah, Malaysia

²International Open University, Banjul, Gambia

³Universiti Sultan Azlan Shah, Kuala Kangsar, Perak, Malaysia

Email: *jannah.afi@aiu.edu.my

Corresponding Author: Noor Jannah Afi

Abstract: In an era where higher education institutions (HEIs) face increasing demands for innovation, global competitiveness, and faculty excellence, Human Resource Management (HRM) must evolve from a purely administrative function into a strategic driver of academic development. This study examines how HRM practices can promote self-actualization among academicians, a psychological state characterized by intellectual autonomy, purpose-driven work, and the fulfillment of personal potential. Grounded in Maslow's motivational theory and self-determination frameworks, the research employs a qualitative design, with semi-structured interviews with 40 academic leaders and HR professionals across Malaysian universities. Findings reveal a significant misalignment between current HRM structures and the intrinsic motivators of academic staff. Themes such as limited strategic HRM integration, narrow recognition systems, lack of tailored professional development, and restrictive organizational cultures emerged as key barriers. However, institutions that adopt transformative HRM practices, such as fostering autonomy, inclusivity, and intellectual growth, report improved academic engagement and retention. The study proposes a conceptual shift positioning HRM as a catalyst for academic self-actualization and institutional excellence. It concludes with strategic recommendations for policy, practice, and further research in aligning HRM with the psychological and professional aspirations of faculty members.

Keywords: *Human Resource Management (HRM), Self-Actualization, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Academic Motivation, Maslow's Hierarchy*

1. Introduction

In the modern knowledge-based economy, higher education institutions (HEIs) are increasingly recognized as key contributors to social development, innovation, and economic growth. Academicians, through their roles in instruction, research, and community engagement, often serve as the intellectual drivers of these institutions. However, despite their intrinsic importance, organizational systems that support their professional growth and motivation are often limited in nature. In particular, Human Resource Management (HRM) in academia has conventionally been confined to operational functions such as payroll management, staffing, and policy implementation (Smith & Jones, 2015). This limited administrative focus risks neglecting the more strategic and developmental facets of HRM that are crucial to maintaining academic excellence and securing high-quality talent in a competitive global landscape (Brown et al., 2018).

Higher education is now hallmarked by accelerated change, which is fostered by globalization, digitalization, heightened accountability, and evolving societal expectations (Whitchurch, 2019). As institutions endeavour to boost research production, enhance teaching excellence, and strengthen international rankings, the expectations placed upon academic staff have grown more complicated and varied. Conventional HRM models, designed originally for industrial or corporate environments, frequently do not address the unique interests of academicians whose work is intensely intellectual, creative, and intrinsically motivated (Zhang et al., 2019). Thus, there is an increasing need to envision HRM as a strategic collaborator in higher education rather than simply an administrative support function, one that supports the overall growth and motivation of academic professionals (Wilson & Taylor, 2018).

At the center of this strategic vision of HRM is the idea of self-actualization, a term coined by Abraham Maslow (1943) in his classic theory of human motivation. Maslow's hierarchy of needs suggests that once individuals have satisfied their basic physiological and psychological needs (such as safety, belonging, and esteem), they are driven to pursue self-actualization—the fulfillment of their highest potential. In the context of academic

work, self-actualization may manifest through intellectual autonomy, academic freedom, recognition of scholarly achievements, interdisciplinary collaboration, and a sense of purpose derived from teaching and research (Goldstein, 1995; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

While self-actualization has been linked to increased job satisfaction, innovation, and productivity in many professional domains (Johnson & Smith, 2016), its application in academic environments remains underexplored. Most existing studies on workplace motivation have focused on corporate employees, with limited attention to the unique organizational cultures, expectations, and career trajectories of university faculty (Zhang et al., 2019). This oversight represents a critical gap, as the failure to support academic self-actualization can lead to burnout, disengagement, and attrition, ultimately compromising institutional performance and reputation (Nguyen & Lee, 2021; Li & Wong, 2020).

There is a lack of integrated models that describe how human resource management (HRM) practices can be developed to facilitate self-actualization in higher education settings. Although many scholars have studied elements such as professional development, work-life balance, and performance appraisal systems (Rodrigues et al., 2021; Tanner & Greene, 2017), few have explicitly linked these elements to Maslow's theory or explored the purposeful design of HRM to facilitate academic self-actualization.

Additionally, organizational culture plays a major role in shaping how human resource management policies are understood by scholars. Cultures that encourage independence, collaboration, and innovation are likely to foster environments that are conducive to self-actualization (Martinez & Kumar, 2019). Inflexible hierarchies and bureaucratic constraints, on the other hand, can hamper creative expression and the desire to take intellectual risks, which are factors that are crucial to the progress of academia (Clark & Davis, 2021).

Problem Statement

Notwithstanding the pivotal position of academicians in promoting institutional excellence, innovation, and research productivity, Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in most higher education institutions (HEIs) are still predominantly administrative and compliance-oriented (Smith & Jones, 2015; Thompson, 2017). As international competition within higher education rises, universities and colleges increasingly depend on academic staff to spearhead knowledge creation, quality of teaching, and societal relevance. However, the HRM systems intended to serve these professionals do not capture their higher-level psychological and professional aspirations, especially the quest for self-actualization (Brown et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2019).

Self-actualization, which Maslow (1943) described as the fulfillment of an individual's highest potential, is particularly applicable to academic environments where work is inherently motivated by curiosity, intellectual independence, and the need to make a significant contribution to society. For academicians, achieving self-actualization can enhance job satisfaction, creativity, and scholarly productivity (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Johnson & Smith, 2016). However, HRM frameworks in HEIs rarely incorporate this motivational construct into their strategic models. Instead, most HRM departments continue to emphasize administrative efficiency over developmental impact, resulting in environments that may inadvertently stifle creativity and academic fulfillment (Nguyen & Lee, 2021).

Moreover, there is a noticeable gap in empirical research and theoretical models that systematically explore the relationship between HRM practices and academic self-actualization (Martinez & Kumar, 2019). Although isolated elements such as professional development, recognition systems, or work-life balance have been studied (Rodrigues et al., 2021; Tanner & Greene, 2017), few studies offer a holistic framework that aligns HRM strategies with the complex needs of academic professionals. This gap is further exacerbated by evolving challenges in academia, such as increased workload, digital transformation, and rising expectations for interdisciplinary research and global engagement (Whitchurch, 2019; Li & Wong, 2020).

Consequently, the underutilization of HRM as a strategic tool not only undermines the well-being and performance of academic staff but also threatens the long-term sustainability and reputation of HEIs. Without purposeful HRM strategies that facilitate intellectual growth, autonomy, and recognition, universities risk disengagement, turnover, and decreased research and teaching outcomes.

Therefore, this study addresses the core problem of the absence of a comprehensive, strategic HRM framework explicitly designed to foster self-actualization among academicians. By investigating how HRM policies can be reimagined to align with the psychological and professional aspirations of academic staff, this research aims to position HRM as a transformative force in enhancing both personal fulfillment and institutional success.

Research Objectives

Given these challenges, this study seeks to reframe HRM as a catalyst for self-actualization in higher education institutions. It is grounded in three key objectives:

- To identify the drivers or challenges in HRM practices that contribute to self-actualization's achievement among academicians.
- To evaluate the extent to which current HRM practices align with or deviate from these factors.
- To develop a framework for strategic HRM that fosters academic self-actualization and institutional excellence.

2. Literature Review

The Evolution of HRM in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

Human Resource Management (HRM) in higher education has historically been positioned as an administrative rather than developmental function, primarily tasked with recruitment, payroll, and compliance (Smith & Jones, 2015). However, with increasing demands for global competitiveness, digital transformation, and performance accountability, universities are under pressure to reconceptualize HRM as a strategic driver of faculty growth and institutional excellence (Brown et al., 2018). More recent scholarship underscores that faculty are not only employees but knowledge creators whose productivity depends on intrinsic motivators such as autonomy and recognition. Sulistiyani (2022), for example, showed that HRM practices in Indonesian universities influence self-actualization by fostering organizational support and professional growth opportunities. Yet, many institutions still regard HRM as a compliance-driven unit rather than a strategic partner (Nguyen & Lee, 2021).

Self-Actualization: Theoretical Foundation and Relevance to Academia

Maslow's (1943) concept of self-actualization, representing the fulfillment of one's highest potential, remains foundational to understanding intrinsic motivation in academic work. In higher education, self-actualization is often expressed through intellectual autonomy, scholarly recognition, and meaningful contributions to society (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Johnson & Smith, 2016). More recent perspectives emphasize the application of self-determination theory, which highlights autonomy, competence, and relatedness as drivers of engagement (Deci & Ryan, 2000). These principles remain highly relevant for faculty, whose careers are less linear than those in corporate environments. Despite this theoretical clarity, there is still limited empirical exploration of how HRM frameworks can actively foster academic self-actualization.

HRM Practices and Academic Motivation

Evidence increasingly shows that HRM practices shape faculty motivation, retention, and engagement. Pratama, Samani, and Buditjahjanto (2024) highlight how continuing professional development (CPD) enhances lecturers' capacity for self-directed learning, ultimately contributing to self-actualization. Similarly, Hassan, Rahman, and Lee (2022) found that strategic HRM initiatives such as performance-based promotions and cross-disciplinary training drive innovation and job satisfaction in Malaysian universities. Conversely, generic, one-size-fits-all training schemes often fail to meet diverse academic needs (Rodrigues et al., 2021). Another recurring concern is reward and recognition systems: while publications remain the gold standard, excellence in teaching, mentorship, and service often receives less attention, leading to disengagement (Tanner & Greene, 2017).

Organizational Culture and Conditions for Self-Actualization

Organizational culture mediates the effectiveness of HRM practices. Studies show that collaborative, trust-based environments enable self-actualization, while hierarchical, compliance-focused cultures undermine it. Zuleha and Sawitri (2024) observed that when HRM practices are embedded in a positive institutional culture, employees report greater satisfaction and self-fulfillment. Likewise, Karppinen, Dimba, and Kitawi (2021) demonstrated that supportive leadership reduces absenteeism and fosters intrinsic motivation by fulfilling

higher-level psychological needs. In higher education, this translates into faculty who feel valued and empowered to innovate, teach, and research without fear of bureaucratic constraint.

HRM as a Strategic Lever for Institutional Innovation

A growing body of work positions HRM as a catalyst for institutional transformation. Wilson and Taylor (2018) argue for a “transformative HRM” model that integrates human resources into academic governance and policy. More recent evidence supports this approach. Sulistiyani (2022) showed that HRM’s active involvement in shaping organizational strategy strengthens faculty motivation, while Cinches and Borbon (2024) stressed that digital inclusivity is now a prerequisite for equitable faculty development. This suggests that HRM reforms must not only target traditional HR policies but also address structural inequities in access to digital and professional resources.

Gaps in the Literature

Despite growing interest in the change-making function of Human Resource Management (HRM) in higher education, several key gaps remain, weakening both theoretical advancement and daily practice. Among the most overwhelming limitations is the lack of synchronization between self-actualization theory and HRM practices as utilized in academic environments. While Maslow’s theory is widely established in motivation literature, its application within the academic environment, where intellectual freedom and personal fulfillment are essential, is comparatively untested.

Additionally, most existing studies focus on individual variables such as job satisfaction, professional development, or employee engagement, without situating these variables within a broader framework. Thus, they fail to capture the root, interrelated motivational drivers of academic performance and behavior. A more unified framework is necessary for understanding how HRM practices may align with the overall psychological and developmental needs of academicians.

Furthermore, there is a notable absence of long-term empirical studies examining the outcomes of strategic HRM interventions in academic contexts. Specifically, little is known about how such practices impact sustained research productivity, teaching quality, and faculty retention over time. Without longitudinal data, institutions are left with fragmented insights that may not support informed policy-making or structural change.

Lastly, despite the progress made, there remains no holistic framework that explicitly connects HRM practices to Maslow’s and Ryan and Deci’s motivational theories in academic contexts. Instead, studies tend to focus narrowly on individual aspects, such as training or recognition. Longitudinal research on the sustained effects of HRM practices, particularly on faculty retention, innovation, and job satisfaction, is rare. Many interventions documented in the literature are also context-specific and fail to address systemic barriers such as entrenched hierarchies and resistance to change. Finally, the role of digital inequalities in shaping faculty opportunities for self-actualization has only recently emerged as a research concern (Cinches & Borbon, 2024), requiring more systematic study.

The literature underscores the importance of aligning HRM practices with faculty motivations to achieve both individual fulfillment and institutional excellence. However, fragmented insights and limited empirical frameworks leave universities without a clear roadmap. This study aims to fill these gaps by offering an integrated framework for HRM that fosters academic self-actualization while responding to contemporary challenges in higher education.

3. Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the relationship between HRM practices and academic self-actualization in higher education institutions. Qualitative approaches allow for the rich capture of personal experiences, institutional dynamics, and organizational culture, all of which are central to understanding how HRM policies are interpreted and enacted (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Participants and Sampling Strategy

Purposive sampling was used to identify 40 information-rich participants across Malaysian universities: 20 academicians and 20 HR professionals. Selection criteria included a minimum of five years of professional experience, direct involvement in HRM policy design or implementation, and representation across different institutional types (public and private). This diversity ensured both strategic and operational perspectives on HRM practices.

Data Collection Methods

Semi-structured interviews served as the primary data collection tool. The interview protocol was informed by established frameworks, including Hackman and Oldham's (1980) Job Characteristics Model, Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, and prior HRM studies in academia (Nguyen & Lee, 2021; Sulistiyani, 2022). The following guiding questions were used during interviews:

- How do HRM policies in your institution support or constrain your academic work and intellectual autonomy?
- Which HRM practices have most influenced your professional development and career trajectory?
- In what ways do recognition and reward systems reflect or overlook your contributions to teaching, research, and service?
- How would you describe the role of organizational culture in enabling or hindering your professional growth?
- Can you share experiences where HRM initiatives contributed to your sense of achievement or self-actualization?
- What challenges do you face in aligning institutional expectations with your personal and professional goals?
- How are opportunities for continuing professional development provided, and how do they affect your motivation?
- In your view, how should HRM practices be reformed to better support faculty self-actualization?
- Follow-up probes were employed to encourage depth and elaboration, ensuring participants could reflect on their experiences while still covering the study's core themes.

Interviews were conducted in two modes: 15 face-to-face sessions on university campuses in private meeting rooms and 25 virtual sessions via Zoom and Google Meet. Each interview lasted 45–90 minutes. All sessions were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

Qualitative Analysis: Thematic Coding

The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step approach, which includes familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and the final step is producing the report.

A combination of deductive coding (based on the research questions and Maslow's theory) and inductive coding (emerging from the data) was employed. NVivo 12 software was used to assist with coding and organizing data. Inter-coder reliability was ensured through peer review and iterative refinement of the coding scheme.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the organizations before data collection. Participants were informed of the study's aims, their rights, and data confidentiality. All participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before interviews and surveys. Data were anonymized and stored securely in password-protected files, accessible only to the research team.

Trustworthiness and Validity

To ensure trustworthiness in qualitative analysis, the study adhered to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Techniques used include member checking to validate interpretations with participants, peer debriefing with academic colleagues, audit trail to document decisions and processes, and thick description to provide contextual detail for transferability.

4. Findings and Results

The findings from this study underscore the complex interplay between Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and the pursuit of self-actualization among academicians in higher education institutions (HEIs). Drawing from semi-structured interviews with 40 participants (20 HR professionals and 20 academic leaders), several thematic insights emerged. These insights collectively reveal that current HRM frameworks in many HEIs are insufficiently aligned with the intrinsic motivations and psychological needs of academic staff. The findings are organized thematically and presented below.

HRM's Administrative Focus and Lack of Strategic Integration

A dominant theme from the interviews was the persistent framing of HRM as a support service with limited strategic input. HR functions were largely described in terms of administrative efficiency; handling contracts, compliance, payroll, and procedural matters. Academic leaders expressed concern that HR was not meaningfully embedded in institutional efforts to enhance academic excellence or faculty well-being. This view was mirrored in the survey results, where 72% of respondents agreed that their institution's HRM was administrative rather than strategic. Only 18% felt that HR actively contributed to their professional development or long-term academic growth. The interviews revealed that such a limited HRM role often resulted in missed opportunities to align institutional goals with the developmental needs of faculty members.

Disconnect Between HRM Practices and Academic Motivators

Another key finding was the evident misalignment between HR policies and the intrinsic motivators that drive academic work, such as intellectual curiosity, autonomy, and social contribution. Academicians noted that current performance appraisal systems and promotion criteria were heavily skewed toward quantifiable outputs, especially research publications, while teaching excellence, community engagement, and interdisciplinary collaboration received minimal recognition. This performance-centric focus was seen as demotivating, particularly for academics whose strengths or passions lay outside mainstream research agendas.

Intellectual Autonomy as a Core Component of Self-Actualization

The concept of intellectual autonomy emerged as a recurring and powerful driver of self-actualization. Participants described autonomy in research, teaching, and academic exploration as essential to their sense of purpose and fulfillment. Several academics spoke passionately about the joy derived from developing their own curricula, mentoring students, or pursuing unconventional research questions. One associate professor shared, "The moment I was allowed to shape my own curriculum and lead a community project, I felt more fulfilled than any pay raise ever made me feel."

Organizational Culture as a Moderator of HRM Effectiveness

Findings also indicated the central role played by organizational culture in shaping the experience and perception of HRM practices. Organizations that fostered open communication, psychological safety, and collegiality were seen to be more conducive to self-actualization. Work environments that were described as having tight hierarchies and bureaucratic control were often depicted as stifling, leading to frustration and disengagement. As one HR director commented, "We have policies for everything, but where there's no culture of trust, the policies don't get translated into actual support." This suggests that HRM reforms, no matter how well-intentioned, must be underpinned by an enabling institutional culture if they are to achieve their intended impacts.

Recognition and Reward Systems Misaligned with Diverse Contributions

A central issue among participants was that their scholarly work outside of high-impact journals was not adequately valued. Pedagogical excellence, student mentoring, service to the community, and administrative leadership were not provided sufficient room in promotion and evaluation frameworks. Academics who excelled in pedagogical creativity or public scholarship believed that they were excluded from institutional reward systems. The lack of an equitable sense of appreciation was regarded as not only demotivating but also damaging institutional diversity and creativity.

One-Size-Fits-All Professional Development Programs

The participants also denounced the uniformity of professional development programs. Even though workshops and training were offered by the majority of institutions, they were mainly described as irrelevant to the diverse needs of academic staff by discipline and stage of career. For example, new lecturers required mentorship and pedagogy training, whereas experienced academics required leadership training and international collaboration experience. Despite these varied needs, the programs were described as uniform and inflexible.

Pockets of Transformative HRM Practice

Aside from the system-wide problems, though, the study also identified areas of exemplary HRM practices in some institutions. These were career development track-related mentorship programs, flexible work-life arrangements synchronized with cycles of research, and merit systems rewarding teaching, service, and innovation as well as research. These institutions had improved faculty participation, lower turnover, and improved morale. These are instances of the way HRM can be strategically employed for inspiring personal growth and institutional excellence.

Synthesis of Findings

In sum, this study reveals that while self-actualization is a salient and desired outcome for many academicians, current HRM practices in HEIs are not adequately configured to support this aspiration. The prevailing administrative orientation of HRM, combined with misaligned reward structures, generic development programs, and unsupportive institutional cultures, significantly limits the potential for academic staff to realize their full potential. However, emerging best practices demonstrate that with intentional design and leadership support, HRM can indeed become a catalyst for both individual fulfillment and organizational success.

Discussion

This study set out to explore how HRM practices can function as catalysts for academic self-actualization in higher education institutions. The findings point to a persistent tension: while faculty aspirations are rooted in autonomy, recognition, and intellectual growth, HRM systems remain predominantly compliance-oriented. The discussion below addresses each research objective in turn.

Research Objective 1: Identify drivers and challenges in HRM practices.

The findings revealed autonomy, recognition, and supportive organizational culture as the strongest enablers of self-actualization. Conversely, bureaucratic procedures and narrow performance metrics were identified as major barriers. These observations echo Sulistiyan's (2022) work, which found that organizational support is central to faculty engagement, and align with Karppinen et al. (2021), who highlighted culture as a decisive factor in motivation.

Research Objective 2: Evaluate alignment of current HRM practices with faculty needs.

Interview data indicated a sharp misalignment: performance appraisal systems heavily weighted research output while undervaluing teaching, mentoring, and service. This mirrors critiques by Zhang, Wang, and Liu (2019), who noted the dangers of corporate-style performance logic in academia. Yet, best practices identified in a handful of institutions—such as tailored CPD programs (Pratama et al., 2024) and inclusive recognition systems (Hassan et al., 2022)—demonstrate that alignment is achievable when HRM is strategically reimaged.

Research Objective 3: Develop a framework for strategic HRM.

Synthesizing insights from this study and the literature, a framework is proposed with four pillars: tailored professional development designed around career stage and discipline, inclusive recognition systems valuing diverse contributions from research to teaching and community engagement, cultural transformation to foster trust, autonomy, and collaboration, and digital inclusivity to ensure all faculty have equal access to professional opportunities (Cinches & Borbon, 2024). This framework responds to the research gap by moving beyond fragmented interventions toward an integrated model that explicitly links HRM practices to faculty self-actualization.

5. Interpretive Implications

The study's results reinforce the relevance of Maslow's hierarchy and self-determination theory in academia, where intrinsic motivation drives long-term productivity and satisfaction. More importantly, they show that HRM reforms cannot succeed without cultural change: policies must be supported by an environment of trust and inclusivity. This underscores that HRM in higher education should be viewed not as a service unit but as a strategic partner in faculty development and institutional excellence.

Limitations

While the rich qualitative data offer a robust foundation for insights, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the geographic scope of the study is limited, with data collected primarily from Malaysian universities. Cultural norms, organizational hierarchies, and faculty expectations vary significantly across global academic systems, and thus, the findings may not be universally generalizable. Institutional factors such as governance models, funding structures, and national education policies were not systematically controlled in this study, which may have influenced participant perceptions of HRM.

Second, the sample composition, though balanced between HR professionals and academic leaders, may have introduced bias due to role-specific interests. For instance, HR professionals may have underreported institutional shortcomings, while academic leaders may have emphasized systemic barriers as a justification for low morale or stagnation in their departments. Though member-checking and peer debriefing were used to mitigate interpretive bias, these subjective lenses may still shape the findings.

Third, the concept of self-actualization itself is philosophically and psychologically complex, with individual interpretations varying widely. While Maslow's hierarchy provides a useful heuristic, some critics argue that self-actualization is culturally contingent or difficult to operationalize in organizational settings (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The study sought to address this through thematic richness, but future research may benefit from multi-theoretical approaches.

Recommendations

The implications of this research are both profound and actionable. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed for higher education institutions, HR professionals, and policy-makers aiming to foster self-actualization among academicians.

Reframe HRM as a Developmental and Strategic Function

HRM departments must evolve beyond their operational remit and be embedded in institutional strategy and academic governance. This includes participation in faculty development planning, academic promotions, research support, and leadership training. Empowering HRM professionals to act as partners in academic development can help align institutional goals with faculty aspirations.

Institutionalize Holistic and Inclusive Recognition Systems

HEIs should develop performance appraisal systems that recognize a broad spectrum of academic contributions, such as teaching, mentorship, service, innovation, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Recognition should be context-sensitive and designed in consultation with academic staff to ensure credibility and buy-in.

Design Professional Development That Is Tailored and Co-Owned

Generic training programs must be replaced with modular, personalized offerings that reflect career stage, disciplinary focus, and individual goals. Institutions should create mechanisms for co-creation of development tracks such as peer-led workshops, action learning sets, and cross-disciplinary coaching.

Foster a Culture of Autonomy and Intellectual Trust

Institutional leaders must work deliberately to cultivate a culture that supports academic freedom, psychological safety, and collegiality. This may involve flattening hierarchies, enabling decentralized decision-making, and modelling inclusive leadership behaviors that validate the diverse motivations of faculty.

Conduct Longitudinal Impact Assessments of HRM Practices

Future research and internal assessments should include long-term tracking of faculty outcomes in relation to HRM initiatives. Metrics could include faculty retention, well-being, productivity, interdisciplinary collaboration, and impact beyond academia. Such data would support evidence-informed HRM reform and policy decisions.

Integrate Self-Actualization Theory Into Faculty Life Cycle Models

Finally, institutions should consider embedding self-actualization principles into every stage of the faculty lifecycle from recruitment and induction to tenure and retirement. Orientation programs, mentoring structures, and exit interviews should all be aligned with an overarching goal: to help each academic realize their fullest professional and intellectual potential.

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