

# Developing a Good Human Resource Governance Framework in Public Holding Companies: The Case of the MAPNA Group

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## ABSTRACT

Human resource governance is rooted in corporate governance and focuses on risk management, compliance, and business success. Developing a human resource governance framework capable of safeguarding entry points and high-risk areas through the involvement of various actors and the use of appropriate mechanisms is the primary objective that this study seeks to achieve. This study is qualitative in nature and employs a systematic literature review and a multiple case study approach using homogeneity analysis. Initially, studies relevant to the research questions were examined, and primary themes were identified. Subsequently, interviews were conducted through purposive sampling, and their themes were extracted. Using homogeneity analysis, the two sets of themes obtained from the literature review and the case study were compared, leading to the development of the proposed model of the study. Following the conducted analyses, 35 concepts were identified and categorized into 14 subcategories and 4 main categories. The human resource governance framework was formulated, and its principles and actors were identified. The four main categories include governance domains, governance actors, governance rules and reports, and principles of human resource governance. Based on the conducted interviews, concepts such as monitoring and reporting in human resource governance, actors involved in human resource governance, domains of concern in human resource governance, and transparency and accountability as principles of human resource governance constitute the components of the human resource governance framework. Organizational culture was also identified as one of the elements incorporated into the framework.

**Keywords:** Corporate governance, Human resource governance, Qualitative research method, Homogeneity analysis

## Introduction

In recent decades, organizations have increasingly recognized that sustainable competitiveness and long-term organizational effectiveness are closely associated with the quality of their human resources and the mechanisms through which these resources are governed. The transition from traditional personnel administration toward strategic human resource management has altered the role of human resources from an operational support



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function to a strategic partner in organizational governance and value creation (1, 2). Simultaneously, the growing complexity of organizations, the expansion of multinational and holding company structures, technological transformation, and increasing stakeholder expectations have intensified the need for governance systems capable of ensuring transparency, accountability, compliance, ethical conduct, and sustainable performance in human resource activities (3, 4). Within this context, the concept of human resource governance has emerged as a critical extension of corporate governance and strategic management.

Corporate governance refers to the system of rules, structures, relationships, and processes through which organizations are directed and controlled (5). The primary objective of corporate governance is to establish balance among stakeholders' interests while ensuring organizational accountability, transparency, risk control, and strategic alignment (3). As organizations increasingly rely on human capital to achieve competitive advantage, governance mechanisms have gradually extended into the domain of human resources. Consequently, human resource governance has become one of the most important dimensions of modern governance systems (6, 7). Human resource governance seeks to ensure that human resource policies, structures, practices, and decisions are aligned with organizational objectives while simultaneously complying with legal, ethical, and strategic requirements (8, 9).

The emergence of human resource governance is rooted in the recognition that inappropriate human resource practices can create significant organizational risks. Recruitment errors, ineffective succession planning, weak compliance systems, unethical managerial behavior, discriminatory practices, and lack of transparency in compensation and performance evaluation may negatively affect organizational legitimacy and sustainability (10, 11). Consequently, organizations have increasingly attempted to establish governance frameworks that can monitor, regulate, and guide human resource activities in a systematic and accountable manner. Human resource governance is therefore considered a mechanism for safeguarding organizational values, minimizing risk exposure, and enhancing organizational effectiveness (12, 13).

The literature indicates that human resource governance integrates multiple dimensions including strategic alignment, compliance management, ethical accountability, leadership oversight, performance management, and stakeholder engagement (14, 15). In this regard, governance structures such as boards of directors, human resource committees, audit committees, and quality assurance systems play significant roles in supervising and evaluating human resource activities. Governance mechanisms also emphasize reporting systems, ethical codes, transparency practices, and competency frameworks to ensure effective implementation of organizational objectives (11, 12). As a result, human resource governance is not limited to administrative supervision but instead functions as a strategic system linking organizational goals, human capital management, and institutional accountability.

Another important dimension of human resource governance relates to compliance and risk management. Organizations operate in environments characterized by increasing legal, regulatory, and ethical complexity. Human resource activities must therefore comply with labor regulations, ethical standards, organizational policies, and strategic priorities. Failure to achieve compliance may expose organizations to financial, legal, operational, and reputational risks (13, 14). Human resource governance frameworks are designed to identify vulnerable areas, monitor policy implementation, and establish accountability systems capable of reducing governance failures. In this regard, governance mechanisms contribute significantly to organizational sustainability and institutional resilience (9, 12).

The increasing importance of human capital in knowledge-based economies has further reinforced the significance of human resource governance. Modern organizations rely heavily on employee competencies, innovation, expertise, and organizational learning to achieve strategic success. Therefore, governance systems must ensure the effective development, maintenance, and utilization of human resources (16, 17). Human resource governance supports this objective by integrating strategic workforce planning, competency management, succession planning, leadership development, and performance monitoring within a coherent governance structure. This integration enhances organizational capability and contributes to long-term value creation (7, 18).

Digital transformation has also reshaped the governance landscape in contemporary organizations. The expansion of digital technologies, virtual teams, data-driven decision-making systems, and intelligent performance management mechanisms has introduced new opportunities and challenges for human resource governance (18, 19). Digitalization increases the need for governance systems capable of managing data privacy, transparency, ethical monitoring, and performance accountability. Human resource governance must therefore adapt to changing technological conditions and ensure that digital systems remain aligned with ethical principles and organizational objectives (17, 19). Furthermore, digital governance mechanisms can improve organizational monitoring systems, facilitate reporting processes, and strengthen strategic decision-making in human resource management.

Holding companies and large organizational groups require even more sophisticated human resource governance frameworks due to their structural complexity and organizational diversity. In such organizations, governance systems must coordinate human resource activities across multiple subsidiaries while simultaneously preserving strategic alignment and organizational coherence (20). The governance of human resources in holding companies involves challenges related to decentralization, policy consistency, managerial supervision, organizational culture, and monitoring mechanisms. Subsidiary companies may possess different operational structures, workforce characteristics, and strategic priorities, making governance coordination increasingly difficult. Consequently, governance frameworks in holding companies must establish mechanisms for balancing central oversight with subsidiary autonomy (21, 22).

The MAPNA Group represents one of the largest industrial holding organizations in Iran, operating across various strategic sectors including energy, transportation, and infrastructure. Due to the scale and diversity of its operations, the organization requires an integrated governance system capable of ensuring effective management and coordination of human resource activities across its subsidiaries (21, 23). Human resource governance within such a complex organizational structure is particularly important because ineffective governance mechanisms may result in inconsistencies, reduced accountability, weakened compliance, and diminished organizational performance. Accordingly, examining the governance structure of human resources in the MAPNA Group provides an important opportunity to understand the practical dimensions of governance implementation within large holding companies.

Previous studies have emphasized various dimensions of human resource governance. Grobler et al. developed a governance framework for South African organizations and highlighted the relationship between governance mechanisms, risk management, and organizational performance (10). Saliba identified human resource governance as a gatekeeping mechanism responsible for ensuring compliance, accountability, and effective oversight of organizational human resource practices (24). Similarly, Borggraefe emphasized that governance and compliance systems are essential for organizational sustainability and strategic coherence (8, 9). Kaehler and Grundei also conceptualized human resource governance as an extension of corporate governance and discussed its theoretical foundations and strategic implications (6, 7).

Research has also highlighted the relationship between governance systems and organizational performance. Ibrahim and Zulkafli argued that corporate governance and human resource management practices significantly influence organizational outcomes and effectiveness (15). Chnaida et al. demonstrated that human resource governance positively affects university performance and organizational capability (25). Likewise, Obyes et al. identified human resource governance requirements as essential factors in achieving administrative reform and effective management (26). These findings suggest that governance systems not only reduce organizational risk but also improve institutional efficiency and strategic performance.

Several studies have additionally emphasized the role of ethics, transparency, and accountability in governance systems. Ethical governance structures contribute to trust-building, stakeholder confidence, and organizational legitimacy (11). Zuma highlighted the role of governance mechanisms in achieving sustainable human resource development and strengthening ethical organizational environments (27). Similarly, Ahmadpour proposed a human resource empowerment model based on good governance principles, emphasizing transparency, participation, and accountability as key governance dimensions (28). Afshar et al. also demonstrated that national culture significantly influences governance practices and human resource governance effectiveness in public organizations (29).

Despite the growing literature on human resource governance, several research gaps remain evident. First, much of the existing literature has focused on conceptual discussions or general organizational settings, while fewer studies have examined governance mechanisms within large holding company structures. Second, empirical studies investigating the interaction among governance actors, governance principles, and organizational processes remain limited, particularly in developing countries. Third, there is insufficient understanding regarding how organizational culture, subsidiary structures, and internal monitoring systems influence governance effectiveness in complex organizations (22, 30). Moreover, limited research has employed qualitative approaches to explore governance structures and identify governance components through in-depth organizational investigation.

Qualitative approaches are particularly valuable in governance studies because governance systems involve multidimensional social, organizational, and managerial interactions. Case study methodologies enable researchers to investigate governance structures within real organizational contexts and to identify patterns, mechanisms, and governance relationships that may not be observable through quantitative approaches (31). The use of systematic literature review combined with qualitative case study analysis can therefore provide a comprehensive understanding of governance structures and facilitate the development of context-specific governance frameworks.

Theoretical developments in governance studies further indicate the need for integrated governance frameworks capable of combining strategic management, compliance systems, ethical oversight, and organizational accountability (4, 16). Human resource governance frameworks should therefore address multiple dimensions simultaneously, including governance principles, governance actors, monitoring systems, organizational structures, leadership processes, and human capital development mechanisms. Such integrated frameworks are particularly necessary in organizations characterized by structural complexity, diversified operations, and high strategic sensitivity.

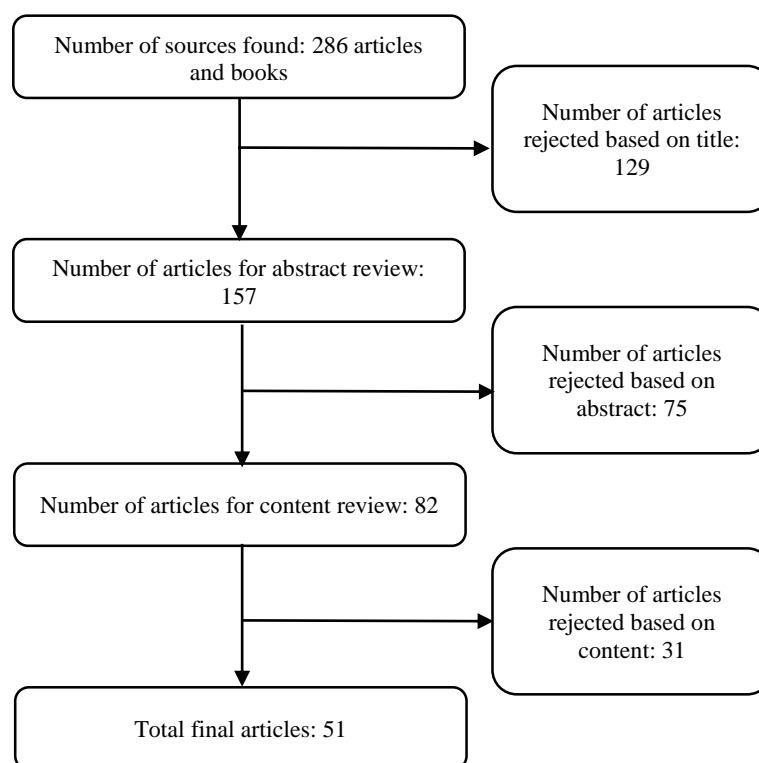
Considering the increasing importance of governance systems in large holding organizations, the strategic significance of human capital, and the limited empirical research concerning human resource governance frameworks in Iranian holding companies, this study seeks to develop a desirable human resource governance framework in public holding companies through a case study of the MAPNA Group.

## Methods and Materials

Given the existence of literature on human resource governance, our study is conducted in two phases and employs a multiple qualitative method. Accordingly, the literature is first examined using the systematic literature review method, based on which an initial conceptual framework is developed. Then, through a multiple case study, this issue is examined in the MAPNA Group of companies.

The unit of analysis in this study consists of human resource governance structures, policies, and processes. Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in human resource units and senior managers, as well as the review of internal documents and corporate governance reports, were used as data sources. Data were collected through purposive sampling from 16 stakeholders in relevant departments. After thematic analysis, the congruence analysis method or process tracing was used to analyze the data obtained from the case study. Through this method, the required themes were extracted, and ultimately, the final framework was developed based on them.

In the first part of this study, articles related to this field were collected and reviewed, the results of which are shown in Figure 1:



**Figure 1. Systematic literature review in the examination of articles and books in the field of human resource governance**

Subsequently, during the data collection process, secondary data and organizational documents were examined and analyzed, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Collected Secondary Sources**

Type	Source type	Number
Written	Texts of interviews conducted with officials	16
Written	Organizational documents	15

In the next stage, after a comprehensive study of the available sources and archives, 16 semi-structured interviews were conducted with several senior managers of the MAPNA Group. The themes of the interviews

included the general framework of human resource governance in the MAPNA Group, the manner of implementing human resource governance in the MAPNA Group, actors involved in human resource governance in the MAPNA Group, governance monitoring, and the key principles and foundations of governance in the MAPNA Group. Saturation was reached through these interviews, and consequently, the interview process was terminated. In summary, among the 16 interviewees, 8 held bachelor's degrees, 7 held master's degrees, and 1 held a doctoral degree. In addition, 9 of these individuals were board members, 2 worked in the field of human resources, 3 were chief executive officers, 1 was deputy chief executive officer, and 1 was manager of the auditing unit.

## Findings and Results

At this stage, the extracted codes were compared using the congruence analysis approach. In the congruence analysis approach, the empirical evidence obtained from the case studies is compared with the framework derived from the systematic review based on the status of the components in terms of correspondence, which is classified into three states: convergent, or fully consistent; complementary, or partially consistent; and divergent, or inconsistent.

**Table 2. Congruence Analysis of Data Obtained from the Literature Review and Multiple Case Study**

Category derived from theoretical data analysis	Category derived from empirical data analysis	Concept derived from theoretical data analysis	Concept derived from empirical data analysis	Consistent	Partially consistent	Inconsistent	Explanation
Governance principles	Governance principles				✓		In the analysis of theoretical data, accountability and transparency are mentioned as principles of corporate governance. Since the literature states that human resource governance is rooted in corporate governance (Kunzleman, Conway, Trenberth, & Wickison, 2006), these concepts were referred to as governance principles. In the conducted interviews, transparency was mentioned as one of the principles of human resource governance in 12 interviews.
Governance principles	Governance principles	Accountability	—			✓	Accountability is another principle mentioned in the human resource governance literature (Grobler et al., 2014). However, it was not mentioned in the interviews. Given the importance of this principle, it will still be used as one of the principles of human resource governance.
Governance principles	Governance principles	—	Trust			✓	Trust was one of the concepts mentioned in the interviews as a principle of human resource governance. However, due to the low frequency of reference in the interviews, namely one interview, and the absence of reference to it in the literature, it will not be used.
Governance principles	Governance principles	Transparency	Transparency and availability of information to stakeholders	✓			Transparency was emphasized as one of the principles of human

					resource governance both in the relevant literature (Burgraaf, 2016; Grobler et al., 2014) and in 12 interviews.
Governance principles	Governance principles	—	Integrity and honesty	✓	Integrity and honesty were among the concepts mentioned in the interviews as principles of human resource governance. However, due to the low frequency of reference in the interviews, namely one interview, and the absence of reference to them in the literature, they will not be used.
Focus of human resource governance	Focus of human resource governance			✓	
Focus of human resource governance	Focus of human resource governance	Risk management	Risk management	✓	In the literature, risk management has repeatedly been introduced as a focus of corporate governance and, consequently, human resource governance (Deloitte, 2011; Colewick, 2011; Grobler, 2014). Risk management was also discussed in 7 interviews.
Focus of human resource governance	Focus of human resource governance	Compliance	Compliance and safeguarding the advancement of issues based on established policies	✓	Compliance has been discussed in the human resource governance literature (Bruin, 2020; Burgraaf, 2016; Charles Saliba, 2014; Grobler, 2014; Obedgiu, 2016). In addition, compliance and safeguarding issues based on established policies were mentioned in 10 interviews.
Focus of human resource governance	Focus of human resource governance	Business success	Business success	✓	Business success is one of the issues mentioned in the human resource governance literature (Bruin, 2020). Likewise, in 9 interviews, proper implementation of human resource issues was regarded as a prerequisite for business success.
Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resources	Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource unit			✓	
Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resources	Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource unit	Human resource systems	Development of human resource infrastructures	✓	In the human resource governance literature, human resource systems are discussed as an issue that can reduce risk in the organization (Charles Saliba, 2014). Similarly, in 8 interviews, human resource infrastructures and human resource systems were mentioned as issues requiring attention.
Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resources	Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource unit	Human resource team	Human resource team	✓	The human resource and human resource governance literature refers to the human resource team and its effect on organizational success and risk reduction (Charles Saliba, 2014; Ulrich et al., translated by

					Binesh & Dabiri, 2019). In addition, in 12 interviews, the human resource team and its effect on the proper implementation of human resource activities and the achievement of organizational success were discussed.
Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resources	Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource unit	—	Safeguarding the implementation of human resource functions in subsidiaries	✓	This issue has not been discussed in the governance literature. However, given the purpose of the research and the effort to develop a human resource governance model for holding companies, the human resource unit seeks to safeguard the implementation of human resource functions in companies and subsidiaries. This issue leads to coordination, risk reduction, and the achievement of success, as almost all interviewees referred to it.
Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resources	Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource unit	Human resource functions, including recruitment, labor relations, performance management, training, clarification of disciplinary cases and penalties, code of ethics, compensation, rewards, and related issues	Implementation of human resource functions	✓	Burgraaf (2016), Grobler (2014), and others stated that human resource functions play an important role in achieving compliance. In addition, in 11 interviews, human resource functions were mentioned as an important factor in organizational success and compliance.
Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resources	Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource unit	Structure of the human resource unit	Structure of the human resource unit	✓	The structure of the human resource unit has a substantial effect on human resource governance and on achieving success and alignment with business objectives (Charles Saliba, 2014; Ulrich et al., 2008). In 9 interviews, the human resource structure was also considered influential in achieving business success, and it was noted that different structural models can facilitate the achievement of organizational objectives.
Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resources	Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource unit	Human resource strategy	Human resource strategy	✓	Deloitte (2011), Heslop et al. (2003), and Colewick (2011) identified human resource strategy as one of the components of human resource governance. Similarly, in 10 interviews, it was stated that human resource strategy is one of the areas that should be considered in human resource governance.
Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resources	Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource unit	Development, implementation, adherence, review, and updating of human resource policies	Human resource policies	✓	The research literature refers to the relationship between human resource policies, compliance, and human resource governance (Eckart Jensen, 2016; Mackin, 2016). This relationship was also mentioned in 10 interviews.
Issues of concern in	Issues of concern in			✓	

human resource governance / structure and composition	human resource governance / structure and composition			Structure of subsidiaries	✓	In 10 interviews, it was stated that the structure of subsidiaries is one of the issues of concern in human resource governance. However, this issue was not mentioned in the literature.
Issues of concern in human resource governance / structure and composition	Issues of concern in human resource governance / structure and composition	—		Number of employees in a specific unit	✓	According to the explanations provided by Charles Saliba (2014), the number of employees in a specific company influences human resource governance. On the other hand, considering the examination of the human resource governance model in a holding company, the number of employees in subsidiaries was identified as influential in human resource governance in 13 interviews.
Issues of concern in human resource governance / structure and composition	Issues of concern in human resource governance / structure and composition	Required education and competencies of employees	—		✓	The literature (Charles Saliba, 2014) indicates that the required education and competencies of employees influence human resource governance. However, this issue was not specifically mentioned in the interviews.
Issues of concern in human resource governance / structure and composition	Issues of concern in human resource governance / structure and composition	Number of workforce members	—		✓	In the article by Charles Saliba (2014), the number of workforce members is considered one of the factors influencing human resource governance. However, it was not specifically mentioned in the interviews.
Issues of concern in human resource governance / structure and composition	Issues of concern in human resource governance / structure and composition	Relative increase/decrease in the number of employees	—		✓	In the human resource governance literature (Charles Saliba, 2014), changes in the number of employees are mentioned as one of the factors affecting human resource governance. However, this issue was not specifically and explicitly addressed in the interviews.
Issues of concern in human resource governance / structure and composition	Issues of concern in human resource governance / structure and composition	Social backgrounds and profiles of individuals	—		✓	In the article by Charles Saliba (2014), the social backgrounds and profiles of individuals are mentioned as one of the factors affecting human resource governance. However, this issue was not mentioned in the interviews.
Issues of concern in human resource governance / structure and composition	Issues of concern in human resource governance / structure and composition	—		Expertise of individuals in subsidiaries	✓	The expertise of individuals in subsidiaries was mentioned in 10 interviews as one of the factors affecting human resource governance.
Issues of concern in human resource governance /	Issues of concern in human resource governance /				✓	

human resource issues of the leadership team	human resource issues of the leadership team				
Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource issues of the leadership team	Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource issues of the leadership team	Level of compliance versus non-compliance with laws and regulations	—	✓	Charles Saliba (2014) states that compliance with laws and regulations is among the issues to which the leadership team should pay attention in advancing human resource issues. This issue was not clearly mentioned in the interviews, but due to its importance, it is presented as one of the issues requiring attention.
Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource issues of the leadership team	Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource issues of the leadership team	Performance management	—	✓	In the human resource governance literature (Charles Saliba, 2014; Grobler et al., 2014; Mackin, 2016), performance management is considered one of the important issues requiring attention in human resource governance. Managerial performance management is also one of these dimensions. Although it was not separately mentioned in the interviews, it is considered one of the issues requiring attention due to its importance.
Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource issues of the leadership team	Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource issues of the leadership team	Professional development of senior managers	Training and development of managers	✓	Thomson Result (2015) and Charles Saliba (2014) state that the professional development of managers is considered one of the important issues in human resource governance. In the conducted interviews, 9 interviewees also stated that the training and development of managers is one of the important issues in human resource governance.
Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource issues of the leadership team	Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource issues of the leadership team	Compensation of the chief executive officer and other senior managers	—	✓	In the human resource governance literature (Bernard Balz, 2016; Thomson Result, 2015), compensation of senior managers has been discussed. Although this issue was not directly mentioned in the interviews, it is presented as one of the issues requiring attention due to its importance.
Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource issues of the leadership team	Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource issues of the leadership team	Rewards and benefits for executive managers and middle managers	Managers' rewards	✓	Kahler and Grundy (2019) specifically discussed executive managers' rewards and their importance in human resource governance. This issue was also mentioned in 12 interviews.
Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource issues of the leadership team	Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource issues of the leadership team	Selection and retention of managers	Selection of board members of subsidiaries	✓	Thomson Result (2015) discussed the selection and retention of managers as one of the factors affecting human resource governance. In the interviews, the selection of board members was also discussed in 13 interviews as one of the important

					issues in human resource governance and as one of the duties of the group's board of directors.	
Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource issues of the leadership team	Issues of concern in human resource governance / human resource issues of the leadership team	Succession planning for senior managers	Succession planning for managers	✓	In the human resource governance literature (Grobler et al., 2014; Heslop et al., 2003; Mackin, 2016), succession planning is mentioned as one of the issues requiring attention in human resource governance. This issue was also discussed in 14 interviews.	
Actors / board of directors and its committees	Actors / leadership team and board of directors				✓	
Actors / board of directors and its committees	Actors / leadership team and board of directors	Monitoring proper implementation, decision-making, and safeguarding compliance	The chief executive officer and the board of directors focus on human resource issues and engage in decision-making, monitoring, and safeguarding compliance with established laws and regulations.		✓	Bryan (2020) states that human resource governance should provide a framework and criteria for assessing and communicating the operational effectiveness of compliance and contribution to business success. Charles Saliba (2014) considers this to be among the duties of the board of directors, the chief executive officer, and their affiliated committees. In all conducted interviews, the role of the board of directors, the chief executive officer, and specialized headquarters in monitoring, decision-making, and safeguarding compliance in human resource issues was mentioned.
Actors / board of directors and its committees	Actors / leadership team and board of directors of subsidiaries				✓	In all conducted interviews, it was stated that in a holding company, all managers at subsequent levels, chief executive officers, and boards of directors of the holding company's subsidiaries are responsible for the proper implementation, monitoring, and safeguarding of human resource policies.
Actors / human resource committee	Actors / human resource committee				✓	
Actors / human resource committee	Actors / human resource committee	Decision-making and accountability	Decision-making support regarding salaries and rewards, benefits and welfare, talent management and succession planning, recruitment, development of managerial capacities, determination of the degree of structural and managerial centralization/decentralization, and determination of the boundaries of responsibility and authority of subsidiaries regarding human resource issues		✓	The human resource governance literature discusses the human resource council, the human resource committee, and their duties (Charles Saliba, 2014; Heslop et al., 2003). Among these issues are decision-making and accountability. In 14 interviews, the duties and functions of the human resource committee were discussed, including decision-making and decision support regarding issues such as recruitment, development of managerial capacities, talent management, and related matters.

Actors / human resource committee	Actors / human resource committee	Monitoring and approval	Safeguarding the development of managerial capacities, safeguarding human resource issues of strategic companies, and safeguarding cultural values	✓	The human resource governance literature discusses the human resource council, the human resource committee, and their duties (Charles Saliba, 2014; Heslop et al., 2003). Among these issues are monitoring and approval of certain important matters. In 10 interviews, the committee's safeguarding of cultural values, recruitment of experts, development of managerial capacities, and related issues were discussed.
Actors / human resource committee	Actors / human resource committee	Reviewing compliance with policies and legal requirements	Periodic and regular strategic monitoring and safeguarding of executive activities and key points	✓	The human resource governance literature discusses the human resource council, the human resource committee, and their duties (Charles Saliba, 2014; Heslop et al., 2003). Among these issues is compliance with policies and requirements. In 8 interviews, reviewing compliance with policies was mentioned.
Actors / internal audit unit	Actors / audit committee			✓	
Actors / internal audit unit	Actors / audit committee	It intervenes whenever it identifies a violation or deviation in the implementation of systems and policies.	Compliance with laws, regulations, and requirements	✓	In the human resource governance literature, internal audit is recognized as an entity that monitors organizational issues, including human resources, and ensures their compliance with laws and requirements (Bernard Balz, 2016; Charles Saliba, 2014). In all conducted interviews, the role of the audit committee in monitoring and safeguarding compliance was mentioned.
Monitoring and reporting / governance competence	Human resource competence			✓	
Monitoring and reporting / governance competence	Human resource competence	Human resource competence and qualification	Expertise, creativity, and human resource competence	✓	Saliba (2014) states that selecting competent individuals to perform tasks is one of the factors affecting human resource governance. In 15 interviews, it was also stated that expertise, creativity, and human resource competence are among the factors affecting human resource governance and safeguarding its proper implementation.
Monitoring and reporting / progress reports	Progress reports, including periodic reports and CFR meetings every 45 days and every three months			✓	In the human resource governance literature, the use of progress reports in human resource governance has been mentioned (Balz, 2016; Bryan, 2020; Grobler, 2014; Heslop et al., 2003; Saliba, 2014). In all conducted interviews, the use of various reports to safeguard the

					advancement of human resource issues in governance was also mentioned.
Monitoring and reporting / quality assurance reports	Quality assurance reports			✓	In the human resource governance literature, the use of progress reports in human resource governance has been mentioned (Balz, 2016; Bryan, 2020; Grobler, 2014; Heslop et al., 2003; Saliba, 2014). In all conducted interviews, the use of various reports to safeguard the advancement of human resource issues in governance was also mentioned.
Monitoring and reporting / audit reports	Audit reports			✓	In the human resource governance literature, the use of progress reports in human resource governance has been mentioned (Balz, 2016; Bryan, 2020; Grobler, 2014; Heslop et al., 2003; Saliba, 2014). In all conducted interviews, the use of various reports to safeguard the advancement of human resource issues in governance was also mentioned.
Monitoring and reporting / professional code	Codes of ethics			✓	Grobler et al. (2014), Saliba (2014), Mackin (2016), Burgraaf (2016), Zuma (2018), and Bryan (2020) discussed codes of ethics as one of the safeguarding elements in human resource governance. In addition, codes of ethics were mentioned in 10 interviews as one of the factors affecting human resource governance.
Monitoring and reporting / professional code	Codes of ethics	—	Organizational culture	✓	In all conducted interviews, the interviewees referred to culture as an important factor in a holding company for advancing the effective and proper implementation of human resource governance. This issue was not observed in the human resource governance literature.

Based on the above table and the conducted analytical study, 35 concepts were identified within 14 subcategories and 4 main categories. Among these, concepts such as monitoring and reporting in human resource governance, human resource competence, decision-making support in the human resource committee, succession planning, and human resource expertise of managers, as well as the main categories of human resource governance principles and actors in human resource governance, had the highest frequency of repetition.

Furthermore, according to the above table, the following concepts emerged from the analysis of empirical data and had no equivalent in the existing theoretical framework. For this reason, they were identified as inconsistent. Consequently, they can complement the theoretical framework.

- Organizational culture as a facilitator of the implementation of human resource governance in the organization

- Safeguarding the implementation of human resource functions in subsidiaries in advancing human resource governance

Based on the results obtained from the congruence analysis of the research literature and empirical data, the following table is presented in response to the main research question:

**Table 3. Results Derived from Congruence Analysis**

Human resource governance framework	Components
Issues of concern in human resource governance	Human resource unit, including human resource policies and procedures, human resource systems, human resource team, measures, human resource functions, human resource strategies, human resource practices, human resource structure, and safeguarding human resource functions in subsidiaries; structure and composition, including human capital, their development, succession planning, and related issues; human resource issues related to the leadership team and the board of directors
Actors	Internal audit units; human resource committee; quality assurance unit; board of directors and its committees
Monitoring and reporting	Audit reports; quality assurance reports; progress reports; codes of ethics; competencies; organizational culture
Principles of human resource governance	Accountability; transparency

## Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the present study showed that a desirable human resource governance framework in public holding companies can be organized around four main categories: issues of concern in human resource governance, actors involved in human resource governance, monitoring and reporting mechanisms, and principles of human resource governance. These findings indicate that human resource governance is not limited to the administrative control of human resource practices; rather, it is a multidimensional governance system that connects human capital management, corporate governance, risk control, compliance, accountability, and strategic alignment. This result is consistent with the view that human resource governance is an extension of corporate governance and should be understood as a mechanism through which human resource decisions are directed, controlled, monitored, and aligned with organizational goals (6, 7). The results also support the argument that corporate governance provides the broader institutional and structural foundation for human resource governance, because both concepts are concerned with transparency, accountability, compliance, stakeholder protection, and organizational sustainability (3, 5).

One of the central findings of the study was that the main focus of human resource governance includes risk management, compliance, and business success. This result is consistent with previous studies that conceptualize human resource governance as a gatekeeping mechanism for reducing organizational risks and ensuring that human resource activities are performed within legal, ethical, and strategic boundaries (10, 24). In holding companies, human resource decisions can create extensive consequences across subsidiaries; therefore, risk management becomes a core governance function. The emphasis on compliance also aligns with the literature indicating that human resource policies, procedures, and guidelines must be designed and implemented in a way that protects the organization from legal, operational, ethical, and reputational risks (13, 14). From this perspective, the finding confirms that human resource governance acts as a bridge between organizational control and strategic value creation.

The results further indicated that the human resource unit is one of the most important domains of human resource governance. This category included human resource policies and procedures, human resource systems, human resource teams, human resource functions, human resource strategies, human resource practices, human resource structure, and safeguarding the implementation of human resource functions in subsidiaries. This finding is aligned with studies emphasizing that human resource governance should ensure the coherence, effectiveness, and accountability of core human resource functions, including recruitment, training, compensation, performance management, employee relations, and succession planning (8, 9). The finding also supports the argument that strategic human resource management contributes to organizational performance when it is governed through clear policies, defined responsibilities, and systematic monitoring (15, 16). In the context of the MAPNA Group, this issue becomes especially important because the governance of human resource functions across subsidiaries requires coordination between central policies and operational implementation.

Another important finding was the role of structure and composition in human resource governance. The results showed that the number of employees in subsidiaries, the structure of subsidiaries, expertise of employees, human capital development, and succession planning are significant issues in the governance framework. This finding is consistent with the view that human resource governance should be sensitive to organizational structure, workforce composition, managerial competencies, and human capital characteristics (24, 32). In holding companies, structural diversity among subsidiaries may create variation in human resource needs, risks, and implementation capacities. Therefore, governance frameworks must provide mechanisms that allow both standardization and contextual adaptation. This finding also confirms the importance of human capital disclosure and governance in contemporary organizations, where the quality, capability, and sustainability of human resources are increasingly regarded as strategic governance concerns (17).

The findings also revealed that leadership-related human resource issues form a major part of human resource governance. These issues included professional development of senior managers, training and development of managers, rewards and benefits for managers, selection of board members of subsidiaries, and succession planning for managers. This result is strongly supported by studies that consider leadership, executive compensation, managerial development, and succession planning as essential components of human resource governance (7, 12). Human resource governance should not only regulate lower-level human resource practices but also provide mechanisms for monitoring leadership quality and managerial accountability. In holding companies, the selection and development of subsidiary board members and managers are particularly important because these actors directly influence the implementation of human resource policies and the realization of corporate governance objectives. This result is also consistent with research indicating that governance quality depends on the competence, accountability, and ethical orientation of leadership teams (11, 27).

The study identified several key actors in human resource governance, including the board of directors, board committees, the leadership team, subsidiary boards, the human resource committee, internal audit units, the audit committee, and the quality assurance unit. This finding confirms that human resource governance is a distributed system of responsibility rather than the exclusive duty of the human resource department. Prior studies also emphasize that governance mechanisms require the interaction of multiple actors who perform decision-making, supervision, monitoring, compliance review, and reporting functions (9, 33). The identification of the board of directors and human resource committee as central actors aligns with the argument that human resource governance should be embedded in the upper levels of organizational decision-making (6, 24). This is particularly

important in holding companies, where human resource governance must cover both parent-company governance and subsidiary-level implementation.

The role of the human resource committee was one of the repeated findings of the study. The committee was found to be involved in decision-making and decision support concerning salaries, rewards, benefits, welfare, talent management, succession planning, recruitment, managerial capacity development, and determination of structural and managerial centralization or decentralization. This finding is consistent with the literature that views the human resource committee as a specialized governance mechanism responsible for aligning human resource policies with strategic, ethical, and compliance requirements (10, 14). In large organizations, such committees can reduce arbitrary decision-making and increase the transparency and consistency of human resource decisions. The finding also aligns with the idea that human resource governance requires formal structures through which key decisions are reviewed, approved, and monitored (12, 13).

Monitoring and reporting emerged as another core category in the proposed framework. The findings showed that audit reports, quality assurance reports, progress reports, codes of ethics, competencies, and organizational culture are important monitoring and reporting elements. This result supports previous studies that emphasize reporting, auditing, and compliance review as essential components of human resource governance (9, 12). Audit and quality assurance reports allow organizations to identify deviations, monitor policy implementation, and ensure that human resource practices remain aligned with organizational standards. Similarly, progress reports provide periodic evidence regarding the advancement of human resource objectives. This finding is also consistent with studies on digitalization and performance management, which argue that systematic data, reporting mechanisms, and performance indicators are increasingly important in modern human resource governance (18, 19).

The emphasis on codes of ethics in the findings confirms the ethical foundation of human resource governance. Codes of ethics provide a normative framework for decision-making, employee relations, managerial conduct, and organizational accountability. This finding is consistent with the argument that business ethics is a core element of governance and compliance systems (11). Human resource governance without ethical codes may become limited to procedural control and fail to address deeper issues of fairness, trust, transparency, and organizational legitimacy. The results therefore support the view that ethical governance must be integrated with human resource policies, performance systems, leadership practices, and reporting mechanisms (27, 28).

One of the important results of the study was the identification of transparency and accountability as the main principles of human resource governance. This result is consistent with the broader corporate governance literature, which identifies transparency and accountability as essential principles of effective governance (3, 5). In human resource governance, transparency means that information related to policies, decisions, responsibilities, and outcomes should be available and understandable to relevant stakeholders. Accountability means that actors responsible for human resource decisions must be answerable for their actions and their consequences. These principles are also consistent with good governance-based approaches to human resource empowerment, in which transparency and accountability are necessary for trust, participation, and organizational effectiveness (28, 29).

The findings also showed that organizational culture and safeguarding the implementation of human resource functions in subsidiaries were concepts derived from empirical data that had no direct equivalent in the theoretical framework. This result is important because it indicates that the existing literature may not fully explain the practical realities of human resource governance in holding companies. Organizational culture was identified as a facilitator of the implementation of human resource governance. This finding is theoretically meaningful because governance

mechanisms cannot be effective only through formal structures and written policies; they also require shared values, behavioral norms, and cultural acceptance. Although some governance studies emphasize ethics and compliance, the specific role of organizational culture in facilitating human resource governance in holding companies requires further attention (11, 27). The identification of this concept suggests that the proposed framework adds contextual depth to previous models.

The second divergent concept was safeguarding the implementation of human resource functions in subsidiaries. This result reflects the specific governance challenge of holding companies. Unlike single organizations, holding companies must ensure that policies designed at the parent-company level are properly implemented in subsidiaries with different structures, capabilities, and operational conditions. This finding is compatible with research on human resource development in holding companies, which emphasizes the importance of coordination, monitoring, and structural alignment across affiliated companies (20). It also supports recent studies that identify human resource governance as a necessary mechanism for improving administrative reform, organizational coordination, and institutional effectiveness (22, 26). Therefore, the proposed framework contributes to the literature by emphasizing subsidiary-level implementation as a specific governance requirement.

Overall, the results of this study are consistent with prior research showing that human resource governance improves organizational performance by aligning human resource systems with strategic objectives, strengthening compliance, supporting ethical behavior, and enhancing monitoring mechanisms (15, 25). The findings also extend previous research by developing a framework specifically suitable for public holding companies. In particular, the framework integrates governance principles, governance actors, human resource domains, monitoring tools, reporting mechanisms, and culturally grounded implementation factors. This integrated view responds to the need for context-specific governance frameworks in complex organizations and supports the argument that governance should be analyzed not only as a formal structure but also as a practical process involving actors, policies, reports, culture, and implementation mechanisms (4, 31).

The present study had several limitations. First, the empirical phase was conducted in the MAPNA Group, and although this organization provides a rich and relevant case for studying human resource governance in public holding companies, the findings may not be fully generalizable to all holding companies or other organizational sectors. Second, the study relied on semi-structured interviews and organizational documents, and although these sources provided valuable qualitative data, the results may still be influenced by participants' perceptions and the availability of internal documents. Third, the study focused on framework development rather than quantitative testing; therefore, the causal effects of the identified components on organizational performance, compliance, and risk reduction were not statistically examined.

Future research should test the proposed human resource governance framework in other public, private, and semi-public holding companies to determine its transferability and contextual adaptability. Researchers are also advised to use quantitative and mixed-method designs to examine the relationships among governance principles, governance actors, monitoring mechanisms, organizational culture, and organizational outcomes. Comparative studies between holding companies in different industries can also clarify whether the identified components are universal or industry-specific. Future studies may also investigate the role of digital technologies, human resource analytics, and artificial intelligence-based reporting systems in strengthening human resource governance.

From a practical perspective, public holding companies should establish clear governance structures for human resource management by defining the roles and responsibilities of the board of directors, human resource

committee, audit committee, quality assurance units, senior managers, and subsidiary-level actors. They should also develop transparent policies, systematic reporting mechanisms, periodic audit processes, ethical codes, and competency-based monitoring tools. In addition, organizational culture should be treated as a core facilitator of governance implementation, not merely as a background condition. Strengthening accountability, transparency, and subsidiary-level policy implementation can help holding companies reduce human resource risks, improve compliance, and align human capital practices with strategic objectives.

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### Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

### Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

### Ethical Considerations

All ethical principles were adhered in conducting and writing this article.

### Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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