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## Article

# The impact of human resource development on employee performance and organizational effectiveness

Management dynamics in the knowledge economy

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## **The Impact of Human Resource Development on Employee Performance and Organizational Effectiveness**

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**Abstract.** *The area of employment is changing dramatically, technology and globalization are impacting practices and experiences, and societies are becoming more global and multicultural. With the rise of globalization and the rapid changes in the business environment, employability is becoming one of the main goals for any organization. The organizational effectiveness lies in human resources quality and human resources development practices have the potential to improve employee competences. This study aims to examine the impact of human resource development practices on the employees' performance and organizational effectiveness at a sample of public universities in Iraq. A descriptive-analytical method based on one regression model was employed for data analyzing. The result indicates that HRD practices are significantly related to employee performance in the enhancement of organizational effectiveness. Also, the results show that there is a statistically significant relationship between employee performance and organizational effectiveness. Furthermore, this study recommends that the decision-makers of universities should strive to develop HRD strategies which will enable them to improve employee competency and enhance the capability of the employees to achieve desired goals and objectives of the organization. This article contributes to human resource development, employee performance and organizational effectiveness literature. Also, this study provides key theoretical and practical implications which are discussed in detail.*

**Keywords:** *human resource development; employee performance; organizational effectiveness.*

### **Introduction**

More and more organizations are investing in human resource as a means to increase their competitiveness (Jones, 2002). Human resources development plays a vital role in achieve sustainable competitive advantage and enhance organizational effectiveness. Human resource development is a systematic process aimed at improving competences of the individual and group through training and development, career development, and organizational development practices to achieve superior performance (Garavan, 2007;

Nadler, 2012). According to Simonds and Pederson (2006), HRD is a set of structured and unstructured learning and performance-based activities which improve individual and organizational competencies to address the changes in the business environment.

Alagaraja (2013) argues that the linkage between HRD and HRM contributes to organizational learning and improving HR orientation, in turn, enhance organizational performance. Katou (2009) states that primary theory of HRD influences organizational performance through enhancing employee commitment as well as knowledge, skills and, abilities. Asfaw, Argaw, and Bayissa (2015) describe that the basic purpose of HRD is by improving and developing the employee competencies so that able organizations to maximize the quality of their human resource. The organizations have to implement different human resource development strategies to develop their workforce competence that makes the organization work effectively (Potnuru & Sahoo, 2016). Lyons (2016) argues that SHRD positively influences organizational performance. Tseng and McLean (2008) argue that SHRD has a key responsibility to provide strategies, training and development, organizational development and career development opportunities to enhance organizations and their employees to achieve their business goals.

Amin, Ismail, Rasid, and Selemani (2014) emphasize that if the universities want to achieve superior performance, they should emphasis more on HRD practices such as training and development, employee participation and organizational development. There is still a gap in the empirical researches on HRD area according to Garavan and Morley (2000); there is no clear model to examine how HRD practices can improve organizational effectiveness by means of employee performance. There are limited empirical studies investigating the association between HRD practices and organizational performance (Bartlett, 2001; Torraco, 1999). Particularly, in Iraq there are no researches or studies have specifically dealt with examining how employee performance is developed by HRD strategies, and its relationship with the enhancement of the OE. This gap led us to propose the research questions: (1) Are HRD constructs (training and development, organizational development, and career development) positively related to employee performance in the enhancement of organizational effectiveness? (2) Does employee performance positively related to organizational effectiveness? Thus, the study aims to examine the impact of human resource development (HRD) on organizational effectiveness (OE) utilizing employee performance. On the basis, the current study has been planned to study the relationship between HRD, employee performance and organizational effectiveness in the universities/institutes of Iraq.

## **Literature review**

### ***Human resource development***

Human resource development (HRD) is a relatively novel field of functional practice and academic study. In last two decades, human resource development was the fastest growing area of management development, due to the great interest of organizations in

the face of intense competition and changes in the business environment (Kareem, 2017). HRD has progressed from the narrow concept of training into a more complex approach to learning and developing knowledge at the individual and organizational level (Mittal, 2013). The term HRD was introduced by Leonard Nadler (2012), he described it as a set of related processes which are aimed at behavioral change. HRD can be defined as the systematic process of developing and improving employee competencies through organization development and personnel training and development to improve organizational performance (Swanson, 2001). McLagan and Suhadolnik (1989) define HRD as the integration of related practices such as training and development, career development, and organizational development to improve the individual and group knowledge, skills and abilities in order to enhance organizational outcomes. Rao (1985) defines HRD as an ongoing process of improving skills, abilities, and knowledge of employees to proactively enable them to acquire the required competencies to meet the present and future job requirements within the organization.

Organizations have used HRD as an important strategic objective to stimulate positive behavior in individuals and impact their knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to enable the organizations to increase their productivity and performance (Clardy, 2008). HRD supports organizational superior perform, enhances organizational competitiveness in today's rapidly changing environment. Furthermore, an effective HRD practices emphasis the lean organization, capability and flexibility of the workforce, at the right time (Mittal, 2013).

The previous studies have demonstrated HRD practices are positivity related to high performing business organizations. But, there is a lack in empirical studies on HRD in higher education. Due to the shifts and rapidly changing in the environment and global challenges the higher education organizations need to implement HRD strategies to improve their employee competences in order to address the environment turbulences. However, some scholars (Allui & Sahni, 2016; Al-Twal, Rowlands, & Cook, 2018; Dauda & Singh 2017; Rudzka, 2018) have investigated this issue, and they conclude that HRM and HRD practices have a significant impact on the performance of higher education organizations. Nguyen (2018) argues that HRD practices in higher education play a key role in improving the quality of academic staff, facilitating innovation, and enhancing organizational outcomes. But, this study argues that HRD practices have a potential impact on employee performance and organizational effectiveness in the Iraqi universities context. In order to better understanding the relationship between the HRD practices and employee performance and organizational effectiveness, the authors have developed hypothesis which are discussed below.

### ***Training and development and employee performance***

Since HRD is developing long-term, work-related learning patterns, knowledge and outcomes at the individual, group, and organizational levels, to accomplish this task, HRD requires a strong investment in the functions of training and development (Marsick & Watkins, 1990). Swanson and Holton (2001) define TD as a systematic process of developing employees' job knowledge, abilities, and skills for improving performance. Jacobs and Washington (2003) state training and development refer to an integrated set of planned programs are designed by the organization provided over some time, to help assure that all individuals have the necessary competencies to

perform their fullest potential in support of the organization's goals. Zumrah, Boyle, and Fein (2003) argue that employees who participated in training and development programs apply the new skills, knowledge, and abilities in their work that leads to a better attitude and competencies in performing their job. Ford, Baldwin, and Prasad (2017) state that the investment in training and development and transferring the outcomes to the job practices lead to significant changes in employee performance. Likewise, Sung and Choi (2014) argue that corporate investment in the training, education and organizational learning have potential to enhance the innovative performance. Based on the above discussion, the first hypothesis can be derived as follows:

*H1: Training and development have a positive influence on employee performance.*

### ***Organizational development and employee performance***

Cummings and Worley (2005) define organizational development as a system wide process and transfer of behavior to the aimed development programs to enhance the strategies, structures, and processes that demonstrate better organizational effectiveness. Swanson and Holton (2001) state that OD is essentially a method for defining and solving problems within the organization to enhance organizational effectiveness. Lynham (2002) states that OD involves implementing a process of planned, systematic change to develop human resource, improving individual, group, process, and organization performance. Berger and Berger (2011) argue that organizational development is a systematic process of executing change and development programs and effective performance management system provides for the assessment of employee performance and helping them to create sets of competencies. Byars and Rue (1991) state that organizational development strives to improve the performance of individuals, groups, and the overall organization. Specifically, organizational development is a system wide process and planned effort managed from the top, with a goal of increasing organizational effectiveness through planned interventions and training experiences. Based on the above discussion, the second hypothesis can be derived as follows:

*H2: Organizational development has a positive influence on employee performance.*

### ***Career development and employee performance***

Gray and Herr (1998) state that career development in a particular organization is shaped by organizational goals, employee needs, profit margins, or resources available to be committed to career services. Torrington and Hall (2007) state that career development is a continuous process of work-life enables organizations to develop and place employees in positions compatible with their employee career interests, needs, and goals. This promotes employee satisfaction and optimal use of employee potential. Niles and Bowlsbey (2002) argue that career development helps in building a healthy relationship between the organization and its employees, enhancing their knowledge, skills, and abilities and demonstrate better capabilities and competencies in performing their job. McGraw (2014) states that the effective implementation of employee career development processes significantly enriching employee's competency and improve their performance. Kakui and Gachunga (2016) argue that career development affects employee performance through counseling and supports employees and helps them to

develop their approach and solving problems. Based on the above contributions, the third hypothesis can be derived as follows:

*H3: career development has a positive influence on employee performance.*

### ***Organizational effectiveness***

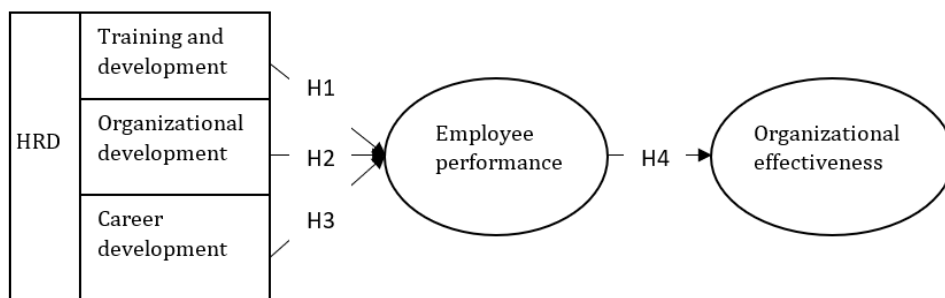
Organizational effectiveness (OE) is one of the most controversial and difficult issues since the emergence of organizational theory (Rojas, 2000). In the literature, there is still a significant lack of agreement on the definition of this concept. There are wide varieties of approaches that researchers attempted to define OE as Federman (2006) states, that the concept of OE concerns to issues such as the organization's ability to access and optimal utilization of resources and consequently achieve its aims. Yuchtman and Seashore (1967) argue that organizational effectiveness is the firm's ability to take advantage of environmental opportunities and acquiring and allocating scarce resources. Organizational effectiveness has not a single model to fit all organizations. According to Balduck and Buelens (2008), the issue of effectiveness in organizations revolves around four main approaches for measurement of OE the system resource approach, the goal approach, the strategic constituency approach, and the competing values approach. Campbell (1977) and Cameron (1981) state that the system resource approach focuses on inputs, acquisition of resources and internal processes. The goal approach focuses on the accomplishment of outcomes such as profit, innovation, and quality. The strategic constituency approach focuses on the expectations of powerful stakeholders and their interests which crossover the organization. The competing values approach focuses on internal and external focus, flexibility and, ends vs means concern.

### ***Employee performance and organizational effectiveness***

Employees are the core assets of an organization and the accomplishment, growth, and success of the organization depends on its employee performance. According to Gomes and Cardoso (2003) employee performance consists of indicators such as quality of work, the quantity of work, job knowledge, cooperative, dependability, initiative, and competency. Kehoe and Wright (2013) suggest that implementation of appropriate HRD practices to improve employees performance are likely to express increased affective commitment toward organizational effectiveness. McKinsey (2006) states that to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the employees, to improve their performance that requires effective training and development programs that may also positively impact on organizational effectiveness. Katou (2009) states that employee's performance with relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities is a critical requirement for the efficient and effective operation of various organizational functions. Nilsson and Ellstrom (2012) argue that human resources development strategies enrich employees' performance that contributes, in aggregate to organizational effectiveness. Human resource development creates new competencies, capabilities, and attitude that influence an employee's performance to achieve organizational goals (Collins & Clark, 2003). Tan and Nasurdin (2011) argue that HRD practices such as training and development enhance organizational effectiveness by providing the employees appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities. Based on the above contributions, the fourth hypothesis can be derived as follows:

*H4: Employee performance has a positive influence on organizational effectiveness.*

Figure 1 demonstrates the hypothesized research model which proposes that HRD constructs i.e. training and development, organizational development, and career development are positively related to the employee performance in the enhancement of organizational effectiveness.



**Figure 1. The proposed research model**

## **Research methodology**

### ***Research objectives***

1. To assess the impact of the HRD constructs (training and development, organizational development, and career development) on employee performance in the enhancement of organizational effectiveness.
2. To examine the impacts of employee performance in the enhancement of organizational effectiveness.

### ***Research questions***

1. Are HRD constructs (training and development, organizational development, and career development) positively related to employee performance in the enhancement of organizational effectiveness?
2. Does employee performance positively relate to organizational effectiveness?

### ***Research design, sampling and data collection***

The study employed a quantitative design based on the descriptive-analytical method. This study used a survey method to collect primary data. The survey was created by using the google-forms tool. An online questionnaire was developed based on the literature. The questionnaire basis of five-point Likert's scale (see appendix 1). It consists of two sections, the first section collects general information of the respondents like age, gender, designation, educational attainment, and experience. The second section includes the items that measure the HRD constructs which are training and development, organizational development, and career development and the mediator variable which is employee performance and finally the responded variable which is organizational effectiveness. The study took place in seven public universities of Iraq

(University of Babylon, University of Al-Qadisiyah, University of Baghdad, University of Mustansiriyah, University of Kufa, University of Kerbala, and University of Diyala) which are ranked in top ten universities in Iraq. In this study, we used a cross-sectional approach based on the descriptive-analytical method. The authors contacted more than 400 employees randomly in total and we collected 132 questionnaires out of which 28 incomplete questionnaires. Finally, 104 completed questionnaires were considered during analysis.

### ***Analysis of data***

The analysis of data was conducted by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS IBM Version 23) and R. The summary of results was presented using frequency distribution and percentages, mean and standard deviation were used to determine the percentage of respondents. Pearson's  $r$  employed to assess the correlations between the variables. Regression analysis was used to assess the impact of the independent variables (HRD) and employee performance on the corresponding dependent variable (OE) and to estimate how one variable could explain the other variable.

## **Results**

### ***The demographic profile***

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents. The majority of the participants are males (86.5 %) and 13.5% females. The majority (69.2%) of the respondents lies in the age category within 30-40 years. Slightly greater than half (53.8%) of the participants achieved Ph.D.'s degree level of education. A little lower than half of the respondent (40.4%) had work experience of 20-30 years.

***Table 1. The demographic data of the respondents***

Item		Frequency	Percentage
Age of the respondent	Less than 25 years	4	3.8
	25-30 years	12	11.5
	30-40 years	72	69.2
	40-50 years	11	10.5
	More than 50 years	5	4.8
Sex of the respondent	Male	90	86.5
	Female	14	13.5
Educational achievements	Bachelor's Degree	14	13.4
	Master's Degree	34	32.6
	Ph.D. Degree	56	53.8
Work experience	1-10 years	17	16.3
	10-20 years	33	31.7
	20-30 years	42	40.4
	30-40 years	8	7.7
	More than 40 years	4	3.8



**Reliability of the instrument**

The reliability of the instrument was assessed by using Cronbach's Alpha. According to Hales (1986) the alpha value more than 0.60 indicates that the scale can be considered reliable. The instrument has (25) questions which are distributed as follow: (15) questions for HRD constructs i.e. (5) questions for the training and development, (5) questions for the organizational development, and (5) questions for the career development. (5) questions for the employee performance and (5) questions for the organizational effectiveness. The table 2 shows the result that the Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0.935 to 0.971 which show the scale is reliable.

**Table 2. The test Alpha's Cronbach for the reliability**

Ser No.	Variables	No. of items	Alpha's Cronbach
1	Training and development	5	0.971
2	Organizational development	5	0.935
3	Career development	5	0.964
4	Employee performance	5	0.939
5	Organizational effectiveness	5	0.957

**Descriptive statistics**

Table 3 shows the descriptive analysis of the data and the correlations matrix among variables. The means, standard deviations, and correlation matrix are presented. The mean score for HRD practices (T&D, OD, CD) is located between 3.29-3.80 and standard deviation 0.755-1.029 that indicates the selected universities have a good level of HRD practices. The mean score for employee performance is 3.721 and standard deviation 0.872 which also shows a good level of employee performance. Finally, the organizational effectiveness has a mean score of 3.596, and standard deviation of 0.980. Also, the results show that each of the constructs is positively and significantly correlated with each other.

**Table 3. Descriptive Statistics**

Variables	Mean	S. D	T\$D	OD	CD	EP	EP
T&D	3.711	1.029	1.00				
OD	3.505	0.755	.966**	1.00			
CD	3.498	0.848	.975**	.989**	1.00		
EP	3.721	0.872	.992**	.967**	.973**	1.00	
OE	3.596	0.980	.991**	.971**	.978**	.988**	1.00

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

T&D=Training and Development, OD=Organizational Development=Career Development=Employee Performance=Organizational Effectiveness

### Test of hypotheses

To test the hypothesis regression analysis was applied to estimate how the independent variable could explain the dependent variable. Table 5 shows that HRD constructs i.e. (training and development, organizational development, and career development) have a positive significant impact on employee performance at the  $p < 0.01$  level of significance. This means that the linear combination of HRD constructs can explain 96.8% of the employee performance ( $R \text{ square} = .968$ ). Moreover, the positive significant impact relationships include, (1) training and development and employee performance ( $\beta=0.758$ ,  $p<0.000$ ) supports H1; (2) organizational development and employee performance ( $\beta=0.821$ ,  $p<0.000$ ) confirms H2, and (3) career development and employee performance ( $\beta=0.590$ ,  $p<0.000$ ) verifies H3.

**Table 5. Summary of regression analysis for test H1, H2, and H3**

R		R Square	Adjusted R Square		Std. Error of the Estimate	
.984 <sup>a</sup>		.968	.967		.79782	
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	-25.393	1.353		-18.766	.000
	Training and development	9.247	1.026	.758	9.015	.000
	Organizational development	14.773	1.805	.821	8.183	.000
	Career development	8.652	1.912	.590	4.525	.000

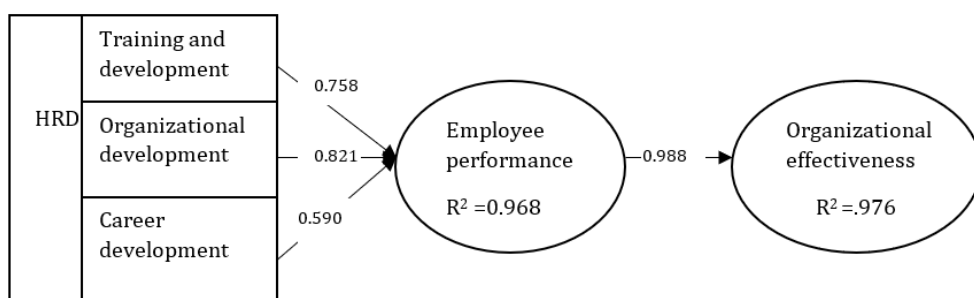
a. Dependent Variable: employee performance

Table 6 shows that there is a statistically significant relationship between employee performance and organizational effectiveness at the  $p < 0.00$  level of significance. This means that the linear combination of the employee performance can explain 97.6% of the organizational effectiveness ( $R \text{ square} = .976$ ). Also, the results show that standardized  $\beta$  value of (.988) for employee performance, that means a change of one standard deviation in predictor variable i.e. employee performance will have a change in .988 times the standard deviation for the dependent variable organizational effectiveness. Therefore, H4 is verified.

**Table 6. Summary of regression analysis for test H4**

R		R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
.988 <sup>a</sup>		.976	.975	.76999		
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)		-2.680	.332		-8.064	.000
Employee performance		1.110	.017	.988	63.829	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational effectiveness

**Figure 2. Research model results**

## Conclusion and discussion

The higher education sector differs from other sectors in two senses. The higher education organizations provide services and their core activity is education. The success of this service depends primarily on the quality of its employees. The effective implementation of HRD practices for the employees will enhance university performance. But, there is a huge gap in empirical studies on HRD in the higher education context. Therefore, our study sought to investigate the impact of human resources development constructs i.e. (training and development, organizational development, and career development) on employee performance in the enhancement of organizational effectiveness. The results are verified hypothesis H1, H2, and H3 by showing that there is a significant and positive relationship between HRD constructs i.e. (training and development, organizational development, and career development) and employee performance. Therefore, our result has validated the assumptions provided by the researchers (El Mansour & Dean, 2016; Potnuru & Sahoo, 2016; Sabrina, 2015). Also, the results of hypothesis H4 confirms that employee performance has a positive and significant impact on organizational effectiveness. Which supports opinions of (Asfaw et al., 2015; Gupta, 2016). The study recommends the decision-makers of

universities and institutes should strive to develop HRD strategies which will enable them to improve employee performance and enhance the capability of the employees to achieve desired goals and objectives of the organization.

### ***Theoretical contributions of the study***

This article provides several contributions to human resource development, employee performance, and organizational effectiveness literature. First, this study strives to address the gap and funds to the emerging knowledge in this area. second, this study provides a better understanding of the ingratiated relationships between HRD practices, employee performance and organizational effectiveness and empirically validates them. Finally, this study developed a model to investigate the relationship between HRD, employee performance, and organizational effectiveness. The results have confirmed all the hypothesized relations. The findings show that HRD practices significantly impact on employee performance. Also, employee performance has a positive significant impact on organizational effectiveness.

### ***Managerial implications of the study***

This study provides significant implications for the university's managers willing to develop HRD practices in order to improve employee performance, in turn, increase organizational effectiveness. The present study provides significant insight for university's leadership through demonstrates a good understanding of the integration of three important managerial processes which are HRD practices, employee performance, and organizational effectiveness. The study suggests that managers should develop specific and focused HRD practices to improve employee skills, knowledge, and abilities, in turn, enhance organizational effectiveness. Since the well-being of the university depends on its academic staff competences therefore, the universities need to recruit and retain talents and utilize them to achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

### ***Limitations and future research***

Despite, this study has key contributions but, it has some limitations that need to be addressed. First, the findings of this study are limited to the selected Iraqi public universities context, which may not be generalized to other universities or another sector. Therefore, future research may be conducted in other sectors. Second, this study has a cross-sectional data, which prevents the researcher to examine the causality of the relationships between variables over time. Third, this study focusses on three dimensions of HRD that gives insight into future research to investigate other potential HRD practices.

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## **Appendix 1**

### ***Training and development***

1. The university\institute provides training and development programs enable to improve skills, knowledge, attitude change, new capability of the employee.
2. The activities of training programs provided meet the needs of the employees.
3. The activities of training programs provided help to increase job satisfaction and work efficiency.
4. The university\institute uses modern training and development methods and tools.
5. Evaluate the trainees' overall satisfaction with the training program.

### ***Organizational Development***

1. The university\institute 's mission, values, and objectives are clearly and widely owned and understood by all staff in the authority and service areas.
2. The university\institute has a well-developed framework of clear performance measurement and targets to drive what we do.
3. The top management makes efforts to identify and utilize the potential of the employees
4. Encouraging problem-solving culture.
5. The top management believes that human resources are an extremely important resource for organizational survival and success.

### ***Career development***

1. The university\institute gives the training to help develop employees career.
2. Management gives work which has developed skills, knowledge, attitude change, new capability of the employee.
3. The university\institute has effective communication system facilitates the information exchange among the employees.
4. The university\Institute has good career planning and development.
5. The university\institute works to develop the skills, experiences, and knowledge of the employees, which enable them to cope with changes and technological developments related to their field of specialization.

### ***Employee performance***

1. I'm satisfied with my job at university\institute and I do not think about looking for work in a different organization.



2. Job rotation in this university\institute facilitates employee performance development

3. The university\institute encourages creative thinking and ideas of the employees.

4. I believe I perform well in my job situation following the restructuring

5. I can work very effectively in a group setting.

***Organizational effectiveness***

1. There is a clear mission that gives meaning and direction to our work.

2. The university/institute has the ability to adapt to the changing business environment and responding to external environmental factors

3. The university/institute has the ability to maintain stability.

4. Development of human resources according to organizational change

5. Optimization of resources

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