



Research article

The effect of human resource development practice on employee performance with the mediating role of job satisfaction among Mizan Tepi University's academic staff in Southwestern Ethiopia



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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study examined the effect of human resource development practices on employee performance, with job satisfaction as a mediating variable among academic staff at Mizan Tepi University.

Methods: A standardized Likert-scale questionnaire was administered to academic staff members selected through stratified random sampling from eight colleges at Mizan Tepi University. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including a structural equation model and t-tests, were used for data analysis.

Results: The study found a significant positive correlation between human resource development practices and employee performance. Job satisfaction was identified as a mediator between HRM practices and employee performance. Specific dimensions of human resource development practices, such as training and development, academic career development, teamwork spirit, and counseling, had significant effects on employee performance, with both positive and negative impacts observed. Additionally, academic career development, succession planning, and counseling were found to have a statistically significant positive effect on the academic staff at Mizan Tepi University.

Conclusions: This study found that training and development, academic career development, teamwork, counseling, and job satisfaction significantly impact employee performance. The results of the regression analysis using the SEM model revealed that job satisfaction, training and development, and teamwork positively affect academic staff performance while negatively affecting academic career development and counseling. Academic career development, teamwork, counseling, and succession planning were found to have a positive effect on job satisfaction. The mediation analysis indicated that academic career development and counseling partially mediate employee performance, while succession planning fully mediates it. Therefore, focusing on training and development, performance appraisal, rewards, teamwork, academic career development, succession planning, and counseling is essential to enhancing job satisfaction among academic staff at Mizan Tepi University.

1. Introduction

A framework for increasing human capital inside an organization by developing the company and its employees to boost

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performance is known as human resource development [1]. Through planned learning activities, human resource development practices create essential competencies that people in companies need to accomplish their present and future roles. Consequently, the concept of HR development has emerged as a strategy to enhance the capacity of existing employees in organizations to perform their duties efficiently. Human resource development (HRD) practices apply to various types of organizations within the business sector that use HRD to initiate and manipulate exchanges that include knowledge sharing, skill development, information transfer, collaboration, feedback, or mentorship. HRD also guarantees a healthy balance between the desires of individual employees and those of the entire organization [1]. According to published studies [2], the foundation of human resource development is the enhancement of organizational performance through the work and skills of people. It seeks to enhance the accomplishment of the purposes and objectives of an organization. The main aim of HRD is to prepare employees to work in the current environment to the best of their abilities and to develop these abilities in preparation for upcoming challenges. Training and development programs create awareness to contribute to employee effectiveness, job performance, and overall organizational success among employees through the use of new technologies [3]. According to Ref. [4], one of the vital traits in the field of HRD is the focus on work-based training, or what may often be referred to as informal education techniques. To accomplish their objectives, organizations must improve the skills and capacities of their workforce by supporting individual training and creating settings where knowledge may be generated, shared, and used by a variety of stakeholders as well as by individual workers. According to Ref. [5], the relationship and impact of HRD practices on job satisfaction indicate that the HRD climate has a definite impact on job satisfaction, which in turn leads to increased organizational performance. They studied the impact of HRD on the job satisfaction of employees in selected public sector enterprises and subsequently studied the impact of HRD on employees and organizational performance. According to Ref. [6], there is a significant relationship between the HRD environment and job performance, and any positive change in the HRD environment will bring about positive changes in job performance. The HRD climate refers to the overall environment, culture, and practices within an organization that support and promote human resource development. HRD practices are the primary way organizations attempt to maintain the competency levels of their employees, thus increasing their performance levels. Ineffective HRD practices can result in various problems, such as a reduction in employees' ability to develop and apply new skills, a decrease in staff productivity, an increase in employee turnover, and lower overall performance levels within organizations [7]. Problems relating to HRD result from HRD programs failing to address organizational and staff needs. When HRD initiatives are carried out effectively, they may boost productivity and save costs associated with personnel turnover, services, strikes, and losses. HRD plays a vital role in improving job performance and overall organizational effectiveness. Some studies have addressed current HRD practices as an HRM issue. For example, new-entry academic staff, especially those who receive training in SPSS, STATA, and SEM and who have skill gaps, will be more effective as a result of HRD practices. This means that they are better equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge, abilities, and competencies to perform their job tasks successfully and contribute to organizational effectiveness because the formal educational system does not adequately teach specific job skills for a position in a particular organization, so such employees will not have the requisite skills, knowledge, abilities, and competencies needed to perform a specific job. As a result, HRD activities are required to enhance their performance and to help them make substantive contributions to the organization's growth. However, inefficient HRD practices can lead to many problems, such as reduced employee enthusiasm for learning and applying new skills, decreased employee productivity, low morale, and higher employee turnover rates [8]. One of the most prominent and well-respected jobs in the world is teaching. Teachers are national thinkers and developers [9]. Teachers, as developers, are involved in recognizing their role in shaping individuals intellectually, socially, emotionally, morally, and ethically. Teachers are not only responsible for imparting subject knowledge but also for fostering personal growth, lifelong learning, and the development of responsible citizens. The availability of dedicated, skilled instructors is vital to helping students develop a solid educational foundation. These students will go on to make numerous contributions to the country. Teaching is a passionate career that involves a wide range of responsibilities in both the classroom and the greater school community. As a result, becoming a teacher does not immediately make someone a professional teacher; instead, one must constantly pursue training, motivation, counseling, and other needs.

Human resource development practice is an important way in which groups try to maintain competency ranges in their human resources and increase their overall performance. The unusable and incapable practice of HRD can result in various problems, including decreased employee potential to expand and apply new capabilities, a lower level of personnel productivity, a boom in worker turnover, and low overall performance in organizations. Problems in HRD are created as a result of HRD programs failing to address organizational and staff needs. HRD is an important tool for reinforcing activity-related overall performance and organizational effectiveness. According to Ref. [10], the root of this problem is based on the role of HR practices such as training and development, reward, job analysis, social support, recruitment and selection, employee relationships and empowerment, and employee satisfaction in employee performance.

Mizan Tepi University (MTU) does not have a dedicated Human Resource Training and Development department to manage its HRD practices and administer training and development programs for its academic staff. However, the university does send selected staff abroad for short-term training.

To assess HRD practices and their impact on employee performance at MTU, a researcher aims to investigate the mediating role of job satisfaction. This study is particularly important as there is a lack of empirical studies on this topic in Ethiopian universities, especially about the mediating variable of job satisfaction. The researcher hopes to contribute to the existing literature and highlight the relevance of the study's outcomes for MTU and other similar public organizations.

The researcher believes that HRD practices play a very important role in fostering cooperation, commitment, and job satisfaction among employees. However, there is a gap in the literature regarding HRD practices in public sector universities in Ethiopia, making this study significant. The study aims to examine how HRD policies, processes, and strategies impact employee performance, with job satisfaction acting as a mediating variable.

By investigating the relationship between HRD practices, job satisfaction, and employee performance at MTU, this study aims to fill the gaps in the existing literature and contribute to a better understanding of HRD practices in Ethiopian universities. The researcher hopes that the findings of this study will be relevant and beneficial to MTU, the Ministry of Education, and other similar public organizations.

- Analyze the significant difference in academic staff performance and job satisfaction based on gender.
- Examine the relationship between HRD practices, job satisfaction, and employee performance to enhance university effectiveness.
- Investigate the effects of HRD practices and job satisfaction on employee performance.
- Explore the effect of HRD practices on job satisfaction.
- Analyze the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between HRD practices and MTU academic staff performance.

2. Literature review and hypothesis development

2.1. HR practices and employee job performance

Human resource management is increasingly recognized for its contribution to organizational performance, particularly in the public sector [11]. In today's globalized world, organizations must develop effective policies and practices to maximize employee job performance, enhance productivity, and gain a competitive edge [12–14]. Employee job performance refers to measurable behaviors performed within the workplace that yield outcomes [15]. HRM practices, such as recruitment and selection, training and development, performance evaluation, rewards, and compensation, have been widely studied in Western countries for gaining a competitive advantage, but their impact in the context of Pakistan is inconclusive [15]. Previous research on the relationship between HRM practices and employee job performance has produced mixed results. Some studies have shown a negative relationship [16], while others have found a weak or positive relationship [17–20], and [13]. However, the direct effect of HRM practices on employees' job performance has been underexplored [21]. Researchers categorize HR practices into various categories: hiring and selection, job definition, performance review, remuneration, employee involvement, and training and development. They hypothesize that if these HRD practices are implemented correctly, they will boost employee commitment and satisfaction while also improving individual and organizational performance [21]. Studies in various organizational settings, including high-tech industrial parks, banking sectors, and universities, have shown that HRM practices such as recruitment and selection, compensation, performance appraisal, and training and development positively affect employee job performance and productivity [22–25], and [26]. Based on the existing literature, the following hypotheses are proposed for validation in the target population.

H1. There exists a significant and positive association between HR practices and the job performance of employees.

2.2. Training and development and employee job performance

Training and development play a very important role in equipping employees with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities, and they also influence their behaviors and attitudes to enhance their present and future performance [27]. It is an essential tool that contributes to improved performance at both the individual and organizational levels [28,29]. Organizations recognize its significance as it not only enhances employees' skills, attitudes, and behaviors [28] but also enables them to adapt to new technologies, thereby increasing the overall efficiency of individuals and organizations [30]. Previous research conducted in industrial-organizational settings has demonstrated a positive relationship between training and development and employee job performance [31,32]. However, the majority of these investigations have mainly emphasized industrial-organizational contexts [30,33], while less attention has been given to such relationships in the higher education sector [28]. Therefore, it is vital to validate these findings in the target population. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H2. There is a significant and positive relationship between training and development and employee job performance.

2.3. Performance appraisals and employee job performance

Performance appraisal is a method used to assess and enhance employees' job performance, aligning it with organizational goals and objectives [23]. Its purpose is to evaluate employees' performance, improve productivity, and subsequently enhance individual and organizational performance [34]. The primary objective of performance appraisal is to improve individual performance by setting standards, promoting motivation, identifying training and development needs, and establishing a positive correlation with employee job performance [35]. Fair performance appraisal, as indicated by Ref. [34], enhances employees' job performance and positively influences organizational performance. Conversely, ineffective performance appraisals can lead to low morale, frustration, and dissatisfaction among employees, as suggested by Ref. [23]. According to Ref. [36], performance appraisal, along with complementary HRM practices such as training and development and compensation, significantly impacts employee productivity. Existing literature indicates a significant positive relationship between performance appraisal and employee job performance [15,37], and [38]. Based on the existing literature, the following hypothesis is proposed for validation in the target population.

H3. There is a significant and positive relationship between performance appraisals and employee job performance.

2.4. Monetary and non-monetary reward and employee performance

Managers strive to create a motivating environment where employees can perform optimally to achieve organizational objectives. In this regard, both monetary and non-monetary incentives are used as workplace motivators. Monetary incentives, as noted by Ref. [39], tend to promote compliance rather than risk-taking, as they primarily rely on performance-based rewards. However, they may discourage creativity and be used to compensate for poor management. Monetary incentives often serve as extrinsic motivators, driving employees to act solely for monetary reward rather than intrinsic motivation. This can lead to a shift from a cooperative work environment to a competitive one, impacting relationships among employees [40].

Instead [41], suggests that the addition of financial rewards to employee compensation can attract motivated individuals to an organization. Similarly [42], states that monetary rewards can increase employees' extra efforts when the marginal value added is equal to the marginal cost of the additional work. This demonstrates that financial incentives provide compensation for employees' additional contributions. Additionally [42], highlights a positive relationship between employee engagement, rewards, and firm performance. Group- or team-based incentives, according to Ref. [43], can enhance knowledge creation, knowledge transfer, and knowledge acquisition. Non-monetary rewards are preferred by well-educated individuals, as stated by Ref. [44]. Profit-sharing bonuses, in particular, are often met with skepticism, as employees may doubt their actual payout [45]. Despite evidence of the motivational impact of intrinsic rewards on employee job performance, many managers still prioritize financial incentives [46]. Bonuses or additional payments are highly valued by employees and can serve as motivation to remain engaged in their jobs and stay with the company. However, according to Ref. [46], other incentives such as participation in decision-making, financial allowances, promotions, and medical assistance are also vital for employee work engagement and job satisfaction. Verbal appraisals and letters of thanks, as well as financial allowances for work in distant areas, are less sought after and less motivational. Non-monetary incentives have a deeper and longer-term effect on motivation compared to monetary incentives, as they fulfill various psychological needs [47]. These incentives are highly visible and hold significant value as trophies, resulting in higher utility for employees. The study by Ref. [48] further supports this argument by calculating the trophy value index of non-monetary incentives, which revealed that employees derive long-term enjoyment, pride, respect, and recognition from such rewards. Based on the literature discussed above, the following hypothesis is proposed for validation in the target population.

H4. Both monetary and non-monetary rewards demonstrate a significant and positive correlation with employee job performance.

2.5. Academic career development and employee performance

The quality of an organization's workforce is very important for its long-term success, as highlighted by Ref. [49]. Employees are valuable assets and play a vital role in the organization's achievements. To maximize job performance, it becomes imperative for organizations to provide better training and development opportunities to enhance the capabilities of their employees. Although human capital management practices are generally associated with employee satisfaction and performance, career development programs are often underutilized by many organizations as a means to improve employee performance. Research indicates that career growth opportunities significantly influence employee-organizational relationships. Career development programs are designed to bridge the gap between current performance and expected future performance [50]. Organizations utilize various activities, techniques, and programs to support employees' career advancement, which helps strike a balance between individual needs (such as job security, development, and promotion) and organizational needs (such as employee loyalty, trust, and commitment) [51]. Performance is closely linked to factors such as ability, opportunity, and motivation [52]. Employees, being the key components of an organization, have a significant impact on its success or failure through their performance. Modern employees are increasingly conscious of their career development and have higher expectations in terms of fulfillment, personal growth, and satisfaction in their work. The achievement of professional development within an organization also represents a higher level of need satisfaction [53]. Based on the literature discussed above, the following hypothesis is proposed for validation in the target population.

H5. There exists a significant and positive association between academic career development and employee job performance.

2.6. Teamwork spirit and employee performance

In the context of teamwork and employee performance, this study seeks to investigate the influence of several team components on employees' job performance, including the abilities of team members, team spirit (*esprit de corps*), team trust, as well as recognition and rewards. According to Ref. [54], when employees receive support from upper-level management and work confidently in teams, their productivity increases. Additionally [55], suggests that teamwork encourages employees to utilize their knowledge, skills, and capabilities while collaborating with their colleagues, ultimately improving overall organizational performance. Previous research has also indicated a significant positive effect of teamwork on employee performance [55]. In Malaysia, a study conducted in a public sector organization [56] measured the impact of effective teamwork on employee performance using predictors such as communication, interpersonal skills, team cohesiveness, and accountability. Similarly, a study carried out in Bonny, Nigeria [57], examined the relationship between teamwork, motivation, commitment, and increased employee productivity. These studies have identified a gap, which motivates the present study to investigate how team members' abilities, trust among team members, team spirit, recognition, and rewards can enhance team performance in an organization. Another study [54] focused on the effect of teamwork on employee performance within the higher education department of Khyber Pakhtoon Khawa, Peshawar Province, Pakistan. The descriptive survey conducted in this study revealed a statistically significant and positive correlation between teamwork and employee

performance. Similarly, a study conducted at an entertainment company in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia [56], explored the impact of effective teamwork on employee performance. The results revealed that efficient communication, trust, leadership, and accountability positively and significantly influenced employee performance, while intrapersonal skills and cohesiveness did not. Based on the literature discussed above, the following hypothesis is proposed for validation in the target population.

H6. Teamwork spirit is significantly and positively related to employee job performance.

2.7. Succession planning and employee performance

Human capital plays a very important role in organizations' long-term success [58]. Succession planning is an effective technique for developing human capital, as it involves identifying, recognizing, preparing, and establishing a group of employees to meet future organizational needs. The objective of succession planning, as stated by Ref. [59], is to explore individual efficiency and effectiveness in achieving organizational objectives. By creating a pool of skilled individuals, succession planning helps address the issue of inappropriate employee selection. Additionally, it can provide a competitive advantage by ensuring uninterrupted customer service in the event of sudden employee resignations [60]. Studies have shown that succession planning improves employees' professional development, which subsequently enhances their performance [61]. Furthermore, research has found that succession planning significantly reduces turnover intentions among banking employees [62], improves employee satisfaction [63], and serves as a critical driver of organizational and leadership renewal [64]. According to Ref. [65], employee performance is characterized by work-related outcomes or actions that demonstrate how effectively they carry out their tasks. In the healthcare sector, the presence of succession planning has been demonstrated to positively impact hospital financial performance [58]. Transparency in succession planning has also been found to contribute to sustainable organizational performance, talent optimization, and the development of individuals for leadership roles [66]. It can be argued that succession management practices, such as training and development, enhance employee performance [67]. Succession planning is directed towards identifying high-potential employees with the objective of maximizing their performance and equipping them for future leadership roles within the organization [58]. Furthermore, succession planning builds talented leaders, enhances individual and organizational performance [68], and boosts employees' confidence during leadership transitions [69]. Based on the literature discussed above, the following hypothesis is proposed for validation in the target population.

H7. There is a strong and positive correlation between succession planning and employee job performance.

2.8. Counseling and employee performance

Workplace counseling has emerged as a valuable tool in HRD for attracting and retaining top talent and enhancing the quality of care provided [70]. In today's fast-paced world, almost every organization faces various work-related challenges that can lead to anxiety, such as meeting deadlines, achieving targets, balancing personal and family commitments, or dealing with personal difficulties. Universities, for example, can gain a competitive advantage over the corporate world by embracing employee counseling to enhance performance. Through "personal counseling," universities can monitor, evaluate, and address poor performance by addressing psychological, emotional, and related concerns. According to Ref. [71], personnel and human resource managers are well-suited to provide workplace counseling by integrating counseling skills into their roles. This grants them the credibility to offer such services. Group counseling, as described by Ref. [72], involves one person seeking help and another professionally trained individual helping them resolve issues and progress toward their personal growth and development goals. Counseling services are necessary for individuals experiencing developmental issues caused by genetic factors or environmental conditions affecting their emotional well-being. Workplace counseling has become increasingly prevalent, with over 75 % of medium and large organizations in Britain and North America offering counseling services to their employees [73]. A review of research on the outcomes of workplace counseling [74] identified 34 reasons based on controlled studies, naturalistic studies with pre- and post-counseling data, and case studies. Universities can make a substantial impact on improving employee performance by implementing counseling programs. An employee's perception of counseling and the university's attitude towards it will determine how effectively they are assisted in facing life challenges. Organized counseling can help employees address personal challenges. By establishing counseling services within the organization, issues can be identified and resolved more promptly. Skilled counselors or psychotherapists can provide counseling services within the organization. A study on the effectiveness of workplace counseling in enhancing employee well-being (organizational pressure, burnout, and depression) and performance [75] found that workplace counseling improved employee well-being, helping them alleviate workplace stress, burnout, and depression symptoms. Based on the literature discussed above, the following hypothesis is proposed for validation in the target population.

H8. Counseling is significantly and positively related to employee job performance.

2.9. HRD practices and job satisfaction

The effect of HRD practices on job performance and job satisfaction has been a subject of global interest for the past 25 years [76]. HRD practices are known to play a very important role in increasing employee job performance to achieve organizational goals and objectives [77]. Previous discussions regarding the outcomes of HRD practices suggest that they contribute to increasing employee confidence, motivation, and satisfaction, leading to greater engagement and commitment to their jobs [78]. Similarly [37], argued that

a well-defined and implemented approach to HRD practices is essential for achieving high job satisfaction and, subsequently, high job performance.

Job satisfaction refers to the emotional experience or evaluation of one's job. It reflects employees' perceptions and feelings toward their work [79]. Organizations have recognized the importance of ensuring job satisfaction by implementing various HRD practices. According to Ref. [79], in today's highly competitive global business environment, organizations need to adopt effective HRD practices that enhance employee job satisfaction, which offers several advantages for the organization. Existing studies have provided evidence of a favorable association between HRD practices and job satisfaction [78]. Researchers have also emphasized the impact of human resource development practices on organizational performance through employee behavior and attitudes, such as job satisfaction, motivation, and commitment [80,81]. HRD practices influence employee behavior based on social exchange theory [82] and signaling theory [83]. Based on the literature discussed above, the following hypothesis is proposed for validation in the target population.

H9. Job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between HRD practices and employee job performance.

2.10. Mediating the role of job satisfaction between HRD practices and employee performance

Job satisfaction has a positive impact on employee behavior, leading to increased commitment, performance, loyalty, and engagement while reducing turnover rates, accidents, grievances, tardiness, and absenteeism [84]. Job satisfaction plays a mediating role in positively influencing employee performance [30]. Therefore, human resource practices are an important aspect of job satisfaction that motivates employees to enhance their performance [85]. Managers must pay close attention to the way they implement HRD practices to achieve a high level of satisfaction, which in turn encourages employees to exert greater effort. Various empirical studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between HRD practices and job satisfaction, with job satisfaction acting as a mediator between HRD practices and different outcomes, although not specifically performance [30,86]. Previous research has established direct relationships between HRD practices and job satisfaction, as well as between HRD practices and employee job performance [76]. In this study, I propose that effective, fair, unbiased, sufficient, and comprehensive HRD practices such as training and development, performance appraisal, rewards, teamwork, academic career development, succession planning, and counseling, when implemented in universities, can lead to employee satisfaction and subsequent performance enhancement. However, this study aims to investigate the mediating effect of job satisfaction. The researcher will integrate both subjects into a single framework to empirically explore the degree to which job satisfaction mediates the relationship in the target population.

3. Methods

3.1. Study design, area, and period

In this study, a combination of descriptive and explanatory research designs was employed. Data were collected from December 1 to 30, 2023. The survey was conducted with Mizan-Tepi University academic staff (MTUAS), which is located in Mizan-Aman in the South Western People's Region (SWPR). Mizan-Tepi University (MTU) is a well-established university in the Southwest People's Region of Ethiopia.

3.2. Sample size determination and sampling technique

This study focused on the effect of human resource development practices on employees' performance, with the mediating role of job satisfaction among Mizan Tepi University academic staff; the target population for the study was academic staff. Therefore, currently, the university has around 2178 academic staff. Using Yamane's (1967) sample size determination formula, 338 sample representatives were selected.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

where N is the population size, n is the sample size, and e is the acceptable sampling error.

Study participants were selected using stratified random sampling to select representatives based on college stratification. Then, using simple random sampling, respondents were selected from each segment.

3.3. Data collection tool and procedure

Data were collected using a pretested, self-administered questionnaire. The choice of a questionnaire on a Likert scale was justified due to its widespread use in social science research and the ability to efficiently collect data from a large sample. The questionnaire was designed on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree [1] to strongly agree [5]. The study participants were asked to answer questions related to the effect of human resource development practices on employee performance and the mediating role of job satisfaction among Mizan Tepi University academic staff. To ensure the validity of the study tool and its use in the study setting, a pilot study was conducted with 20 randomly selected academic staff members. Finally, 20 randomly selected academic staff members were excluded from the study. The completeness and consistency of the collected data were checked during the data collection. The reliability of the analysis of the collected data was determined using Cronbach's alpha test, where the reliability coefficients

(Cronbach's alpha) were 0.863, 0.843, 0.713, 0.727, 0.759, 0.842, 0.931, 0.881, and 0.715 for Training and Development, Performance Appraisal, Reward, Academic Career Development, Teamwork Spirit, Succession Planning, Counseling, Job Satisfaction, and Employee Performance, respectively, and Cronbach's alpha for the total was 0.80. The pilot study ensured the questionnaire's validity and relevance to the study setting. Moreover, the reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha demonstrated the internal consistency of the questionnaire items.

3.3.1. Human resource development (HRD) surveys

To measure HRD variables, the researcher adopted a questionnaire adapted from Ref. [87] to measure management support for HRD. Responses were recorded on a Likert-type scale consisting of five points, with 1 representing strong disagreement and 5 representing strong agreement. Dimension 1: The researcher adopted [88] to measure the sense of training and development. Cronbach's alpha for attitude training and development was 0.897. Dimension 2: To measure the second dimension, performance appraisal, the researcher adopted the measurement in Ref. [89]. Cronbach's alpha for attitude performance appraisal was 0.72. Dimension 3: To measure the third dimension, monetary and non-monetary rewards, the researcher adopted the [90] measurement. Cronbach's alpha for attitude performance appraisal was 0.78. Dimension 4: To measure the fourth academic dimension, the career development program was measured using a career development scale developed in Ref. [91] to fit the context in which the researcher wanted to measure a career development program. According to Ref. [92], this scale was used to examine the impact of organizational training on employee development and performance in the hotel industry in Lahore, Pakistan. They used this scale to measure the level of career development programs (T&D) offered to employees by an organization. The scale has an alpha value of 0.73. Dimension 5: To measure the fifth dimension, teamwork spirit, the researcher adopted Janet's measurement. Cronbach's alpha for attitude performance appraisal was 0.81. Dimension 6: The sixth dimension, a nine-item scale [93], was used to measure succession planning. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability estimate for the scale was 0.82. Dimension 7: To measure the sense of counseling, the researcher adopted a measurement method [94]. The Cronbach's alpha for attitude training and development was 0.72.

3.3.2. Employee performance surveys

To measure employee performance variables, the researcher adopted the questionnaire developed in Ref. [95]. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert-type scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. It has ten items, and a sample of them states, "I conscientiously follow university regulations and procedures" and "I complete my job in time." The Cronbach's alpha for attitude training and development was 0.897.

3.3.3. Job satisfaction surveys

To measure job satisfaction, the researcher adopted the seven-item General Satisfaction Scale of Taylor and Bowers [96], a 7-item scale, to measure the job satisfaction level of the respondent on a five-point Likert-type scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. The sample of the items is "I am satisfied with the person in my work group" and "I never thought to leave this organization even though the condition of this company is not suitable". The internal consistency and reliability of job satisfaction were evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which yielded a value of 0.87.

3.4. Data processing and analysis

Statistical analysis in this study was conducted using SPSS software, specifically version 24.0. SPSS software was used for descriptive and inferential statistics, such as mean and percentage, and STATA 16.0 was used for structural equation modeling and covariance analysis. The association pathways were modeled using AMOS 24.0. Additionally, I utilized t-tests to explore gender differences in job satisfaction and employee performance. T-tests are appropriate for comparing means between two groups and helped identify statistically significant disparities between male and female academic staff perceptions. Because SEM and t-tests were appropriate for answering the research questions, their use was justified. SEM allowed for the examination of complex relationships and the mediating role of job satisfaction, while t-tests facilitated the identification of gender differences in job satisfaction and employee performance. The correlation results for HRD practices, employee performance, and job satisfaction were analyzed using a structural equation model. The model was considered to be well-fitted if the validation indices had a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of less than 0.06, a standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) of 0.09, a non-normed fit index (NNFI), a Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) > 0.90, and a comparative fit index (CFI).

3.5. Ethics, approval, and consent to participate

The ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki were strictly adhered to during the course of this study. The Research and Community Service Directorate of Mizan-Tepi University granted ethical approval for this study. Ethical approval was granted on December 8, 2022 (number MTURCD/24/2022). All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their right to deny participation, anonymity, and confidentiality. Before their involvement in the study, participants were required to provide written informed consent.

3.6. Assumptions of SEM

Similar to other regression models, SEM has its own assumptions, which are said to be multivariate.

Normality: The normality of the observation is the first and most important factor before building the model and checking the fit index. This observation must be drawn from both continuous and multivariate normal populations. To check the normality of the data, this study used skewness (-2 to $+2$) and kurtosis values (-7 to $+7$) [97,98]. This implies that the data were normal and passed the first assumption for using the SEM model.

Missing data: The study variables should be completed in data forms. In this study, there is no missing data and no passing of the second assumption.

Reliability of measurements: The Cronbach's alpha value of each variable was as follows: training and development (0.863), performance appraisal (0.896), reward (0.713), academic career development (0.727), teamwork spirit (0.759), succession planning (0.842), counseling (0.931), job satisfaction (0.881), and employee performance (0.881).

Model fit indices: According to the existing literature, the practicality of utilizing model fit indices seems to exhibit flexibility. This also suggests that one should use a combination of at least two fit indices [99].

4. results

4.1. Socio-demographic characteristics

This study aimed to examine the effect of human resource development practices on employee performance and the mediating role of job satisfaction among academic staff at Mizan Tepi University. The required sample size was 338; however, to compensate for the non-response rate, 345 questionnaires were distributed to the final academic staff of Mizan Tepi University. Of these, 312 were completed and successfully collected with full information, representing a 92 % response rate. Before the presentation and analysis, the accuracy of data entry, missing data, and assumption of multivariate analysis were examined for all relevant variables. After checking the accuracy of data entry, tests of assumptions were conducted.

Tests were done for normality and multicollinearity. For normality, the skewness and kurtosis values were taken, and all the variables lay between -1 and 1 (Table 1). The collinearity diagnosis was also conducted using a measure of multicollinearity known as the variance inflation factor (VIF) greater than 2.5 (Johnston 2018), and all the results are below (Table 2). To ensure the internal consistency of the measures, a reliability test was conducted. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was seen, and the multivariate analysis of variance, covariance, and structural equation model result was analyzed. The majority of the respondents (81.41 %) were male, and 18.59 % were female (Fig. 1). Regarding the age distribution of academic staff participants, the majority of respondents (52.6 %) were aged between 26 and 35, followed by the age group below 25 years, which covered 29.2 %. The age group of 36–45 comprised 13.1 %, the age group of 46–55 comprised 4.5 %, and the remaining 0.6 % of respondents were under the age of 56 and above (Fig. 2). Thirty-one (9.9 %) were degree holders, 243 (79.9 %) were master's degree holders, and 27 (8.7 %) were assistants. Professor holders, and the remaining 11 (3.5 %) were Ph.D. holders, respectively, regarding their educational status (Fig. 3). Regarding the service years of respondents, about 42.0 % of respondents have 1 to three years of experience, 26.0 % have four to six years of experience, 18.3 % have seven to nine years of experience, and 11.5 % have 10 years of experience. Approximately 2.2 % of respondents had less than one year of experience in which employees had served their institution (Fig. 4).

4.2. Multivariate analysis

Regarding the academic staff's participation in training and development at Mizan Tepi University, as depicted in the above table, based on frequency and percentages, the general mean of all statements towards training and development is (1.99) with SD = 0.746 and their frequency distribution shows 28.2 % of the respondents had a low agreement to training and development towards, 46.6 % of them depicted that they had a medium agreement to attitude towards, but it's not strong, and the rest of 27.2 % of them had a high agreement. In general, it can be concluded that training and development toward employee performance are medium, which is not strong. This result implies that the academic staff's perception of training and development, such as determining their training

Table 1

Normality test.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
TD1	312	0.016	0.138	-1.196	0.275
PA	312	-0.262	0.138	-0.622	0.275
RW	312	0.089	0.138	0.341	0.275
ACD	312	0.046	0.138	0.695	0.275
TWS	312	-0.475	0.138	-0.651	0.275
SP	312	0.017	0.138	-0.195	0.275
Couns	312	0.222	0.138	-1.042	0.275
JS	312	0.299	0.138	-1.123	0.275
EP	312	0.014	0.138	-0.311	0.275
Valid N (listwise)	312				

Source: own survey, 2023

Table 2
Multivariate assumption tests.

Multicollinearity test		Collinearity Statistics	
Coefficients ^a			
Model		Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)		
	TD1	0.721	1.387
	PA	0.555	1.800
	RW	0.787	1.271
	ACD	0.624	1.604
	TWS	0.726	1.377
	SP	0.490	2.041
	Couns	0.573	1.744
	JS	0.510	1.962

^a Dependent Variable: EP_a.
Source: own survey, 2023

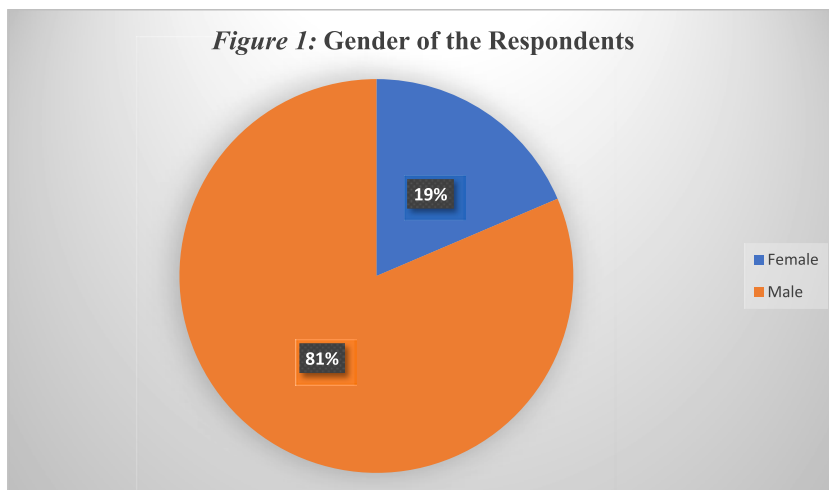


Fig. 1. Gender of the respondents.
Source: own survey, 2023

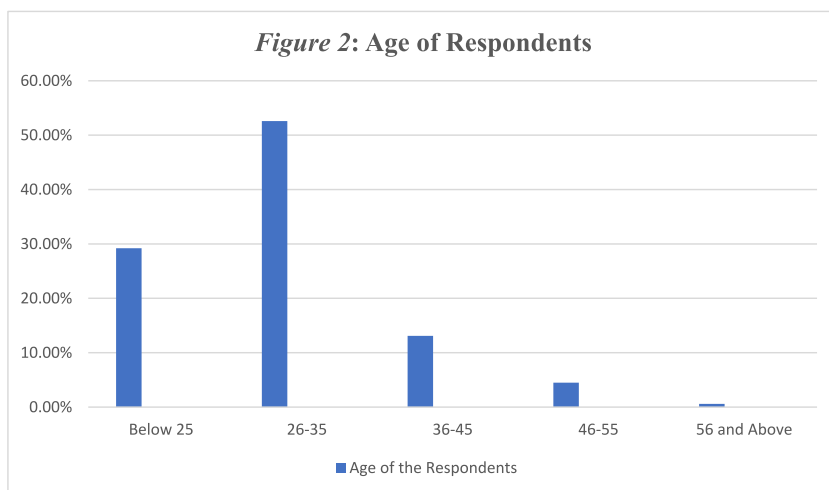


Fig. 2. Age of respondents.
Source: own survey, 2023

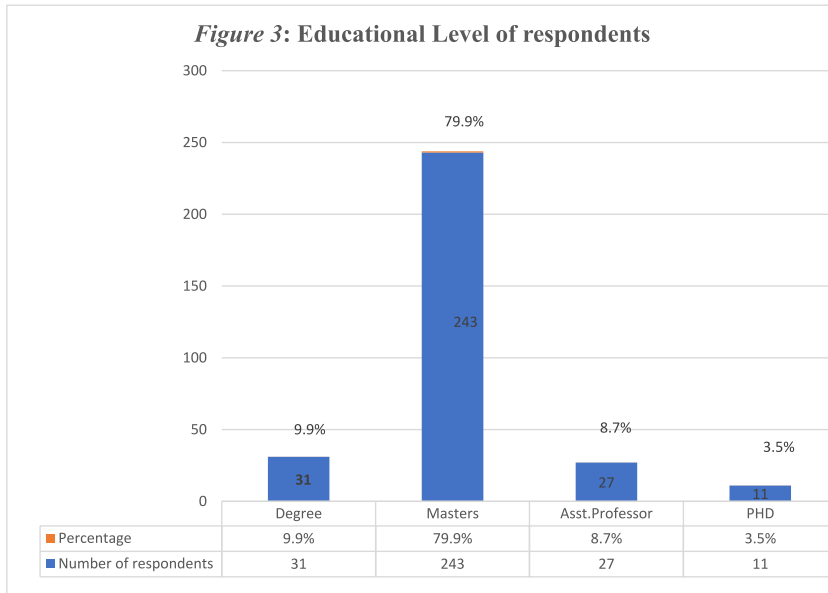


Fig. 3. Educational Level of respondents.
Source: own survey, 2023

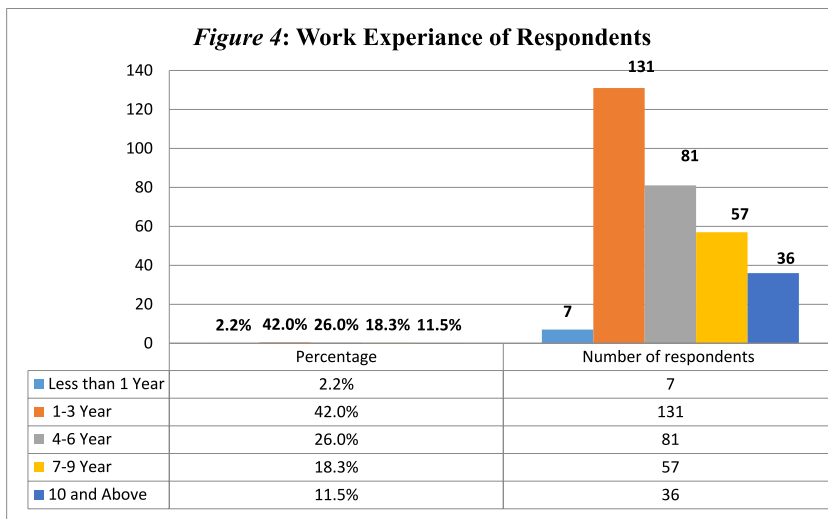


Fig. 4. Work experience of respondents.
Source: own survey, 2023

programs at the university, which helps to enhance their performance, determines the updated training that is required for their position. Job development programs are not sufficiently strong when performing their duties on time. Accordingly, the result shows the mean score of the performance appraisal is 2.30 with an SD = 0.605. The frequency result also shows that 7.7 % of the respondents are in the zone of low agreement, 54.2 % of the respondents had a medium agreement, and the rest of 38.1 % exhibited agreement on performance appraisal. This result implies that the academic staff’s perception of performance appraisal indicates that they have no strong access to performance appraisal, which objectively reflects their performance, to clearly understand their manager’s comments and opinions during their feedback, and that performance appraisal objectively reflects their performance. Accordingly, the academic staff’s participation in rewards at Mizan Tepi University is shown in the above table, based on frequency and percentages, where the general mean of all statements of attitude towards rewards was 2.11 with SD = 0.536, and their frequency distribution shows 9.6 % of the respondents had a low agreement, 70.2 % of them depicted that they had a medium agreement towards reward, and the rest of 20.2 % of them had a high attitude toward behavior. In general, it can be concluded that the reward for the employee’s performance is medium, which is not strong. This result implies that the academic staff’s perception of reward Thus, it indicates that the academic staff

have no strong access to such things, as supervisors rarely openly appreciate staff's good performance, their basic salary is fair enough for the work they do, and the responsibilities they hold. The reward programs of the academic staff for good performance are not sufficiently strong. Concerning the academic staff's participation in academic career development at Mizan Tepi University, as depicted in the above table, based on frequency and percentages, the general mean of all statements towards academic career development is 2.03, $SD = 0.521$, and their frequency distribution shows that 11.9 % of the respondents had a low agreement, 72.8 % of them depicted that they had a medium agreement with academic career development, but it was not strong, and the rest of 15.4 % had a high attitude. In general, it can be concluded that academic career development toward employee performance is medium, which is not strong. This reflects a medium level of agreement, but it is not strong. This indicates that the academic staff is not relatively capable of determining training programs to teach new employees the necessary skills they require to perform their career jobs or formal training programs to teach new employees the necessary skills they need to perform their career jobs. Accordingly, the academic staff's participation in the essence of teamwork spirit at Mizan Tepi University, as depicted in the above table, based on frequency and percentages, was the general mean of all statements towards the teamwork spirit was 2.41 with $SD = 0.599$, and their frequency distribution shows 5.8 % of the respondents had a low agreement to attitude towards, 47.1 % of them depicted that they had a medium agreement to, and also 41.7 % of them had a high attitude. In general, it can be concluded that teamwork spirit toward an employee's performance is equal to agreement. This result implies that the academic staff's perception of teamwork spirit, such as the team working evaluation system in the university, is that each member of the team has a clear idea of the group's goals, and team leaders are recognized for promotion and development; thus, the academic staff of the MTU had the opportunity and access to training and development practices at a level that satisfied their needs. Regarding the academic staff's participation in succession planning at Mizan Tepi University, as depicted in the above table, based on frequency and percentages, the general mean of all statements towards succession planning is 1.95 with $SD = 0.598$, and their frequency distribution shows 20.5 % of the respondents had a low agreement with attitude towards succession planning, 64.1 % of them depicted that they had a medium agreement with succession planning towards but it's not strong, and the rest of 15.4 % of them had a high agreement. This reflects moderate agreement, but it is not strong. This result implies that the academic staff's perception of succession planning, such as: in the university, succession planning considers all key positions; performance appraisals are conducted annually; management supports employees who wish to advance in their careers through education and training; and it is demonstrated that the academic staff of MTU need the opportunity and access to management support employees who wish to advance in their careers through tough succession planning practices at a level that satisfies their needs. Concerning the academic staff's participation in counseling at Mizan Tepi University, as depicted in the above table, based on frequency and percentages (the general mean of all statements towards counseling is 1.86 with $SD = 0.718$), their frequency distribution shows 34 % of the respondents had a low agreement to counseling towards, 46.5 % of them depicted that they had a medium agreement to attitude towards, but it's not strong, and the rest of 19.6 % of them had a high attitude. In general, it can be concluded that counseling toward employees' performance is moderate, which is not strong. Helping employees better understand themselves, increasing employee engagement or communication, establishing or improving coping skills, developing effective solutions to problems, learning to look at issues with a more positive outlook, and using different perspectives are required for their position. This result implies that the academic staff's perception of counseling requires more work and practice to be effective. Accordingly, the academic staff participation in job satisfaction at Mizan Tepi University, as depicted in the above table, is based on frequency and percentages, where the general mean of all statements towards job satisfaction is 1.82 with $SD = 0.739$, and their frequency distribution shows 37.8 % of the respondents had a low agreement to attitude towards, 42.3 % of them depicted that they had a medium agreement to job satisfaction, but it's not strong, and the rest of 19.9 % of them had a high agreement. This reflects moderate agreement, but it is not such a strong one. This result implies that the academic staff's perception of job satisfaction, such as the extent to which an employee feels self-motivated, satisfied with his or her job, and comfortable work-life balance, needs to be increased or improved by creating a productive and healthy work environment, communication, recognizing good work, caring about employee well-being, offering opportunities for learning, empowering employees, providing a clear career path, setting up career goals, and milestones to show the employees their opportunity to grow. Lastly, concerning the participation of academic staff in

Table 3

Mean, Standard deviation and Frequency distribution of HRD Practice, Job satisfaction and Employee performance Variables.

Variables	1. Low Agreement		2. Medium Agreement		3. High Agreement		Mean	SD	N
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent			
Training and Development	88	28.2 %	139	44.6 %	85	27.2 %	1.99	0.746	312
Performance Appraisal	24	7.7 %	169	54.2 %	119	38.1 %	2.30	0.605	312
Reward	30	9.6 %	219	70.2 %	63	20.2 %	2.11	0.536	312
Academic Career Development	37	11.9 %	227	72.8 %	48	15.4 %	2.03	0.521	312
Teamwork Spirit	18	5.8 %	147	47.1 %	147	47.1 %	2.41	0.599	312
Succession planning	64	20.5 %	200	64.1 %	48	15.4 %	1.95	0.598	312
Counseling	106	34 %	145	46.5 %	61	19.6 %	1.86	0.718	312
Job Satisfaction	118	37.8 %	132	42.3 %	62	19.9 %	1.82	0.739	312
Employee Performance	21	6.7 %	198	63.5 %	93	29.8 %	2.23	0.559	312

Source: own survey, 2023

employee performance at Mizan Tepi University, as depicted in the above table, based on frequency and percentages, the general mean of all statements towards counseling was 2.23 with SD = 0.559, and their frequency distribution shows that 6.7 % of the respondents had a low agreement to employee performance towards, 63.5 % of them depicted that they had a medium agreement to attitude towards but it was not strong, and the rest of 29.8 % had a high attitude. This result implies that the academic staff's perception of employee performance needs some improvement methods, such as pointing out any stand-out moments in the performance as well as the areas for development, recognizing their hard work, providing consistent feedback, and creating a positive workplace culture (Table 3).

4.2.1. T-test results on job satisfaction and employee performance

Analyzing the significant difference between academic staff performance and job satisfaction based on gender, a two-sample *t*-test was used to determine whether there were significant gender differences in the perception of employee performance and job satisfaction. The male and female means and standard deviations for job satisfaction were $M = 1.86$, $SD = 0.73$, and $M = 1.66$, $SD = 0.76$, respectively, and the *t*-value was 1.896, *df* (310), and $p > 0.05$. These data indicate that there was no significant gender difference in the sense of job satisfaction. Cohen's *d* was used to determine the real difference between the two groups. Cohen's *d* is a measure of effect size that quantifies the difference between two means. Cohen's *d* values are also known as the standardized mean difference (SMD). Cohen's *d* was found to be 0.272, which is 0.5, indicating that gender difference has a small effect on job satisfaction. Although there was a small mean difference between males and females, which was not significant, it might have occurred because of random variation. The mean and standard deviation of the responses from males ($M = 2.65$, $SD = 0.60$) and females ($M = 2.31$, $SD = 0.60$) regarding how they felt about employee performance did not differ between the genders, and the *t*-value of 3.925, *df* (310), and $p > 0.05$ (0.613) indicated that the result was not statistically significant. Cohen's *d* was found to be > 0.5 (0.99), which indicates that gender differences have a larger effect on employees' performance (Table 4). In this study, there were no statistically significant differences between male and female academic staff on job satisfaction, but it had a significant effect on employee performance dimensions. Therefore, there was no statistically significant difference in perception between male and female academic staff regarding job satisfaction and employee performance at Mizan Tepi University.

4.2.1.1. Results of hypotheses. The present study aimed to examine the relationships between the variables under investigation by testing nine major hypotheses. The first hypothesis explored the direct relationship between human resource development (HRD) practices and employee job performance. The findings of this study support this hypothesis, revealing a statistically significant coefficient ($\beta = 0.242$, $p < 0.05$). These results suggest that HRD practices positively impact employee job performance.

Additionally, the relationship between training and development and job performance, as proposed in the second hypothesis, was confirmed. The analysis demonstrated a positive influence, with a significant coefficient ($\beta = 0.2469827$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that investing in training and development initiatives can enhance employee job performance.

The third hypothesis focused on the association between performance appraisals and job performance. The results of this study revealed a significant coefficient ($\beta = 0.0398752$, $p < 0.05$), supporting a positive relationship between the two variables. These findings suggest that effective performance appraisal processes can contribute to improved job performance.

While the coefficients for the fourth and fifth hypotheses, concerning rewards and academic career development, yielded unexpected results, further analysis is required to determine their statistical significance. The coefficients for rewards ($\beta = -0.0056155$, $p < 0.05$) and academic career development ($\beta = -0.4253883$, $p < 0.05$) exhibited negative values, suggesting a need for additional investigation.

In contrast, the results of this study supported the sixth hypothesis, indicating that teamwork spirit positively influences job performance. The coefficient was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.4096928$, $p < 0.05$), providing evidence for the role of teamwork in enhancing job performance.

The seventh hypothesis explored the positive relationship between succession planning and job performance. The analysis confirmed this relationship with a significant coefficient ($\beta = 0.0185142$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that effective succession planning practices contribute to improved job performance.

The detailed outcomes of all the suggested hypotheses are provided in (Table 6).

The structural equation model for the relationship between human resource development practice, employee performance, and job satisfaction.

4.2.1.2. Association between human resources development practices and employee performance. The results indicate that all HRD practices and employee performance have a positive relationship. Employee performance had a positive but insignificant relationship

Table 4

t-Test of gender with employee performance and job satisfaction.

Variables	Sex	N	Mean	SD	DF	T	P (0.05)
Job Satisfaction	Male	254	1.86	0.73	310	1.896	0.163
	Female	58	1.66	0.76			
Employee Performance	Male	254	2.65	0.60	310	3.925	0.613
	Female	58	2.31	0.60			

Source: own survey, 2023

Table 5
Correlation result of Human resource development practice, Employee performance and job satisfaction.

	Variables	TD	PA	RW	ACD	TW	SP	Coun	JS	EP
1	TD	1.0000								
2	PA	0.4194 ^a	1.0000							
3	RW	0.0347	0.0490	1.0000						
4	ACD	0.3315 ^a	0.4239 ^a	0.2854 ^a	1.0000					
5	TW	-0.0774	0.2279 ^a	0.2436 ^a	0.2413 ^a	1.0000				
6	SP	0.2369 ^a	0.3718 ^a	0.2776 ^a	0.0471	0.2837 ^a	1.0000			
7	Coun	0.1414 ^a	0.3451 ^a	0.1482 ^a	0.1852 ^a	0.4153 ^a	0.5516 ^a	1.0000		
8	JS	0.2593 ^a	0.5390 ^a	0.1534 ^a	0.3083 ^a	0.2697 ^a	0.5611 ^a	0.5142 ^a	1.0000	
9	EP	0.0130	0.0861	0.2183 ^a	0.3135 ^a	0.1461 ^a	0.1124 ^a	0.0751	0.0305	1.0000

^a Covariance is significance at 0.05 levels.

Source: own survey, 2023

Table 6
SEM regression output.

	Coef	Std. Err	z	P> z	[95 % Conf. Interval]
StructuralEP					
JS	0.5059758	0.1210687	4.18	0.000	0.2686854 0.7432661
TD	0.2469827	0.0417515	5.92	0.000	0.1651512 0.3288142
ACD	-0.4253883	0.0930104	-4.57	0.000	-0.6076853 -0.2430913
PA	0.0398752	0.0497489	0.80	0.423	-0.0576308 0.1373812
RW	-0.0056155	0.0705506	-0.08	0.937	-0.1438922 0.1326612
TWS	0.4096928	0.0751504	5.45	0.000	0.2624006 0.5569849
SP	0.0185142	0.0821175	0.23	0.822	-0.1424331 0.1794615
Coun	-0.5366954	0.0904572	-5.93	0.000	-0.7139882 -0.3594026
JS					
TD	0.0172915	0.0283601	0.61	0.542	-0.0382933 0.0728763
ACD	0.2605204	0.0609495	4.27	0.000	0.1410615 0.3799792
PA	0.0536313	0.0391516	1.37	0.171	-0.0231044 0.130367
RW	0.0789178	0.053969	1.46	0.144	-0.0268595 0.184695
TWS	0.0900193	0.0461299	1.95	0.051	-0.0003937 0.1804323
SP	0.3117114	0.0672511	4.64	0.000	0.1799016 0.4435212
Coun	0.1672354	0.056552	2.96	0.003	0.0563955 0.2780753

with training and development ($r = 0.0130, p > .05$), performance appraisal ($r = 0.0861, p > .05$), counseling ($r = 0.0751, p > .05$), and job satisfaction ($r = 0.0305, p > .05$). Employee performance had a significant positive relationship with rewards ($r = 0.2183, p > .05$), academic career development ($r = 0.3135^*, p > .05$), teamwork ($r = 0.1461^*, p = .050$), and succession planning ($r = 0.1124^*, p > .05$) (Table 5). This indicates that if the university properly performs the practice of human development, such as recognizing their work with reward, succession planning, academic career development, and also working together, which is teamwork between the employees, the employee’s performance with their university goes proportionally. This finding is consistent with the study of [100], which established that Barclays Bank of Kenya has implemented several human resource developments. Further, it was concluded that teamwork plays a very important role in enhancing employee performance. The study recommended the design and development of policies and procedures after skill audits to ensure the policies and procedures designed and implemented enhance employee performance [60] and studied the effect of succession planning strategies on the performance of audit firms in Nairobi City County.

4.2.1.3. Human resources development practice and job satisfaction. The results indicate that all HRD practices and employee job satisfaction have a significant and positive relationship. The relationships between training development and job satisfaction were statistically significant ($r = 0.2595, p > .05$); performance appraisal and job satisfaction ($r = 0.5390, p > .05$); rewards and job satisfaction ($r = 0.1534, p > .05$); academic career development and job satisfaction ($r = 0.3083, p > .05$); teamwork and job satisfaction ($r = 0.4121, p > .05$); succession planning and job satisfaction ($r = 0.2697, p > .05$); and job satisfaction ($r = 0.5142, p > .05$) (Table 5). In this regard, the implementation of human development practices makes employees satisfied, increasing the level of job satisfaction among employees. The highest positive value of the correlation between human resources development practices and job satisfaction presented in the correlation matrix demonstrates that a special focus should be attached to training and development, performance appraisal, reward, teamwork, academic career development, succession planning, and counseling to be able to improve the job satisfaction of the university. In addition, it is also observed that succession planning, counseling, academic career development, and performance appraisal have an important effect on job satisfaction. This study’s findings are similar to those of [101], which investigated the strategic importance of human resource practices on job satisfaction in private hospitals.

4.2.1.4. Association between job satisfaction and employee performance. The relationship between employee performance and job satisfaction is positive and significant ($r = 0.0305, p > .05$) (Table 5).

4.2.2. The effect of human resource development practices and job satisfaction on employee performance (mediating effect of job satisfaction)

In structural equation modeling, the coefficients indicate the variance ratio of exogenous variables within endogenous variables. In line with this, the regression coefficients of employee performance with training and development ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.05$); academic career development ($\beta = -0.425$, $p < 0.05$); performance appraisal ($\beta = 0.04$, $p > 0.05$); reward ($\beta = -0.01$, $p > 0.05$); teamwork ($\beta = 0.410$, $p < 0.05$); succession planning ($\beta = 0.02$, $p > 0.05$); and counseling ($\beta = -0.54$, $p < 0.05$) (Table 7). According to these data, the effects of performance appraisal, reward, and succession planning were insignificant on the performance of Mizan Tepi University's academic staff. Employees' perceptions of job satisfaction, training and development, academic career development, teamwork, and counseling had a significant effect on their perceptions of employee performance. This implies that employees' perceptions of job satisfaction, training and development, and teamwork standard deviation variations will result in an increase in employee performance by 51 %, 25 %, and 42 %, respectively. In contrast, employees' perceptions of academic career development and counseling standard deviation variations resulted in a decrease in employee performance by 42.5 % and 54 %, respectively. This finding is related to Ref. [102] identifying the impact of job satisfaction factors on employee performance, such as employees' impressions, inclinations, desires, and visualizations towards their jobs in the faculty of science and humanity studies. The researcher investigated the presence of a positive and statistically significant relationship between job satisfaction factors and employee performance, and he also concluded that whenever there are better work conditions, pay and promotion, and work relationships, there is higher job satisfaction. According to Ref. [103], there is a significant impact of job satisfaction on organizational performance in development organizations. When employees experience satisfaction, it fosters a positive organizational environment and motivates them to enhance their performance with greater efficiency. As a result, the investigation of job satisfaction and its impact on organizational performance has emerged as a significant focus of research endeavors.

4.2.2.1. *The relationship between job satisfaction and human resource development practices.* As per the (Table 6) results, the regression path output of job satisfaction with training and development ($\beta = 0.017$, $p > 0.05$), academic career development ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.05$), performance appraisal ($\beta = 0.05$, $p > 0.05$), reward ($\beta = 0.08$, $p > 0.05$), teamwork ($\beta = 0.09$, $p > 0.05$), succession planning ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.05$), and counseling ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.05$). According to these data, the effects of training and development, performance appraisal, and teamwork were insignificant on employees' job satisfaction at Mizan Tepi University. Employees' perceptions of academic career development, succession planning, and counseling have a significant effect on their perceptions of employee performance. In this case, one unit change in the academic career development standard deviation will result in a 26 % variation in the academic staff's perception of job satisfaction; similarly, one unit change in the standard deviation of succession will result in a 31 % variation in the employee's perception of job satisfaction; and also, one unit change in the standard deviation of counseling will result in a 17 % variation in the employee's perception of job satisfaction. According to Ref. [104], the impact of career development on employee satisfaction in the private banking sector in Karachi. The study revealed a positive association between career development and job satisfaction among employees in the banking industry. Employees are satisfied with the career development activities that are offered at their organizations. It is argued that employees' job satisfaction is dependent on career development opportunities in their respective organizations in the banking sector. Another study [105] followed a quantitative, non-experimental correlational design of research in succession planning, job engagement, and job satisfaction. They prove that there are positive correlations between succession planning, job engagement, and job satisfaction. Additionally [106], proved that counseling would influence job satisfaction.

5. Discussion

The objective of this study was to examine the association between human resource development (HRD) practices, job satisfaction, and employee performance among the academic staff at Mizan Tepi University. The findings revealed that HRD practices had both direct and indirect effects on employee performance through job satisfaction. This study's findings align with and contribute to the existing literature on HRD practices and their impact on employee performance. This study revealed that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between HRD practices and employee performance, which is consistent with previous research [37,107,108], and [21]. This suggests that HRD practices can influence employee performance indirectly through their effect on job satisfaction. By focusing on improving HRD practices, organizations can enhance job satisfaction, ultimately leading to improved employee performance.

Table 7
Mediation Analysis output for direct and indirect effects.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Standardized Coefficients					
		Direct effects			Indirect effects		
		Coef.	Std. Err	P-value	Coef.	Std. Err	P-value
Employee Performance	Training and development	0.247	0.042	0.000	0.009	0.014	0.539
	Academic Career Development	-0.425	0.093	0.000	0.132	0.045	0.004
	Performance Appraisal	0.039	0.049	0.423	0.027	0.021	0.195
	Reward	-0.006	0.071	0.937	0.039	0.028	0.156
	Teamwork Spirit	0.409	0.075	0.000	0.046	0.023	0.053
	Succession planning	0.019	0.082	0.822	0.158	0.049	0.001
	Counseling	-0.537	0.090	0.000	0.085	0.034	0.013

Source: own survey, 2023

The results showed that training and development, teamwork spirit, and counseling had positive direct effects on employee performance. Moreover, this study expands upon existing literature by examining the specific dimensions of HRD practices and their effects on employee performance. I found that training and development, teamwork spirit, and counseling had a statistically significant positive effect on employee performance. These findings support previous studies that have highlighted the importance of training and development [109], teamwork [110], and counseling [111] in improving employee performance. Organizations can leverage these specific HRD practices to foster a positive work environment that enhances employee performance. However, this study also uncovered some divergences from existing literature, providing new insights. Specifically, I found that academic career development had a direct negative effect on employee performance. This finding contradicts previous research that often emphasizes the positive impact of academic career development on employee performance. The negative effect I observed suggests that organizations need to carefully manage academic career development practices to avoid any potential negative consequences. Further research is warranted to explore the underlying mechanisms and contextual factors that contribute to this unexpected finding.

In addition, job satisfaction played a partial mediating role in the relationship between academic career development, teamwork spirit, counseling, and employee performance. This suggests that HRD practices influence employee performance through the enhancement of job satisfaction.

These findings have important implications for organizations. They highlight the importance of implementing effective HRD practices to improve employee performance. Organizations should prioritize training and development programs, teamwork initiatives, and counseling support. At the same time, attention should be given to addressing any negative impacts associated with academic career development. These findings contribute to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between HRD practices and employee performance. They emphasize the need for a tailored approach to HRD practices, considering the specific dimensions and their varying effects on employee performance.

Overall, this study enhances our understanding of the complex dynamics between HRD practices, job satisfaction, and employee performance. It offers valuable insights for organizations seeking to optimize their human resource management strategies.

6. Conclusions

The main objective of this study was to examine the effect of human resources development practices on employee performance and explore whether job satisfaction mediates the relationship between human resources development practices and employee performance. The study focused on academic staff at Mizan Tepi University as the sample population. The following conclusions have been drawn in light of the study's objectives and findings:

Firstly, the analysis of demographic variables revealed that there were no significant mean differences between male and female respondents in terms of job satisfaction. However, gender affects employee performance. This suggests that gender diversity should be promoted in organizations, creating an inclusive environment and policies that eliminate gender-based discrimination.

Secondly, the results of the correlation analysis showed a positive and significant relationship between training and development, academic career development, teamwork, counseling, and job satisfaction. It implies that when the university effectively implements human development practices, such as rewarding employees, implementing succession planning, promoting academic career development, and fostering teamwork, there is a proportional improvement in employee performance. Furthermore, all the HRD practices showed significant and positive relationships with employee job satisfaction. This underscores the significance of focusing on training and development, performance appraisal, rewards, teamwork, academic career development, succession planning, and counseling to enhance job satisfaction among academic staff at Mizan Tepi University.

Thirdly, the SEM regression analysis revealed that job satisfaction, training and development, and teamwork had a positive and significant effect on academic staff performance. However, academic career development and counseling had a negative and significant effect. Additionally, academic career development, teamwork, counseling, and succession planning had a significant and positive effect on academic staff's job satisfaction.

Moreover, the mediation analysis using SEM indicated that academic career development and counseling had a partial mediation effect between employee performance dimensions, with both the direct and indirect effects being significant. On the other hand, succession planning had a full mediation effect between employee performance dimensions.

Several recommendations might be made in light of the findings and conclusions.

- ✓ Organizations should create an inclusive environment that promotes gender diversity, as it has a positive impact on employee performance.
- ✓ Special attention should be given to HRD practices and job satisfaction, as they have a strong correlation. Investing in employee training, career development, and creating a supportive work environment can enhance job satisfaction and overall employee performance.
- ✓ Administrators should focus on improving job satisfaction among academic staff through tough activities that contribute to satisfaction, such as recognition, creating good working conditions, offering advancement opportunities, providing attractive benefits packages, and reducing workload and stress levels.
- ✓ Academic career development should be given more attention, as it plays a very important role in employee performance. Institutions should provide opportunities for advancement and ownership, which lead to empowerment and higher job satisfaction.
- ✓ The university should implement counseling programs to assist employees in facing life challenges positively, which can contribute to their overall performance. Future research can delve deeper into the impact of counseling on employee performance.

- ✓ Mizan Tepi University needs to configure its human resources development strategies to align with corporate strategies, especially in a dynamic and growth-oriented environment.

7. Limitations of the study

Limitations of the study include the limited scope of examining only employees' perceptions towards HRD practices at Mizan Tepi University, excluding administrative, general, supportive operation, and academic work units. Additionally, the small sample size restricts the representativeness of the findings. Future research should expand the scope, increase the sample size, and consider other variables that may impact employee performance. Similar studies in the Ethiopian context should address these limitations.

8. Implications of the study

The study on the effect of HRD practices on employee performance and job satisfaction has several theoretical and managerial implications for academics and practitioners. Here are the key implications.

9. Implications for academics

Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction: The research findings contribute to the academic field by providing empirical evidence for the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between HRD practices and employee performance. This finding enhances the understanding of the underlying mechanisms through which HRD practices influence employee outcomes and provides a basis for further theoretical development in the field of HRD and employee performance.

Importance of HRD Practices: The study emphasizes the significance of HRD practices in enhancing employee performance and job satisfaction. This finding contributes to existing theories and frameworks on HRD and extends our knowledge of specific practices, such as training and development, career advancement, teamwork, counseling, and succession planning. It opens avenues for further research on the effectiveness of different HRD interventions and their impact on employee outcomes.

Gender Diversity: The research sheds light on the impact of gender diversity on employee performance and job satisfaction. While no significant effect was found on job satisfaction, the study highlights the importance of gender diversity in improving employee performance. This finding provides a basis for further exploration of gender-related dynamics in the workplace and their influence on organizational outcomes.

10. Implications for practitioners

Enhancing Job Satisfaction: The research findings have practical implications for HR practitioners. Organizations can focus on implementing effective HRD practices, such as training and development programs, recognition and rewards systems, creating a positive work environment, offering career advancement opportunities, and promoting work-life balance. These initiatives can enhance job satisfaction and, in turn, improve employee performance.

Addressing Academic Career Development: The study highlights the potential negative impact of academic career development on employee performance. Practitioners can address this by providing alternative career paths for individuals with academic backgrounds, offering opportunities for growth and advancement outside of academia, and ensuring that academic pursuits align with organizational goals. This approach allows organizations to leverage employees' academic expertise without compromising their performance.

Implementing Counseling Programs: The research suggests the implementation of counseling programs to support employees in managing personal and professional challenges. HRD practitioners can provide resources and assistance through counseling services, helping employees overcome obstacles, enhance their well-being, and ultimately improve their job satisfaction and performance.

Aligning HRD Strategies: The findings emphasize the importance of aligning HRD strategies with organizational goals and objectives. Practitioners should ensure that HRD practices are directly linked to the overall corporate strategy. Aligning HRD initiatives with strategic objectives helps create a sense of purpose and direction among employees, leading to improved performance outcomes.

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Data availability statement

Not all the data generated or analyzed during this study is publicly available to maintain the privacy of individuals' identities. The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are part of an ongoing project, and I will make them available to organizations and individuals upon official request.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Tamirat Tafese Keltu: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Supervision, Software,

Resources, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Abbreviations

HRD	human resource development
SEM	structural equation model
SMD	standardized mean difference
TD	Training and Development
ACD	Academic Career Development
TWS	Teamwork Spirit
Coun	counseling
SP	succession planning
PA	performance appraisal
JS	is job satisfaction
RW	is reward;
EP	is employee performance
SRMR =	standardized root mean square residual
RMSEA =	root mean square error of approximation
TLI =	Tucker-Lewis index
CFI =	comparative fit index
SRMR =	comparative fit index

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e29821>.

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