

# The Impact of Strategic Human Resource Management on Healthcare Service Delivery Efficiency

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## Abstract

**Background:** The global healthcare system faces significant challenges, including workforce shortages, increasing demand for services, and rising costs. Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) is crucial in addressing these issues, as it ensures effective resource allocation and workforce optimization. **Aim of the Study:** To investigate the impact of strategic human resource management practices on the efficiency of healthcare service delivery. **Methods:** This cross-sectional observational study was conducted over 1.5 years (February 2023 to August 2024) at [Place of Study] in Saudi Arabia. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 230 healthcare professionals across various roles. Data were collected via structured questionnaires, checklists, and document analysis. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS (version 26) to identify key trends and associations. **Result:** The study found that the majority of healthcare workers perceived the healthcare sector as adequately staffed and supported by effective HR strategies. However, concerns were raised regarding staff development programs, the availability of medical supplies, and the adequacy of timely promotions. Notably, 74.35% of respondents agreed that staffing was sufficient, while only 13.48% strongly agreed that development programs were available. **Conclusion:** Strategic HR management plays a critical role in enhancing healthcare service delivery efficiency by aligning workforce skills with organizational goals. However, gaps in staff development and resource availability highlight areas for improvement. Targeted HR interventions, including ongoing professional development and better resource management, are essential to improving healthcare service quality.

**Keywords:** Strategic Human Resource Management, Healthcare Efficiency, Workforce Management.

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## INTRODUCTION

The global healthcare system is increasingly recognized as a significant social, economic, and political challenge, as it directly impacts the well-being of populations and the economic stability of nations [1]. There is a shortage of healthcare workers, and their distribution across the sector is uneven. The demand for healthcare services continues to grow due to an aging population and the increasing prevalence of chronic and age-related illnesses. Health systems are also grappling with rising costs driven by ongoing technological advancements and the growing need for specialized skills. Organizational processes are evolving, with centralized management of highly specialized tasks and a greater focus on safety. Quality and efficiency have also improved, even for less specialized interventions. However, disparities in access to healthcare and preventive services persist [2]. These concerns stem from a variety of factors, including resource constraints,

inefficiencies, workforce shortages, and rising costs, all of which are exacerbated by the evolving demands on healthcare systems [3]. Consequently, many nations are under pressure to implement transformative changes to enhance their healthcare systems and address these multifaceted challenges effectively [2]. Many literatures have showed the importance of human resources management on developing the quality of healthcare service [4-6]. In healthcare services, the World Health Organization defines human resource management as encompassing various types of clinical and non-clinical personnel who are responsible for implementing health interventions at both public and individual levels [7]. Broadly speaking, HRM is a dynamic and essential management function within healthcare services, playing a crucial role in driving the successful transformation and restructuring of the health sector [8]. It is therefore crucial to examine how HR management strategies impact performance and outcomes in healthcare settings. Over the years, research has consistently demonstrated

that the quality of human resources significantly influences healthcare outcomes. Inadequate or substandard services are frequently attributed to challenges in HR management, such as insufficient training, low employee motivation, or misalignment between skills and job roles [9]. Thus, the processes must be carefully designed to ensure that all staff, both medical and non-medical, have the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their duties effectively [10, 11]. With the right strategies, hospitals can enhance productivity and the quality of services provided. Effective training enhances not only technical expertise but also fosters better communication and teamwork, both of which are essential in the fast-paced hospital environment [12]. Employee motivation, in turn, can directly impact the quality of interactions with patients and the effectiveness of services [13, 14]. Research shows that offering incentives and motivating employees, including implementing a competency-based bonus system, enhances the performance of hospital staff and can create a significant distinction between high-performing healthcare organizations and those that underperform or fall below average [15]. This paper explores the multifaceted impact of strategic HRM on healthcare service delivery efficiency, shedding light on its potential to transform challenges into opportunities for sustainable improvement.

## METHODOLOGY & MATERIALS

This extensive cross-sectional observational study was rigorously conducted within the [Study Place] at [Hospital Name], Saudi Arabia, over a 1.5-year period, spanning from February 2023 to August 2024. Employing a purposive sampling technique, the study carefully selected 230 healthcare professionals, encompassing a diverse range of roles including administrators, medical doctors, clinical officers, nurses, and other healthcare personnel. The participant recruitment process adhered to well-defined inclusion and exclusion criteria, ensuring clinical relevance, maintaining homogeneity within the study population, and enhancing the robustness and generalizability of the findings.

### Inclusion Criteria

- Healthcare professionals with a minimum of one year of experience in resource management.
- Healthcare facilities possessing documented resource management policies.
- Healthcare facilities with a minimum of one and a half years of operational data on healthcare delivery metrics available for analysis.

### Exclusion Criteria

- Healthcare facilities undergoing significant operational restructuring during the study period.
- Professionals who were not directly involved in resource allocation or strategic planning processes.

## Data Collection

Data collection was conducted through multiple methods, including the administration of structured questionnaires to selected participants, physical evaluation of healthcare equipment through detailed checklists, and the analysis of relevant documents provided by the healthcare institutions. Two distinct sets of questionnaires were crafted—one targeted healthcare practitioners and the other aimed at patient caregivers. The questionnaire for healthcare practitioners primarily focused on evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of devolved governance structures within the public health sector. In contrast, the questionnaire for patient caregivers sought insights into the perceived quality of services provided by the healthcare facilities. A comprehensive checklist was utilized to assess the adequacy and functionality of healthcare equipment available in the public health institutions. This approach was particularly valued for its capacity to gather direct observational data on the current state of health infrastructure. All participants were fully briefed on the study's objectives, methodology, and potential outcomes, and informed written consent was obtained from each participant prior to their involvement in the study. Confidentiality and ethical standards were strictly maintained throughout the research process. Ethical approval was granted by the institutional review board prior to the commencement of the study.

## Statistical Analysis

The collected data were systematically organized and presented in tabular form to facilitate clear and comprehensive analysis. Statistical evaluations were performed using SPSS software (version 26) to identify key trends, patterns, and associations within the data. Categorical variables were expressed as frequencies and percentages, providing valuable insights into the distribution of responses across various groups.

## RESULT

A total of 230 healthcare personnel participated in the study. Nurses constituted the majority, making up 54.78% (n = 126) of the participants, followed by clinical officers at 21.30% (n = 49). Individuals categorized as "others" represented 14.35% (n = 33), while medical doctors accounted for 5.22% (n = 12). Administrators comprised the smallest group, at 4.35% (Table 1). The participants evaluated various aspects of healthcare service delivery. Prevention and vaccination services received the highest agreement, with 61.74% (n = 142) agreeing and 30.43% (n = 70) strongly agreeing. Staff courtesy was rated positively, with 69.57% (n = 160) agreeing and 15.22% (n = 35) strongly agreeing. Competence among hospital staff was highly regarded, with 71.30% (n = 164) agreeing and 16.09% (n = 37) strongly agreeing. In contrast, ease of access to medical specialists received less favorable feedback, with 26.52% (n = 61) strongly disagreeing and 26.09% (n = 60) disagreeing. Adequacy of medical personnel and staff also emerged as a concern, as 39.13% (n = 90)

disagreed, and 12.61% (n = 29) strongly disagreed. ICT integration had polarized opinions, with 28.70% (n = 66) agreeing, while 33.04% (n = 76) strongly disagreed. Other areas, such as medical supplies, affordable ambulance services, and road linkage, reflected mixed levels of satisfaction (Table 2). Feedback on strategic HR frameworks highlighted that 74.35% (n = 171) agreed the health sector is adequately staffed, while 6.52% (n = 15) strongly agreed. Staff motivation schemes were rated positively, with 63.91% (n = 147) agreeing and 15.22% (n = 35) strongly agreeing. Promptness in remunerations

received favorable ratings, with 64.78% (n = 149) agreeing and 9.57% (n = 22) strongly agreeing. Timely staff promotions were a notable concern, with 31.30% (n = 72) disagreeing and 8.26% (n = 19) strongly agreeing. Mixed feedback was observed regarding fair treatment of staff, with 22.17% (n = 51) disagreeing and 20.87% (n = 48) undecided. Relevant HR strategies were positively rated by 53.04% (n = 122), while ICT integration in HR received moderate agreement from 48.26% (n = 111), but 20.43% (n = 47) disagreed (Table 3).

**Table 1: Professional qualification-wise distribution of healthcare personnel (N = 230).**

Qualification	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Administrator	10	4.35
Medical doctor	12	5.22
Clinical officer	49	21.30
Nurse	126	54.78
Others	33	14.35

**Table 2: Analysis of responses on healthcare sector service delivery (N = 230).**

Statements on service delivery	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Health facilities are closer to people	47 (20.43)	138 (60.00)	2 (0.87)	31 (13.48)	12 (5.22)
Drugs are available in health facilities	8 (3.48)	103 (44.78)	23 (10.00)	69 (30.00)	27 (11.74)
Services are affordable	33 (14.35)	133 (57.83)	11 (4.78)	43 (18.70)	10 (4.35)
Waiting times are short	39 (16.96)	107 (46.52)	8 (3.48)	53 (23.04)	23 (10.00)
Enough beds	15 (6.52)	49 (21.30)	49 (21.30)	62 (26.96)	55 (23.91)
Prevention & Vaccination services available	70 (30.43)	142 (61.74)	6 (2.61)	8 (3.48)	4 (1.74)
Prompt response to emergencies	29 (12.61)	144 (62.61)	18 (7.83)	31 (13.48)	8 (3.48)
Health infrastructure improved after devolution	15 (6.52)	111 (48.26)	6 (2.61)	75 (32.61)	23 (10.00)
Medical supplies are readily available	18 (7.83)	83 (36.09)	20 (8.70)	86 (37.39)	23 (10.00)
Adequate medical personnel and staff	16 (6.96)	68 (29.57)	27 (11.74)	90 (39.13)	29 (12.61)
Employees attend to patients promptly	31 (13.48)	152 (66.09)	10 (4.35)	35 (15.22)	2 (0.87)
Patient care services have improved	23 (10.00)	133 (57.83)	8 (3.48)	58 (25.22)	8 (3.48)
Staff attend to patients with courtesy	35 (15.22)	160 (69.57)	10 (4.35)	23 (10.00)	2 (0.87)
Hospital staff is competent	37 (16.09)	164 (71.30)	15 (6.52)	10 (4.35)	4 (1.74)
Ambulance services are affordable	21 (9.13)	116 (50.43)	15 (6.52)	66 (28.70)	12 (5.22)
Cleanliness and sanitation has improved	25 (10.87)	142 (61.74)	10 (4.35)	43 (18.70)	10 (4.35)
Health facilities linked to accessible roads	27 (11.74)	98 (42.61)	15 (6.52)	67 (29.13)	23 (10.00)
Ease of access to medical specialists	10 (4.35)	78 (33.91)	21 (9.13)	60 (26.09)	61 (26.52)
Referral services are available and prompt	25 (10.87)	129 (56.09)	21 (9.13)	47 (20.43)	8 (3.48)
Integration of ICT promoted efficiency	16 (6.96)	66 (28.70)	35 (15.22)	37 (16.09)	76 (33.04)

**Table 3: Feedback on the implementation of strategic HR frameworks in healthcare (N=230).**

Items on strategic human resource	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
The Health sector is adequately staffed	15 (6.52)	171 (74.35)	12 (5.22)	25 (10.87)	7 (3.04)
Appropriate mix of different cadre of staff	22 (9.57)	124 (53.91)	36 (15.65)	40 (17.39)	8 (3.48)
Staff development programmes are available	31 (13.48)	127 (55.22)	30 (13.04)	36 (15.65)	6 (2.61)
Staff motivation schemes are clearly adhered to	35 (15.22)	147 (63.91)	20 (8.70)	26 (11.30)	2 (0.87)
Recruitment exercise of workers is done on merit	26 (11.30)	132 (57.39)	26 (11.30)	40 (17.39)	6 (2.61)
The health sector is prompt in remunerations	22 (9.57)	149 (64.78)	16 (6.96)	36 (15.65)	7 (3.04)

The health sector ensures timely promotion of staff	19 (8.26)	115 (50.00)	22 (9.57)	72 (31.30)	2 (0.87)
The HR department employs relevant strategies to recruit and retain staff	37 (16.09)	122 (53.04)	33 (14.35)	32 (13.91)	6 (2.61)
Staff is treated fairly	26 (11.30)	102 (44.35)	48 (20.87)	51 (22.17)	3 (1.30)
HR department has integrated ICT to enhance service delivery	35 (15.22)	111 (48.26)	31 (13.48)	47 (20.43)	6 (2.61)

## DISCUSSION

The integration of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) within healthcare organizations has become a crucial factor that significantly influences the efficiency of service delivery and the overall performance of healthcare systems. This strategic approach to human resources plays an essential role in shaping the operational effectiveness of healthcare facilities by ensuring the alignment of the workforce with the organization's goals, thus enhancing service quality. In healthcare settings, the distribution of personnel reflects the importance of various roles in the provision of care, with nursing staff comprising the largest proportion of the workforce, representing 54.78% of the total number of employees. Clinical officers follow closely, making up 21.30% of the workforce. This distribution highlights the pivotal role that nurses play in the day-to-day delivery of patient care. Given that nurses are often the frontline providers of medical services, their effective management through strategic HR practices is indispensable for improving the overall quality of healthcare services and ensuring the optimal functioning of healthcare organizations [16]. A closer examination of the responses from healthcare personnel reveals that 60% of respondents agreed that health facilities are generally accessible to the population, with only 3.48% strongly disagreeing. This finding emphasizes the positive perception of healthcare accessibility, which is a critical determinant of public health outcomes. However, when it comes to the availability of essential drugs and medical supplies, the responses were notably less favorable. A significant 30% of respondents disagreed regarding the availability of drugs in health facilities, pointing to a gap in the consistency of resources available for patient care. These disparities in perceptions indicate specific areas where strategic HR interventions could be beneficial, particularly through enhancing workforce training and better resource management to address critical shortages in medical supplies. Such interventions would ensure that healthcare personnel are equipped with the necessary tools and knowledge to meet patient needs more effectively, which is a key component of improving service delivery in resource-constrained environments [17]. Furthermore, a noteworthy 74.35% of respondents expressed agreement that the health sector is adequately staffed, suggesting that recruitment practices are generally successful in maintaining a sufficient workforce. However, only 13.48% strongly agreed that staff development programs are available, revealing a potential gap in continuous professional development opportunities for healthcare workers. This discrepancy highlights the need for targeted HR initiatives aimed at

providing ongoing training and development to ensure healthcare workers possess the skills necessary to provide high-quality care. Aligning HR practices with organizational goals is essential to fostering a work environment that promotes continuous improvement, professional growth, and high-quality service delivery. Previous research has demonstrated that organizations that effectively implement SHRM principles tend to experience greater employee satisfaction and retention, which, in turn, positively impacts patient care outcomes [18]. The importance of integrating SHRM in healthcare organizations cannot be overstated. Effective HR practices in healthcare settings have been shown to improve patient satisfaction, reduce medical errors, and enhance operational efficiency within hospitals [19]. The complexity of managing human resources in healthcare is further compounded by the unique demands of the sector, such as the need for empathy, emotional intelligence, and strong interpersonal skills among healthcare staff. As healthcare organizations work to deliver high-quality services while also minimizing costs, HRM practices become key drivers of organizational success. Research indicates that organizations that align their HR strategies with their operational goals are better equipped to meet patient needs and improve service outcomes [18]. Strategic recruitment efforts aimed at attracting qualified personnel are particularly crucial, as they help address the mismatch between the growing demand for healthcare services and the available human resource capacity, ultimately leading to improved healthcare delivery and better patient outcomes.

### *Limitations of the Study:*

This study presents several limitations. The sample size of 230 healthcare personnel, though sufficient for basic analysis, may not fully represent the diversity of the healthcare workforce. The study relies on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias, as respondents might provide socially desirable answers, especially when discussing sensitive issues like staff treatment and HR practices.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Strategic human resource management (SHRM) plays a pivotal role in enhancing the efficiency of healthcare service delivery by ensuring the alignment of workforce skills with organizational goals. The study reveals that while healthcare facilities are generally perceived as accessible and adequately staffed, there are notable concerns regarding resource availability, such as the inconsistent supply of drugs and medical equipment,

and the need for continuous professional development programs. These challenges highlight the importance of targeted HR interventions, including workforce training, development, and better resource management. By aligning HR practices with organizational objectives, healthcare systems can improve both employee satisfaction and patient care outcomes, ultimately contributing to more effective and sustainable healthcare service delivery.

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