



# Beyond Administration: Achieving Strategic Visibility by Redefining the HRM Function's Uniqueness in Uganda Government Institutions

Robert Frank Kyagaba<sup>1</sup>, Samuel Mafabi<sup>2</sup>, John C. Munene<sup>3</sup>, Jotham Byarugaba Mbiito<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PhD Student, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, Makerere University Business School

<sup>2</sup>Professor, Department of Human Resource Management, Makerere University Business School

<sup>3</sup>Professor, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, Makerere University Business School

<sup>4</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Marketing, Makerere University Business School

This study investigates the relationship between social identity and the visibility of Human Resource Management (HRM) within government institutions in Uganda. By adopting a social identity approach, the research explores how internal and external perceptions shape the strategic value of the HRM function. The study examines how self-conception, relationships, and collective membership predict HRM visibility. It employed an explanatory sequential design. Quantitative data were collected from a sample of 109 government institutions and analyzed using SmartPLS. This was followed by qualitative research involving 10 key informants and analyzed using NVivo. The findings reveal that self-conception, relationships, and collective membership positively and significantly relate to HRM visibility. The study recommends Uganda government institutions empower the HRM function to demonstrate strategic value through relationships, cross-functional collaboration, stakeholder engagement, and entrusting HRM with leadership in formulating institutional strategies. By aligning HRM activities with institutional goals, the research highlights that social identity can elevate HRM visibility within the public sector context.

**Keywords:** Social identity, Human resources management visibility, Human resources management function, Government institutions, Stakeholders

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## Corresponding Author

Robert Frank Kyagaba

PhD Student, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, Makerere University Business School

E-mail: [rfkyagaba@ndejeuniversity.ac.ug](mailto:rfkyagaba@ndejeuniversity.ac.ug) / [rfkyagaba1563@gmail.com](mailto:rfkyagaba1563@gmail.com)

## INTRODUCTION

Amid unprecedented global shifts, the strategic importance of human resource management (HRM) has fostered sustainable growth, transitioning from a supporting function to a primary engine of organizational performance (Knies et al., 2024: 2). As institutions grapple with the challenges of technological disruption and a globalised, diverse workforce, the success of these strategies increasingly hinges on HRM visibility. HRM visibility refers to the extent to which institutions recognize the contribution and impact of HRM roles, policies, and practices to drive performance (Stone et al., 2024: 24). HRM visibility ensures that the HRM function is present and influential in driving institutional competitiveness (Munene, 2012). It boosts employee trust and engagement

in addition to demonstrating organizational commitment, cohesion, and employee development (Klimchak et al., 2020: 3). Globally, HRM has transitioned from a traditional administrative role to a strategic partner that drives performance, innovation, and change (Brewster et al., 2022: 521). In Africa, this transition has gained traction and is linked to talent retention, organizational legitimacy, and capacity building efforts (Kamoche et al., 2012: 4; Stone et al., 2024: 3). In Uganda, public institutions have embraced this shift and reconfigured their HRM systems to promote transparency, inclusiveness, and responsiveness, which collectively increase HRM visibility.

While numerous factors contribute to the strategic importance of HRM in public sector organizations, social identity stands out as a significant determinant. It is defined as an individual's sense of belonging within a specific social setting, and is a key driver of HRM visibility (Walker et al., 2024). It is conceptualized in terms of self-conception, relationships, and collective membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Self-conception is when individuals define themselves through specific group memberships, such as the HRM function within government institutions. On the other hand, relationships (the relational identities) begin as dyads or professional pairs that integrate with significant others, evolving into wider collective memberships that distinguish "us" from "them" through shared belonging and social differentiation (Lukate, 2025, p.130). This means that HRM must distinguish itself as a function, then how it relates with other functions, and finally its engagement with the entire government institutions' framework. Thus, HRM must be inclusive and acknowledge other functions to increase the HRM function's contribution and impact within organizations (Ayoko & Fujimoto, 2023: 13). In the Ugandan context, the significance of HRM visibility in public institutions is undermined by challenges in workforce management. For instance, the Ministry of Public Service in Uganda noted that the healthcare sector faced a critical shortage of medical staff, with only 58% of approved positions filled nationally as of 2012 (Mulegi, 2022: 59). This shortage is attributed to low pay, poor working conditions, and limited HRM support, highlighting the need for visible HRM practices. Furthermore, the informal sector dominates the country's economy, accounting for a significant portion of the workforce (Mugoda et al., 2020: 2). In such settings, HRM visibility becomes critical in formalizing organizational performance.

Despite the recognized importance of HRM visibility, empirical research exploring its antecedents and outcomes in the Ugandan context remains limited (Aboramadan et al., 2019: 3). While studies have examined the impact of HRM practices on public institutions, there is a scarcity of research examining how factors, including self-conception, relationships, and collective membership, influence HRM visibility (Mahmood et al., 2019: 2; Sharif et al., 2024: 2). This gap hinders the development of targeted HRM strategies that can enhance organizational effectiveness and employee satisfaction.

The objective of this study is to examine the relationships between social identity and HRM visibility in Uganda public institutions. This is subdivided into three parts, including examining whether self-conception, relationships, and collective memberships predict HRM visibility. By investigating these relationships, the study aims to provide insights into how the HRM function can be made visible to support institutional goals. The findings will inform policy and practice, contributing to the development of strategic HRM frameworks in Uganda and similar contexts.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Optimal Distinctiveness Theory

The theoretical landscape of HRM visibility has been mapped through various lenses, including Legitimacy and Stakeholder theories (Ogunode, 2022: 22). However, the current study utilizes the Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (ODT) by Brewer (1991) to examine the relationship between social identity and HRM visibility within government institutions. ODT provides a framework for understanding the HRM function's drive to record the need for institutional belonging with the quest for professional uniqueness. Thus, individuals seek a balance between

assimilation (belonging) and differentiation (uniqueness) (Lin et al., 2024).

By achieving this equilibrium, HRM establishes recognition for its strategic contributions, ensuring visibility within competitive environments (Zhao & Glynn, 2022, p.5). Literature highlights the application of ODT within such contexts, particularly concerning corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives (Zhou et al., 2025, p.4). The application describes HRM's desire to strengthen identity resilience by aligning its contributions with stakeholder expectations to achieve distinctiveness and foster long-term outcomes amidst challenges. ODT has been applied to understand many fields, including organizational psychology and legitimacy, among others, to explain identities within social contexts (Brewer, 2012, p.23). It suggests that individuals hold a need to achieve an optimal balance between inclusion and distinctiveness within social groups and situations (Taeuscher & Rothe, 2021, p.438). In the context of government institutions, ODT explains how HRM strives to achieve a balance between fitting into the broader organizational context while maintaining its own identity and value proposition (Lin et al., 2024, p.8). By understanding the dynamism, HRM positions itself to serve the interests of stakeholders and retain its identity, which is the bedrock of what makes it serve institutions.

### **Social Identity and Human Resource Management Visibility**

Social identity, which is an individual's self-concept derived from perceived membership in relevant social groups, while HRM visibility is the contribution and impact of the HRM function in institutions. Studies have highlighted the role of inclusive HRM practices in enhancing organizational identification among institutions (Chaudhry et al., 2021: 4). According to Waligóra (2024: 2), research demonstrates that HRM supports diverse social identities to enhance organizational connections. Similarly, a systematic review of literature emphasizes the importance of belongingness and intersectionality in HRM, advocates for inclusive practices that recognize the multifaceted nature of HRM to foster an engaged workforce (Ayoko & Fujimoto, 2023: 3). Furthermore, the integration of ODT (Brewer, 1991: 4) into HRM has been explored to understand its identification with organizations to influence outcomes. A systematic review of research underscores the significance of social identity in shaping HRM practices, suggesting that when HRM identifies with mother institutions, it is likely to perceive HRM as visible (Alqarni et al., 2023: 3). Furthermore, social identity optimizes HRM practices, elevates service quality, and overall HRM visibility (Bartram et al., 2014: 8). However, empirical exploration remains scarce, within multicultural developing contexts like Uganda, as most scholarship focuses on Western settings (Bajwa & König, 2017: 13; Welbourne et al., 2017: 2).

It is important to note that there is limited understanding of how social identity dimensions interact with HRM functions. While inclusive practices validate identities to enhance HRM presence (Ren & Chowdhury, 2026: 6), the specific mechanisms driving this visibility require deeper investigation (Detzen et al., 2023: 3). This research examines how social identity influences stakeholder perceptions and HRM standing globally, addressing gaps within non-Western organizational contexts.

Self-conception in social identity explains how individuals define themselves within a group, influencing their behavior based on perceived appreciation of their contributions (Abrams & Hogg, 1988: 12; Tajfel & Turner, 1979: 5). This directly relates to HRM visibility, where HRM, the function, evaluates its impact on institutional value and competitiveness (Yukl, 2012: 24). HRM's self-perception drives its evaluation of contributions against other departments (Charness & Chen, 2020: 4). Scholars suggest self-conception intensifies when an identity is threatened, influencing its salience during challenging times, shaped by the operating environment (Detzen et al., 2023: 3; Ripoll & Breugh, 2025: 6). This is crucial for Ugandan government institutions, often administration-focused rather than strategic. The evolution of the HRM function from administrative to strategic roles demonstrates its adaptation to new work environments (Nduhura et al., 2022: 8; Nwagwu, 2020: 4). The social self then becomes pivotal in positioning HRM for its desired future role (Hallier & Forbes, 2004: 14). This leads to relationships.

Relationships are the connections among individuals and groups that shape belonging, influence, and behavior,

guiding intergroup interactions (Hogg et al., 2017: 571). They link HRM to other functions and external stakeholders (Abrams et al., 2022: 7; Kane & Levina, 2017: 19). These interactions create opportunities by shaping intergroup relations and enabling collaboration across diverse identities (Hogg et al., 2017: 571). While these ties are beneficial, they require clear definition and boundary management; otherwise, HRM's self-conception may dominate and obscure the contributions of other functions (Dirth & Branscombe, 2018: 8; Jetten et al., 2017: 6). Well-structured relationships generate positive spillover effects, enhancing HRM's value and institutional impact (Kane & Levina, 2017: 12; Rao et al., 2000: 9). Through these interdependencies, organizations cultivate group-based social identities in which shared benefits and a sense of belonging strengthen cohesion (Dirth & Branscombe, 2018: 1305). Over time, these dynamics extend beyond individual or functional identities, fostering broader collective memberships aligned with organizational goals. Consequently, effectively managed relationships not only support coordination and performance but also reinforce social identity processes, ensuring that collaboration remains balanced, inclusive, and strategically beneficial across institutional contexts.

Collective membership refers to an individual's sense of belonging to a group as well as the emotional and cognitive significance attached to that affiliation (Cheded et al., 2025, p 12). It shapes how individuals define themselves in relation to others, reinforcing shared norms, values, and goals within the group. Through collective membership, individuals internalize group prototypes and align their behavior with collective expectations, strengthening cohesion and intergroup differentiation (Abrams et al. 2021, 204). This process enhances solidarity but may also contribute to bias toward out-groups. Importantly, collective membership is dynamic, evolving with context and social interactions, and is central to understanding identity construction and group-based behavior in organizational and societal settings (Hogg, 2016). This means that the HRM function collectively internalizes and aligns with the expectations of the institutions in which it operates. This helps in strengthening cohesion and intergroup diversity. This discussion underscores the importance of self-conception, relationships, and collective membership towards HRM visibility, and the literature therefore reveals the following hypothesis:

***Hypothesis one.*** *Self-conception positively relates to human resources management visibility in government institutions*

***Hypothesis two.*** *Relationships positively relate with human resources management visibility in government institutions*

***Hypothesis three.*** *There is a positive relationship between collective membership and human resources management visibility in government institutions*

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design, Study Population, and Sample

The study adopted a sequential explanatory research design, which involves collecting and analyzing quantitative data and supplementing it with qualitative data to further explain the quantitative results (Garip, 2025). The study population consisted of 153 government institutions, including 24 Ministries and Departments as well as 129 Agencies (MDAs), based on the records obtained from the Ministry of Finance (*Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development Audit report, 2022/2023-Uganda Government*). A sample size of 109 institutions was selected based on (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Respondents included four heads of departments (HRM, Accounts & Finance, PR, and Procurement & Disposal). These were targeted owing to their deep knowledge about HRM visibility in government institutions. Data were aggregated to an institution as a unit of analysis, while the four heads of departments were the unit of enquiry. Institutions were clustered into two strata based on the Uganda government classification, i.e., Ministries & Departments as well as Agencies. Proportionate random sampling was conducted

on each stratum, whereupon 109 institutions were selected, including 17 ministries and departments, as well as 92 agencies. Data were collected using questionnaires that were anchored on six Likert scales to provide adequate options for respondents (Taherdoost, 2025, p. 8). Precautionary measures were considered to avoid bias; these included the principal researcher distributing questionnaires, assisted by two research assistants, instead of leaving them to an individual in the organisation. Questionnaire ambiguity was addressed by using different scale anchors, as well as avoiding double-barrelled questions (Jordan & Troth, 2020: 5). Items were separated and staggered throughout the instrument to deter respondents from predicting relationships under study. Collecting data for independent and dependent variables was carried out at different points in time, which is known as a temporal separation or common source, a procedural remedy used to reduce common method bias (CMB). The independent variable was collected first, and then, after 2 weeks, the dependent variable was also collected. This is because collecting data at different intervals helps ensure that the observed relationship between variables is substantive rather than a result of the measurement environment (Podsakoff et al., 2012, 2024; Tehseen et al., 2017).

### **Background Characteristics**

The study was conducted among government institutions in Uganda to contribute to improving service delivery. Institutions were categorized in terms of Ministries and Departments on one hand, and on the other hand, there were Agencies. Out of a sample of 109 institutions that received the questionnaires, a final total of 78 institutions returned usable questionnaires, representing a response rate of 71.5%. The study considered only those that had been in existence by the time the research was conducted (2022). 74 institutions representing 94.8 per cent had been in existence for over twenty years, while 1 institution had been in existence for 6-10 and 11-15 years, representing 13 percent. This implies that since the majority of the institutions had been in existence for such a long time, they can justify the contribution of the HRM function in such institutions. Regarding the characteristics of the respondents, the majority of them were aged between 36 and 46, representing 47.5 percent. This implies that a good number of them were mature enough to make informed decisions about the contribution and impact of HRM function. In terms of gender, the majority were male at 52.54% and females 45.8%, implying that government institutions are male-dominated. The largest number of respondents were graduates at 45.8%, indicating respondents' ability to comprehend the questionnaire. Finally, in terms of work experience, 30.5% had worked with government institutions for 3-5 years, which means they understood the importance of human resources management visibility.

### **Measurement of Variables**

Social identity was measured using three indicators: self-conception, relationships, and collective membership (Sieger et al., 2016: 35). A scale developed by Leach et al. (2008: 156) was modified and utilized. On the other hand, human resources management visibility was measured as strategic positioning, stakeholder expectations, strategic partnerships, and social transformation. (Munene, 2012: 5; Munene & Nansubuga, 2017: 8). The scale to measure human resources management visibility was adapted from Munene (2012: 8). The items were measured using scales anchored on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1- Very untrue to 6- Extremely true.

### **Data Cleaning**

From the field, data were entered into SPSS for cleaning in accordance with Field (2009: 11). Missing data were assessed at the level of cases, variables, and values. Missing values can reduce statistical power, and because they were less than 5%, they were replaced using linear interpolation (Kim et al., 2024, p.7). No outliers were identified in the dataset; therefore, running descriptive statistics and assigning missing values to the next lower or higher values to avoid biasing the mean and inflating the standard deviation were not necessary (Field, 2009: 133-134).

## Data Analysis

Cleaned data were finally analyzed using Structural Equation Modelling with the aid of partial least squares, specifically SmartPLS 3 software (Hair et al., 2017: 3). Smart PLS works well with small samples of less than 200, and in this case, the sample size of 109 institutions was within the limit (Hair et al., 2022). Furthermore, PLS path modeling involves no assumptions about the population or scale of measurement, which is also useful where distributions are highly skewed (Bagozzi & Yi, 1992: 15; Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). This is in addition to facilitating the modeling of complex relationships within datasets, making it suitable for the multifaceted nature of the research. This research comprises various relationships, making Smart PLS suitable (Asmawati et al., 2024). From the study, the number of government institutions covered in the study is 109, thus making PLS SEM suitable. According to Henseler et al. (2014: 3), the measurement (outer) and structural (inner) models are used to evaluate and interpret PLS–SEM results. The inner model, as defined by Hair et al. (2017: 5), examines the relationships between the independent and dependent latent variables, while the outer model assesses the relationship between the corresponding indicators and the latent variable, focusing on reliability and validity. After analysing quantitative data, qualitative data were also analysed using NVivo in order to obtain a deeper meaning from the respondents. Ten key respondents were interviewed, and the saturation point was obtained when additional data from interviews did not generate new knowledge (Hair et al., 2022).

## FINDINGS

### The Measurement Model

Two types of construct validity were employed to determine whether the instrument accurately measured the underlying trait it was intended to assess. These were convergent and discriminant validities (Neuman, 2007: 212). Convergent validity assesses the degree to which a measure correlates positively with other measures of the same construct. To assess convergent validity, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was employed. The results show that all AVE values exceed the 0.5 threshold, confirming convergent validity as shown in Tables 1 (Henseler et al., 2014: 9). To evaluate discriminant validity, an indicator's outer loading on a construct should be higher than its highest construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This is illustrated in Table 2.

Furthermore, instrument reliability was examined using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. These tests measured the internal consistency of the scales used to assess the variables (Hair et al., 2017: 9). Composite reliability values for each variable exceeded 0.7, indicating that the instrument is reliable (Nunnally, 1978: 17). Refer

**Table 1.** Composite reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

|                       | Composite Reliability | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Collective Membership | .924                  | .708                             |
| Relationships         | .904                  | .703                             |
| Self-Conception       | .853                  | .632                             |

Source: Primary data (August 2025)

**Table 2.** Fornell-Larcker criterion analysis for checking discriminant validity

|                       | Collective Membership | Relationships | Self-Conception |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Collective Membership | .82                   |               |                 |
| Relationships         | .70                   | .85           |                 |
| Self-Conception       | .77                   | .59           | .81             |

Source: Primary data

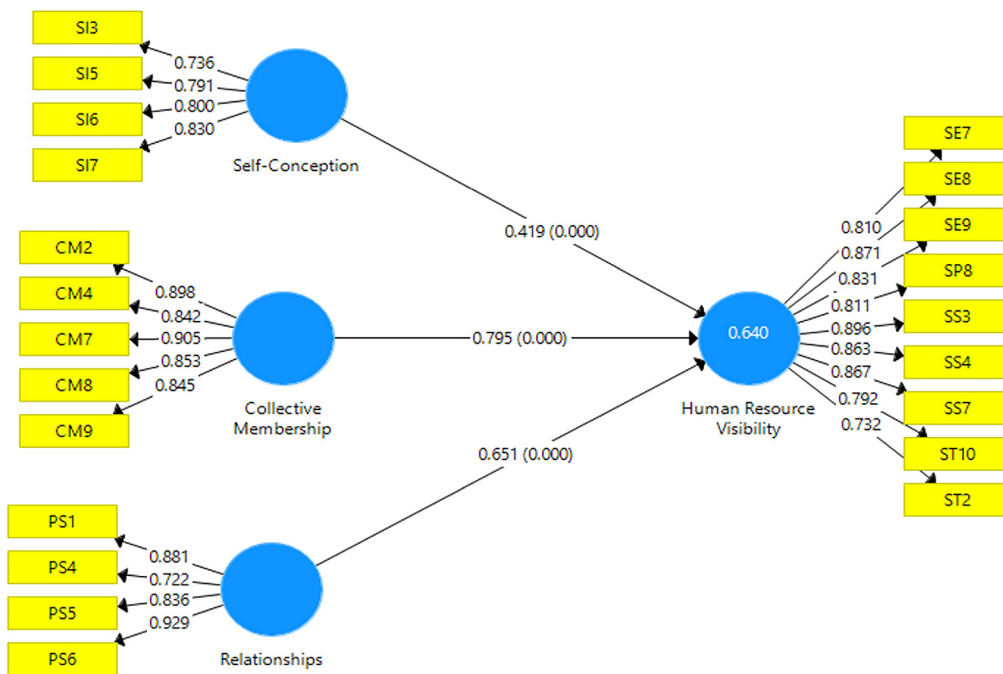


Fig. 1. Hypothesis testing

to Table 1. Composite reliability is preferred over Cronbach's alpha because it considers the different outer loadings of indicator variables (Hair et al., 2017: 7). According to the table, all composite reliability values for individual test variables were above 0.7, which means that the instrument was acceptable.

## Structural Model

### Test of Hypothesis

Relationships between constructs were tested by examining their path coefficients and related *t*-statistics via the bootstrapping procedure (Wong, 2013). The bootstrapping method was used to test the significance of the path coefficients and loadings. Three hypotheses were tested, and the findings are shown in Figure 1 below:

The findings reveal that self-conception is positively and significantly associated with HRM visibility ( $\beta = 0.419$ ,  $t$ -statistic = 5.461,  $p$ -value < 0.05). Thus, hypothesis H1 is supported.

This means that in government institutions, the HRM departments in government institutions perceive their role as valuable and positively contribute to impacting their competitiveness. Self-perception is exhibited through the HRM function's behaviour through communication and decision-making, which earns it a lot of respect from other departments and external stakeholders. The perceptions drive the HRM function to engage in activities which enable it to traverse the entire breadth of government institutions by advising other departments, external stakeholders, among others, which boost its image within the institutions and external stakeholders.

Furthermore, results indicate that relationships have a positive and significant association with HRM visibility ( $\beta = 0.651$ ,  $t$  statistic 13.717,  $p$  values < .05). Therefore, hypothesis H2 is supported. This means that when the HRM function partners with other functions to perform institutional responsibilities, it enhances its contribution and impact within these organizations. This is through the HRM function, collaborating with other functions to partner when implementing institutional activities. Associating with other departments produces positive results since the other departments and external stakeholders hold a lot of trust in the HRM function owing to its previous success

over time. The HRM function is represented in other departments where heads of other functions have been skilled in basic HRM ideologies, thereby not necessarily always calling on the head or representative of HRM even in the simplest of matters. In addition to this, partnering is enabling the bringing of HRM services closer.

In addition, results indicate that collective membership positively and significantly associates with HRM visibility ( $\beta = 0.795$ ,  $t$  statistic 14.690,  $p$  values  $< .05$ ). Therefore, H3 is supported. This implies that in government institutions where the HRM function cultivates a sense of a common cause for the general good of government institutions its contribution to impacting the said organisations is enhanced. This is achieved through establishing and maintaining strong ties with other departments and external stakeholders, which enables the sharing of skills and ideas. Accordingly, when the HRM function adapts well to changes geared towards delivering quality services, its contribution to institutional value and competitiveness is enhanced. The concept of collective membership allows the HRM function to be accepted by other functions as a contributor to institutional performance. The HRM function actively involves itself in planning for entire organisations, identifying appropriate workforce or talent and identifying external partners that may be useful for institutional competitiveness.

### ***Discussion of Findings***

The study aimed to examine the relationship between social identity and human resources management visibility in government institutions. It found that there is a positive and significant relationship between social identity and HRM visibility in these institutions. Social identity represents the HRM department's sense of belonging within government institutions, while visibility indicates its individual impact and contribution toward institutional goals. The study shows that a strong sense of belonging, which the HRM function experiences with other functions, enhances collaboration with internal and external stakeholders. Teamwork enables the HRM function to focus on achieving institutional goals, significantly increasing its visibility within government institutions and improving public perceptions of its previously undervalued contributions. Accordingly, the HRM function receives considerable attention and is placed in key positions within the institutional hierarchy. Additionally, many government institutions have a rule requiring other functions, such as finance, to work with their HRM function to ensure smooth operations. The detailed implications of this relationship are discussed under the following three themes that emerged: acceptability, control, and purpose.

Acceptability occurs when the HRM function is compelled to consider its value as vital to institutional competitiveness. When other functions willingly follow HRM's recommendations, it exhibits the importance of HRM's involvement. Through this, the HRM function influences decisions and holds considerable power, whereby other functions cannot work contrary to its position. For example, in a number of agencies, other departments are duty-bound to seek the HRM's guidance on new tasks. In some institutions, HRM facilitates training in various skills, especially in matters related to HRM basics. This aims to ensure that HRM services are accessible to all and may not necessarily require HRM professionals. This is due to the HRM function's approach of involving and consulting everyone, which has helped them build trust and support from other departments and stakeholders. This is supported by the qualitative findings from the field:

*“There is evidence of acceptability from the side of HRM owing to the trust by other functions regarding its influence on this institution, the head of this organization entrusts important decisions to HRM, and there have not been many disappointments.”* **Key informant 4**

The qualitative findings above explain the position of the HRM function in government institutions, which enhances HRM visibility. The finding is supported by Brosius, H. B. (2022, p.55), who conclude that the acceptability of new technology influences perceived usefulness and ease of use. Perceived usefulness describes

the degree to which individuals believe that using a system improves performance and plays a positive role if the system is adopted. In addition, perceived ease of use explains an individual's belief that using a new technology is free from physical and mental effort. Relatedly, Doberstein et al. (2022: 8) supplemented the findings by relating age to acceptance. The study argues that in private institutions, young employees are more likely to accept new technologies, unlike older ones in the public sector. It further suggests that older employees in public institutions accept new technologies after consulting colleagues to generate trust. This resonates with the findings in the current study, where the young employees in government institutions are willing to accept the new roles of HRM function, arguing that implementing new found HRM practices "is the way to go." It is important to note that young people between the ages of 36-46 were the majority at 41%, thus willing to experiment with new inventions.

Another theme that emerged is control. Control in this case means that in government institutions where the HRM function takes responsibility for effective use of resources, employee welfare, protecting stakeholder interests, regulating programs, to enable the HRM contribute and impact such organisations. This is achieved through other such organisations prioritising recommendations made by the HRM function, necessitating a proactive approach to achieving institutional goals. It is important to note that control by HRM function is key in identifying performance gaps and correcting errors, especially those committed during the implementation of new tasks. These are bound to occur, and in such situations, the HRM function assists other functions during the implementation of tasks, especially in compliance with contractual regulations guided by policy frameworks. This is further elaborated in the qualitative discussion with a key informant:

*"...during the process of implementing organizational programs, HRM has been able to effectively control resource utilization. HRM is in control, which enables us to achieve as a team,..we do not lack."* **Key informant 7**

The narrative explains how HRM is in control of government institutions' resources which enables HRM visibility. From the observations, the achievements in this organization are as a result of the control exercised by the HRM function. This finding is in agreement with Akinleye and Kolawole (2020: 5), who conclude that an efficient joint control framework improves performance in selected public institutions in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The study suggests that in institutions where there are functional systematic controls, performance is enhanced, and recommends that individuals charged with governance need to strengthen identified components of internal controls. This is supplemented by Fathima Sajeetha and Kaneshalingam (2020: 8), who argue that power rooted within accountability mechanisms ensures transparency, liability, controllability, responsibility, and responsiveness. These are important in ensuring accountability of institutional responsible centers. Another theme that emerged is purpose.

Purpose, according to the study, implies that in such institutions, the HRM function works with a determination to achieve institutional goals and objectives. This determines the extent to which the HRM function contributes to impact institutional value and competitiveness. By capitalizing on management attention, HRM functions are empowered to work hard, make decisions, set goals, and take responsibility for their results. Accordingly, HRM functions are aided to continuously link and advise other departments about the best work practices, which uplift other functions as well as HRM. This is further explained by a key informant to the study:

*"There is a determination by HRM to evolve from what it has been known for to a new beginning. This is done on purpose so its contribution and impact on such institutions is visible. Many government institutions today argue that HRM does this purposefully."*

The narrative above from key informant 5 explains the deliberate effort taken by the HRM function to ensure that its efforts in contributing to and impacting government institutions are recognizable. Accordingly, HRM continuously and purposefully links up with other stakeholders to enhance its visibility. For example, Oluyinka and Cusipag (2021: 6) conclude that working purposefully influences the adoption of policies like the use of Google Classroom in educational institutions. The study suggests that purposeful adoption of new learning methods enables performance in public learning institutions. Such efforts allow HRM to influence institutional policies. Similarly, Kitchener et al. (2022: 9) found that purposefulness extends beyond profit-making, contributing to strategic clarity and operational disciplined stakeholder interests. This aligns with institutions where service delivery takes precedence over profit. Many Uganda government institutions are not profit-oriented but serve as regulators through policies. It is against this background that such institutions endeavor to regulate than focus on profit. This includes Ministries and Departments.

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationships between social identity and HRM visibility in government institutions in Uganda. Results indicate that all three dimensions of social identity were found to positively and significantly associate with HRM visibility in Uganda government institutions. This indicates that social identity is a foundation for HRM visibility in government institutions in Uganda. There is thus a need for the HRM function to constantly reflect on its actions to assess its contribution to the impact government institutions. The continuous assessments help in determining areas of strength and weakness, providing a foundation for improvement and making informed decisions. Furthermore, relationships should also be encouraged among the different functions and external stakeholders to enable HRM visibility to be realized in government institutions. Working in partnership with other functions to plan and implement institutional strategies enables the HRM function to have a significant impact. Additionally, collective membership enables the HRM function to work with purpose to contribute to impacting government institutions. In addition, government institutions must intentionally empower the HRM function to drive institutional change by mandating its early integration into all strategic activities. This will enable all institutions to appreciate HRM's contribution and impact as desired.

## LIMITATIONS

The study concentrated on social identity and HRM visibility in government institutions in Uganda. Future studies should concentrate on other sectors where HRM visibility is necessary. Furthermore, the study adopted a sequential explanatory approach, which poses a challenge of obtaining many kinds of information since there are two datasets, which may lead to a lack of integration, and findings are reported separately, often resulting in conflicting results. Therefore, another approach should be adopted to get a deeper understanding and interpret the meanings rather than generalizing the causes and effects of social identity dimensions and HRM visibility.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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# 행정을 넘어: 우간다 정부기관에서 HRM 기능의 고유성 재정의를 통한 전략적 가시성 확보

Robert Frank Kyagaba<sup>1</sup>, Samuel Mafabi<sup>2</sup>, John C. Munene<sup>3</sup>, Jotham Byarugaba Mbiito<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PhD Student, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, Makerere University Business School

<sup>2</sup>Professor, Department of Human Resource Management, Makerere University Business School

<sup>3</sup>Professor, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, Makerere University Business School

<sup>4</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Marketing, Makerere University Business School

본 연구는 우간다 정부기관에서 사회적 정체성과 인적자원관리(Human Resource Management, HRM) 기능의 가시성 간의 관계를 분석하였다. 이를 위해 조직 구성원 및 외부 이해관계자의 인식이 HRM 기능의 전략적 가치를 어떻게 형성하는지를 살펴보았으며, 자기개념, 관계, 집단적 소속감이 HRM 가시성을 예측하는 핵심 요인인지 검토하였다. 연구 방법으로는 설명적 순차 연구설계를 적용하여 109개 정부기관을 대상으로 수집한 양적 자료를 분석하고, 주요 정보제공자를 대상으로 한 질적 연구를 수행하여 NVivo로 분석하였다. 연구 결과, 자기개념, 조직 내 관계 및 집단 소속감은 HRM 기능의 가시성에 유의한 긍정적 영향을 미치는 것으로 나타났다. 또한 HRM 기능의 전략적 역할을 강화하기 위해서는 조직 내 협력 확대, 이해관계자 참여 강화 및 기관 전략 수립 과정에서 HRM의 적극적인 참여가 필요함이 확인되었다. 본 연구는 사회정체성이 공공부문에서 HRM 기능의 전략적 위상을 강화하는 핵심 요인임을 보여주며, 정부기관의 인적자원관리 기능 강화를 위한 정책적·실무적 시사점을 제시한다.

**주제어:** 사회정체성, 인적자원관리 가시성, 인적자원관리 기능, 정부기관, 이해관계자

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## Corresponding Author

**Robert Frank Kyagaba**

PhD Student, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, Makerere University Business School

E-mail: fkyagaba@ndejeuniversity.ac.ug / rkyagaba1563@gmail.com