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THE EFFECT OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ON THE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE OF PRIVATE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN GHANA

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ABSTRACT

Performance management has been recognised as a primary driver of organisational performance, yet evidence from private tertiary institutions in Ghana is limited. This study investigates how performance management influences corporate performance in these institutions, focusing on target setting, performance review, appraisal frequency, feedback, and support of goal achievement systems. Employing a cross-sectional design and quantitative approach, data were collected based on structured questionnaires from 291 respondents of the selected private universities. The association between variables was analysed through structural equation modelling (SmartPLS 3.0). Findings suggest that performance management positively and significantly impacts private universities' performance. Our study provides practical recommendations to policymakers and managers on improving performance management systems and their alignment with long-term institutional goals. University managers and policymakers must prioritize rigorous and merit-based practice, blending individual and management potential and institutional goals to create competitiveness and sustainability. The study contributes to the literature through empirical results in the relatively under-researched Ghanaian private higher education setting. This study is among the first to apply contingency leadership theory and the Resource-Based View (RBV) to investigate performance management in Ghana's private higher education sector. The study adds to theory by bringing to the fore the reality that leadership competencies in management are more valuable to organizations. In the meantime, the study also offers practical insights for advancing talent management models in developing-country contexts.

KEYWORDS: *Contingency Leadership Theory, Corporate performance, Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio, Performance Management, Resource-Based View, Structural equation modelling.*

1 Introduction

Private tertiary education institutions in Ghana operate in a dynamic educational sector, continuously under pressure to recruit students, remain economically sustainable, and achieve high academic performance (Mensah & Osei, 2020; Owusu & Amoako, 2019). Under these circumstances, performance management is increasingly important for maximising institutional efficiency. Performance management involves setting clear objectives, monitoring progress, evaluating, providing feedback, and coaching employees to achieve organisational objectives (Aguinis, 2013; Armstrong, 2020). Despite its critical role in improving organisational performance, there is little or no evidence about its role in contributing to the corporate performance of private tertiary institutions in Ghana. Corporate performance of tertiary education universities is complex, encompassing financial performance indicators, growth rates in student enrollment, graduation rates, academic quality, staff productivity, and operational efficiency (Okurut et al., 2016; Aluko & Oladipo, 2017). Performance management plays a key role in bringing these performance results by aligning administrative and faculty staff to the institutional objectives, their motivation to deliver high performance, and empowerment to achieve goals (Schuler et al., 2011; Tarique & Schuler, 2010). Organisations with strategic and formal performance management practices will likely enhance teaching quality, administrative efficiency, student satisfaction, and overall competitiveness (Aguinis, 2013; Mensah & Osei, 2020).

Although several studies have examined performance management in general organizational contexts, few have explored its relevance and implementation within public universities or broader HR practices in Ghana. Even less is known about its implications in private tertiary institutions (Amankwah-Amoah, 2018; Owusu & Amoako, 2019). Specifically, there is limited empirical evidence to validate the effect of goal setting, appraisal frequency, feedback and performance support systems on the firm performance of private higher education institutions. It is necessary to fill the gap because the number of private sector institutions vying for students, employees, and finance in a disrupted education market is rising. This study explores the influence of performance management on the corporate performance of Ghanaian private tertiary institutions. By investigating the relationship between principal performance management practices and institutional performance in academic quality, operational efficiency, and organisational sustainability, this study aims to inform policy and strategic management in Ghanaian private higher education with empirical evidence. Following the elucidated gaps, this study aims to respond to the following research question:

How does performance management affect the corporate performance of private tertiary institutions in Ghana?

The study presents some theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the study applies Contingency Leadership Theory and Resource-Based View (RBV) to show how organisational capabilities and leadership behaviour impact performance outcomes and fill a literature gap on higher education performance management in Ghana (Aguinis, 2013; Barney, 1991). The study enlightens university managers and policymakers on formulating the systems to propel performance management, align personal and institutional objectives, and promote institutional sustainability (Armstrong, 2020; Mensah & Osei, 2020). The study contributes knowledge to how formal performance management practice enhances corporate performance in the private higher education sector.

2 Theoretical Foundation, Empirical Review, and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Resource-Based View (RBV)

Barney's Resource-Based View (RBV) (1991) argues that organisations gain and sustain competitive advantage from valuable, rare, imitable, hard, and substitutable resources. Compared to mainstream models of strategy based on external drivers (Porter, 1985), RBV is focused on internal competencies as the cause of superior performance. Private tertiary institutions are impacted most by internal procedures and human capital. Private tertiary institutions are significantly affected by human capital and internal processes. Practice of performance management such as setting clear goals, monitoring progress, conducting

appraisals, providing timely feedback, and assisting employees in achieving goals—can be termed strategic assets. The practices allow the institution to effectively manage human and operational resources, enhancing instruction quality, administrative capacity, and student satisfaction (Aguinis, 2013; Armstrong, 2020).

The RBV advocates that resources alone cannot determine performance excellence. They must be aligned and structured to help create tangible value (Bitar & Hafsi, 2007; Semaan & Mostapha, 2020). Performance management allows institutions to be in a position to align employees' work towards tasks most critical for corporate performance. For example, systematic review and continuous feedback systems allow teaching and administrative personnel to improve performance, directly impacting academic accomplishment and effectiveness of operations (Nguyen et al., 2016; Saurombe, Barkhuizen, & Schutte, 2017). A competitive Ghanaian environment is characterised by low resource availability, in which private tertiary institutions conduct business. Illuminating how performance management practices can make internal capabilities a sustainable source of competitiveness applies the RBV. Applied effectively, the practices build resilience, promote innovation, and facilitate long-term institutional building. Though criticised for not addressing external pressures, RBV remains a valuable model for explaining how clearly defined internal processes and human resource practices link to corporate performance within higher education.

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2.2 Contingency Leadership Theory

Contingency Leadership Theory, proposed by Fiedler (1964, 1967), assumes that no general leadership style is effective every time but depends on a leader's style and organisational task factors. Applied to performance management, the theory suggests that success in goal setting, appraisals, feedback, and performance support system success depends on leadership congruence with institutional needs. For instance, institutions experiencing fast growth may succeed under innovation and employee development leadership, whereas operation-restrained institutions may gain from efficiency, form, and responsibility leadership (Donaldson, 2001; Fiedler, 1967). Leadership is an enabler of performance management. Research has shown that context-contingent leadership enables employees' participation, motivation, and institutional goal commitment (Bolden, Petrov, & Gosling, 2009; Meyers & van Woerkom, 2014). High staff turnover, scarce resources, and cutthroat competition characterise Ghanaian private universities. Contextualising leadership orientation of performance management practice to these situations can consolidate institutional results, whereas leadership orientation-institutional demand incongruence can discredit the efficacy of PM interventions.

For example, transformational leadership inspiring, motivating, and developing staff may be highly effective within organisations that seek academic achievement and research breakthroughs, whereas transactional leadership focusing on monitoring performance, imposing discipline, and rewarding conformity can be most helpful to organisations that seek operational efficiency and stability (Eva et al., 2019; Fiedler, 1967); Thanappan S, Adjei-Fio F. (2025). Contingency Leadership Theory addresses the consideration that leadership is central to maximising performance management's return on investment. By institutionalising the style of leadership to suit the institutional environment, leaders can ensure that PM practices serve their purpose of achieving corporate performance targets.

2.3 Empirical Review, Research Gap, and Hypothesis Development

Performance management (PM) has always driven organisational performance, particularly in knowledge-based organisations such as higher learning institutions. Well-functioning PM systems characterized by explicit performance expectations, open feedback loops, and open appraisal processes improve worker productivity, student satisfaction, and operational effectiveness (Mzangwa & Ngibe, 2020; Khan et al., 2019). For example, blending academic staff performance appraisal with teaching, research, and outreach goals at South African universities has improved institutional performance and accreditation (Mzangwa & Ngibe, 2020). Similarly, in the United Kingdom, open systems of appraisal improved staff motivation, reduced role ambiguity, and increased a continuous improvement culture (Khan et al., 2019).

Participatory PM practices facilitate African tertiary education environments by allowing organisational and personnel participation, leading to sustained institution success (Arthur & Rousseau, 2019). Performance evaluation and training frequency in Kenya must improve academic quality and administrative

performance (Nzuve & Omolo, 2016). Linking PM with personnel development plans in Nigeria improved worker retention and publishing (Okeke & Ezeh, 2017). Aligning individual objectives with organisational objectives has enhanced employee performance and accountability globally. At the Australian level, PM practice regarding strategic goals led to enhanced accountability among academics and administrators (Dowling et al., 2017). Canadian universities provided systems of feedback and measurable performance metrics on increased research production and student engagement (Baruch & Budhwar, 2019). 360-degree feedback and peer ratings-based PM systems, encouraged in Singapore, enabled cross-functional working and innovation (Yeo & Li, 2014). Such research suggests that PM develops a high-performance discipline culture with clear expectations, constructive feedback, and effective appraisal mechanisms. With leadership, professional development, and fair reward systems, PM is an executive business performance improvement driver.

Despite wide-ranging evidence from across the globe, there is a shortage of empirical research within Ghanaian private tertiary institutions on the effect of PM on company performance. Research has been primarily performed in public universities or general HR practices, with a missing link on how PM practices (goal setting, frequency of appraisal, feedback mechanism, and support systems) influence private higher education outcomes (Owusu & Amoako, 2019; Amankwah-Amoah, 2018). With the influx of private universities in Ghana and the competitiveness of these universities, the PM's impact must be studied to improve academic quality, operational efficiency, and institutional viability. Performance management aligns individual objectives with organisational objectives, promotes accountability, and develops a high-performance culture (Aguinis, 2013). Newer strategies emphasise continuous feedback, coaching, and real-time goal tracking rather than old annual appraisals. Effective PM allows managers to diagnose capability gaps, recognise excellent work, and provide focused support, maximising individual and institutional returns.

Based on this evidence and the aforementioned gap in research, the study formulates the following hypothesis:

H1: Performance management positively and significantly impacts corporate performance in private universities in Ghana.

3. Materials/Methods

An explanatory research design was employed in this research. This was appropriate as it examined cause-and-effect relationships between corporate performance and performance management of a private university in Ghana. A quantitative approach was employed to examine the statistical relationship between the key variables (Fischer et al., 2023). Standard questionnaires were the primary data collection instrument to provide standard and comparable responses from staff and students (Kumar, 2018). Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) reports that 49 private tertiary learning institutions in Ghana are accredited, constituting this study's population. Five privately owned higher learning institutions were purposively identified as the population that would be studied, considering ownership, accreditation, charter status, and geographical spread to represent a range of institutional characteristics. This approach enables the research to describe talent acquisition practice variation across various categories of private tertiary institutions. The selected institutions are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample Frame

Private Institution of Higher Learning	Selected Institution
Chartered Private Tertiary Institutions	Central University
Private University Colleges	KAAF University College
Private Colleges of Education	Jackson Educational Complex
Private Nursing Training Colleges	St. Karol Nursing Training
Private Polytechnic	Archbishop Potter's Polytechnic

The five private higher learning institutions were chosen purposefully based on different criteria. Regional balance was considered to obtain perspectives from different parts of Ghana, and ownership structure (religiously-based or private) was included to obtain differences in governance arrangements. Institutional chartered status was also a consideration in studying how institutional maturity impacts talent management practice. Accessibility also guided the decision to obtain the pragmatic feasibility of data collection. The approach provides an achievable yet representative level for the research. Five hundred sixty-six individuals are available in the institutions sampled and serve as undergraduate students, members of the academic staff, and senior administrative or management officers, representing the sampling frame. They ensured reliability and systematic analysis based on research objectives. Senior management was interviewed semi-structuredly to back up survey data and obtain more in-depth information on institutional practice and leadership perceptions.

The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula, giving 264 at a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error. Following Israel's (1992) guideline, 13.5% was added for nonresponse, resulting in 300 respondents (Hair et al., 2021). The study employed a stratified proportional random sampling approach to access fair representation of the respondents from five categories of private institutions of higher learning (PIHLs) in Ghana. The population of 566 was heterogeneous and consisted of chartered universities, private colleges, colleges of education, nursing training colleges, and private polytechnics. They were purposively sampled by accreditation status, ownership, regional representation, and accessibility to get a diverse and representative sample. The population was stratified initially into five institutional levels. Proportionate sampling was used in each stratum to reflect the proper proportion of the overall population. Within each institution, staff were also stratified into Senior Management, Senior Administrators, and Junior Staff, with random sampling within each category. This two-stage stratification reduced bias and ensured that all categories of staff were included in the study. The final sample size was 300 respondents: 35 Senior Management, 57 Senior Administrators, and 208 Junior Staff. This captures perspectives at hierarchical levels and institution types, increasing the validity of comparisons on talent management practice.

3.1 Data Collection Process and Informed Consent

After approval by KAAF University and the university agreement to participate, data were collected using systematic questionnaires from students and employees and via interviews representing the management's view. The participants were informed about the research, assured confidentiality, and informed that participation was voluntary. Institutional members facilitated administering and retrieving the questionnaires. Data collection was from June to December 2024, with attention to accuracy and completeness before analysis. Harman's single-factor test was used to check for common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). An unrotated principal component analysis showed that the first factor accounted for 23.8% of the variance, below the 50% cut-off. This means no single factor dominated, and the two constructs corporate Performance and performance management remained distinct. The result shows that bias did not affect the data, and the instruments were valid and reliable.

3.3 Model Specification and Robustness Checks

3.3.1Model Specification

The primary analytical framework for this study is specified as follows:

Model 1 (Direct Effect – H1):

$CP=\alpha+\beta 1PM+\epsilon i$

Where:

- **CP** = Corporate Performance
- **PM** = Performance Management

- α = Constant
- $\beta 1$ = Coefficient of interest
- ϵ = Error term

Models will be estimated using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression with robust standard errors. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) tests direct effects simultaneously, with mean-centred predictors to reduce multicollinearity. The study focused on Corporate Performance and performance management as key variables. Corporate Performance was measured using financial goals, customer satisfaction, resource management, achievement of strategic objectives, and innovation. Performance management was assessed based on Clarity of performance management, Goal alignment, Frequency of performance reviews, Feedback, and Support for goal achievement. All items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The information gathered was cleaned for accuracy, completeness, and outliers before analysis. Descriptive statistics of mean, minimum, maximum, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis were calculated to determine the distribution of the variables. SEM was used to test hypothesised relationships since it enables multiple constructs to be examined simultaneously along with their interrelations. Statistical analyses were carried out on SPSS and SmartPLS 3.0 software.

4. Results

The analysis's results are presented in two broad phases. First, we introduce the descriptive statistics of study variables. Lastly, we test structural associations among the constructs using SEM through SmartPLS 3. Table 2 presents the demographic profile of 291 respondents. The female respondents (58.76%) exceeded the males by a narrow margin of 41.24%. By roles, 12.03% were in senior management, 29.21% middle management, 17.18% administrator, and 41.58% junior staff positions. University management experience was diverse, with 27.49% having 4–6 years, followed by more than 10 years (22.36%). University size distribution revealed 17.18% from small universities, 41.24% from medium, and 41.58% from large ones.

Table 2 – Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	120	41.24%
	Female	171	58.76%
Role within University	Senior Management	35	12.03%
	Middle Management	85	29.21%
	Administrator	50	17.18%
	Junior Staff	121	41.58%
Years of Experience	<1 year	25	8.59%
	1–3 years	60	20.62%
	4–6 years	80	27.49%
	7–10 years	61	20.93%
	>10 years	65	22.36%
Size of University	Small (1–500)	50	17.18%
	Medium (501–2000)	120	41.24%
	Large (2001+)	121	41.58%

Normality of the dataset and descriptive statistics were assessed using skewness, kurtosis, mean, minimum, maximum, and standard deviation, which are typical tests of distributional measures of quantitative research (Field, 2013). For Corporate Performance (CP), the mean score was 3.569, on a 1-to-5 scale, reflecting a

moderate degree of agreement among respondents. Standard deviation was 0.928, which reflects variability in response. The skewness value was 0.003, reflecting virtually perfect symmetry in the distribution, while the value of kurtosis is -0.872, reflecting relative flatness of the distribution relative to the standard curve (George & Mallery, 2010). The mean for Performance Management (PM) was 3.81 on a scale of 1 to 5. The standard deviation of 1.076 shows moderate spread of the responses. The -0.904 skewness shows moderate negative skewness, and the kurtosis of 0.318 shows the distribution is almost identical to the normal distribution with slight peak (Hair et al., 2010). The variables had near-zero skewness and good kurtosis of ±2 that indicates near-normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The data are thus acceptable for further statistical analysis without undue transformation (Field, 2013).

Table 3. Normality using Skewness and Kurtosis

Variable	Mean	Min	Max	Standard Deviation	Excess Kurtosis	Skewness
Corporate Performance	3.569	1	5	0.928	-0.872	0.003
Performance Management	3.810	1	5	1.076	0.318	-0.904

4. 1 Reliability and Validity of the Measurement Model

Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) were used to test reliability of measurement model. For Performance Management (PM), the item loadings were between 0.673 to 0.817, the Cronbach's alpha = 0.858, and the Composite Reliability = 0.831. These are higher than the suggested values of 0.70, indicating that the items consistently measure the construct and have good internal reliability (Hair et al, 2021). The loadings for Corporate Performance (CP) were between 0.616 and 0.752. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.830, and the Composite Reliability was 0.840, both of which are well within acceptable levels for construct reliability. This suggests that the indicators used to gauge Corporate Performance are stable and internally consistent. The results confirm acceptable internal consistency for corporate performance constructs and performance management. All values of CR above 0.70 indicate that the measurement model is acceptable and reliable for further structural analysis (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2021).

Table 4. Reliability Analysis of the Construct

Variable	Indicator	Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability
Performance Management	PM1	0.736	0.858	0.831
	PM2	0.817		
	PM3	0.673		
	PM4	0.767		
	PM 5	0.815		
Corporate Performance	CP1	0.616	0.830	0.840
	CP2	0.693		
	CP3	0.624		
	CP4	0.752		
	CP5	0.680		

Source: Research data 2025

4.2 Results for Validity with Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Discriminant validity was subsequently tested using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which requires a square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for every construct to be greater than its between-construct correlations (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This ensures that every construct measures a distinct concept and is not closely related to other constructs in the model. The square root of AVE for Corporate Performance

(0.789) is higher than its correlation with Performance Management (0.105). Similarly, the square root of AVE for Performance Management (0.844) is higher than its correlation with Corporate Performance (0.105). These results guarantee that the constructs are well differentiated and have high discriminant validity. This confirms that the measurement model is robust, and both constructs significantly explain institutional performance.

Table 5. Fornell-Larcker Criterion (Discriminant Validity)

Variable	**Corporate Performance**	**Performance Management**
Corporate Performance	0.789	
Performance Management	0.105	0.844

Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity was examined using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). All Performance management and Corporate Performance (CP) indicators yielded VIF values between 1.65 and 2.39, below the recommended threshold of 5 (Hair et al., 2019). This suggests multicollinearity was not a concern, and the model estimates are stable.

Table 6 – Multicollinearity (VIF)

Factor	**VIF**
PM1Clarity of performance management	2.39
PM2Goal alignment,	2.12
PM3 Frequency performance reviews	2.03
PM4 Feedback	2.19
PM5 Support for goal achievement	2.29
CP2 – Customer satisfaction	1.65
CP3 – Resource management	1.79
CP4 – Achievement of strategic objectives	1.80
CP5 – Innovation	1.76

Discriminant Validity (HTMT Criterion)

Henseler et al. (2015) recommended using the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio to further examine constructs' discriminant validity. The HTMT ratio between Performance Management and Corporate Performance was 0.312, well below the conservative threshold of 0.85. This result indicates that the two constructs are empirically distinct and measure conceptually different dimensions, confirming discriminant validity.

Table 7 Discriminant Validity (HTMT Criterion)

Variables	Performance Management	Corporate Performance
Performance Management	1	0.312
Corporate Performance	0.312	1

Model Fit Indices (Quality Criterion)

The result of the quality test on the model between Corporate Performance (CP) and Performance Management (PM) is that PM was 0.022 in predictive relevance (Q^2), indicating good predictive validity (Hair et al., 2019). The model explained 47.1% of CP variance ($R^2 = 0.471$), indicating moderate explanatory power as specified by Chin (1998). The model was 56.7% explanatory, confirming that PM explains CP significantly.

Table 8 – Model Fit Indices (Quality Criterion)

Relationship	R^2	Q^2	Explanatory Power
PM → CP	0.471	0.022	56.7%

Structural Model Validation

This section explores the relationships between the construct's performance management and corporate performance of a private University in Ghana. The structural model evaluates the proposed hypotheses by examining the relationships among predictors and outcome effects.

Direct hypothesis testing

Hypothesis 1

H1: Performance management positively and significantly influences the corporate performance of a private University in Ghana

The analysis showed that Performance Management positively and significantly affected Corporate Performance (β = 0.210, t = 2.143, p = 0.032), indicating that better performance management improves organizational performance.

Table 9 Direct effects

Variable	β	SD	t	P
Performance Management -> Corporate Performance	0.210	0.098	2.143	0.032

Source: Smart Pls results

5. Discussion of the Results and Implications

The study examines whether performance management positively and significantly affects corporate performance (CP) at Ghana's private universities. The first hypothesis (H1) was that performance management positively and significantly affects corporate performance in Ghanaian private universities. The findings revealed that performance management, including review frequency, performance management clarity, feedback management, goal alignment, and goal support, positively and significantly affect corporate performance in Ghanaian private universities. The findings corroborate the views of Aguinis (2009) and Armstrong (2006) that performance management is a strategic way to align employee effort with organisational objectives, influencing institutional performance positively. Along the same lines, Kaplan and Norton (1996) note that goal congruence and performance measurement have long-term performance repercussions, which also agrees with the findings of this research. At university, Decramer et al. (2013) affirmed that advanced performance management systems improve accountability and learning quality, which is consistent with the positive and significant relationship derived from the current study.

Further, the study is consistent with the firm's Resource-Based View (RBV) (Barney, 1991), which refers to internal resources like human capital and management routines responsible for sustainable competitive advantage. The study's findings reveal that, if properly executed, performance management enhances private universities' ability to realise their strategic targets, optimise the use of resources, and remain competitive in the evolving academic landscape within Ghana. Counterintuitive findings, however, have been documented in some settings. For instance, Macky and Boxall (2007) caution that performance management may be utilised in a manner contra-productive to improved outcomes when it is conducted in an inferior or even punitive manner, where employees react negatively. In the same light, Kuvaas (2006) argues that performance management systems centred on control rather than development may hinder

employee motivation, thereby hindering organisational performance. These counterfactual results prove that performance management drives overall performance, but its impact greatly relies on design, implementation, and employee attitudes.

5. Implications

RBV argues that organisations achieve sustainable performance due to the effective leveraging and utilisation of superior internal resources. In this study, performance management is a strategic resource that transforms human capital into quantifiable institutional outcomes through goal alignment, feedback, and appraisal processes. This creates the premise that performance management systems are more than an administrative tool but organisational tools with a mandate to spearhead competitive edge in private universities. The study further expands the Contingency Leadership Theory (Fiedler, 1967; Donaldson, 2001), assuming organisational effectiveness is contingent on congruence between management practices and situational variables. The results indicate that the implementation of performance management practice in the university environment that emphasises fairness, transparency, and academic requirements yield excellent performance outcomes. They add to theory since they demonstrate that performance management can be theorised as an asset for strategy (RBV) and as a contingency process guarantor that organisational practice is aligned to context demands in knowledge-intensive organisations such as universities.

Universities' managers and leaders must invest in systematic procedures that clearly set expectations, monitor progress, and provide immediate feedback. Besides, open evaluation systems reduce the rate of misinterpretation and promote accountability, challenging employees to improve. Regular performance testing and constructive feedback could further improve employee morale, retention, and commitment, crucial in the current competitive age of higher education. The study suggests that boards and policymakers should use performance management systems with components of equity, goal congruence, and resource facilitation to ensure the competitiveness of private universities. Institutionalisation of the systems in policies will enhance effectiveness and a culture of continuous improvement**.** Regulators like the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) should mandate universities to implement standardised performance management systems, including clearly defined performance indicators, an open appraisal system, and development-linked appraisals.

In line with contingency theory, policy also emphasises aligning performance management systems with the institutional environment. Policies, for instance, can trigger universities to customise performance measures to their mission teaching excellence, research productivity, or community engagement. Embedding these frameworks in legislation will reduce leader-specific variations and ensure consistency during leadership changes. Finally, the policies must mandate leadership capacity development programs to enable academic leaders to apply performance management and efficiently. This would safeguard accountability, boost staff motivation, and make Ghana's private higher education competitive.

6. Recommendations

Hiring policies must go beyond hiring and include formalised onboarding, mentoring, and retention strategies to enable new employees to contribute effectively to institutional performance. Universities and regulatory agencies such as GTEC must establish clear and transparent appraisal mechanisms with specific performance measures linked to academic and administrative functions. Institutions should reserve a permanent percentage of their budgets for training, research support, and overseas exposure. Competitive grants in national schemes may also be made available to develop personnel in strategic fields. Succession policies within universities must be based on merit, with clearly defined parameters to reduce internal politics and politics-based competition. Regulators may require periodic reporting of succession practices.

Training initiatives should equip university leaders with inclusive management, team development, and mentoring skills. A nationally endorsed leadership competency framework may be used to guide universities. Policies should enable staff autonomy in professional development choices, with alignment with institutional objectives. University leaders must incorporate performance management into their strategic plans to ensure fairness and consistency in leadership changes. Institutions should allow for a setting where talent management processes are not dependent on individual leaders but are supported by

institutional policy. Regulators (like GTEC) should align university talent management policy with national human capital development priorities, particularly in STEM, digital transformation, and health sciences.

7. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite its contributions, this study has some limitations. Firstly, employing a cross-sectional design restricts the ability to determine causal relationships between performance management and corporate performance. Future research could use longitudinal or experimental designs to track changes over time better and strengthen causal conclusions. Second, the study focused on private universities in Ghana, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to public universities or higher education institutions in other countries. Comparative studies across private and public universities or regions would provide broader insights into how context shapes the talent management performance relationship. Finally, the study relied on self-reported data from managers and staff, which, despite the precautions taken, may be subject to common method bias and social desirability effects. Future research could triangulate findings using multiple data sources, such as performance records, student satisfaction measures, or external quality rankings.

8. Conclusion

This study confirmed that performance management has a positive and significant influence on the corporate performance of private universities in Ghana. Institutions implementing clear performance goals, frequent evaluations, and effective feedback systems are better positioned to enhance productivity, accountability, and service delivery. The results reinforce the view that well-structured performance management practices align individual efforts with institutional objectives and contribute directly to overall organisational success. Therefore, strengthening performance management systems should remain a central priority for private universities seeking sustainable growth and competitiveness in Ghana's higher education sector.

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