



Talent management in higher education: how institutional logic shapes faculty recruitment, development, performance, and identity

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Receive: 12/06/2025

Accepted: 02/09/2025

Published: 01/10/2025

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji mekanisme-mekanisme utama yang membentuk manajemen talenta dosen dalam lingkungan pendidikan tinggi di Indonesia yang memiliki karakteristik institusional berbeda. Melalui analisis multi-kasus pada satu perguruan tinggi swasta dan satu perguruan tinggi negeri, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi lima faktor struktural yakni formalisasi sistem, infrastruktur pengembangan, filosofi kinerja, jalur mobilitas karier, dan keselarasan identitas, yang secara kolektif memengaruhi motivasi, keterlibatan, dan retensi dosen. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa perguruan tinggi swasta, yang ditandai oleh sistem yang terstruktur dan memiliki sumber daya memadai, memperoleh manfaat berupa kejelasan peran, penguatan kapasitas, serta akuntabilitas yang lebih tinggi, meskipun kondisi tersebut juga berpotensi meningkatkan tekanan beban kerja. Sebaliknya, perguruan tinggi negeri menawarkan tingkat otonomi yang lebih besar namun menghadapi tantangan berupa ambiguitas peran, dukungan pengembangan yang terbatas, evaluasi kinerja yang terfragmentasi, dan peluang kemajuan karier yang terhambat. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, penelitian ini mengusulkan model terintegrasi berbasis teori yang terdiri atas empat pilar strategis: Faculty Role Clarity Framework, Faculty Development Architecture, Balanced Performance and Recognition Model, dan Faculty Career Mobility & Identity Alignment Framework. Dengan disertai rencana implementasi berbasis bukti empiris, model ini memberikan peta jalan yang aplikatif untuk meningkatkan pengalaman kerja dosen di berbagai konteks institusional. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa penyelarasan struktur organisasi dengan kebutuhan psikologis dan identitas profesional dosen merupakan prasyarat untuk mendorong keunggulan akademik yang berkelanjutan serta memperkuat daya saing institusi pendidikan tinggi di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: Manajemen Talenta Dosen; Pendidikan Tinggi; Kejelasan Peran; Manajemen Kinerja; Mobilitas Karier.

Abstract

This study examines the underlying mechanisms that shape faculty talent management within contrasting higher-education environments in Indonesia. Through a multi-case analysis of a private and a public university, the research identifies five key structural drivers, system formalization, development infrastructure, performance philosophy, career mobility pathways, and identity alignment, that influence faculty motivation, engagement, and retention. The findings reveal that private institutions benefit from highly formalized and resource-rich systems that enhance clarity, capability-building, and accountability, yet may create heightened workload pressure. Conversely, public institutions offer greater autonomy but face challenges related to ambiguity, limited developmental support, fragmented performance evaluation, and constrained career progression. Drawing on these insights, the study proposes an integrated, theory-driven model consisting of four strategic pillars: the Faculty Role Clarity Framework, the Faculty Development Architecture, the Balanced Performance and Recognition Model, and the Faculty Career Mobility & Identity Alignment Framework. Accompanied by empirically justified implementation plans, this model offers a practical roadmap for strengthening faculty experiences across diverse institutional contexts. The study concludes that aligning structural systems with faculty psychological needs and professional identities is essential for fostering sustainable academic excellence and institutional competitiveness in Indonesian higher education.

Keywords: Faculty Talent Management; Higher Education; Role Clarity; Performance Management; Career Mobility.

Background

Attracting and retaining high-quality faculty is essential for higher education institutions around the world, particularly amid intensifying competition and rapid changes in the global academic landscape. As expectations for research productivity, industry relevance, teaching excellence, and international recognition continue to grow, developing an effective strategy for managing faculty talent has become more crucial than ever (OECD, 2008; Altbach & Salmi, 2011). Faculty members play a central role in delivering academic excellence, shaping student experiences (Hardré & Cox, 2009), and contributing to institutional prestige. Their performance influences key indicators such as global rankings and employer perceptions (Cadez et al., 2017; Ke et al., 2016). Additionally, their expertise is vital in securing research funding, cultivating industry partnerships, and ensuring that curricula remain aligned with evolving market demands.

Despite its importance, many business schools continue to rely on traditional or fragmented approaches to talent management. Conventional academic HR systems often emphasize rigid tenure tracks, publication-based metrics, and limited investment in professional development, approaches that fail to reflect the diverse roles and changing expectations of modern faculty members (Björkman et al., 2022; Ke et al., 2016; Taamneh et al., 2022). Furthermore, insufficient attention to succession planning, leadership development, and personalized retention strategies has led to high turnover and growing dissatisfaction among both junior and senior academics. These institutional shortcomings create barriers to high-quality recruitment, hinder innovation, and undermine long-term competitiveness in a dynamic educational environment.

These challenges are particularly evident in Southeast Asia, where higher education systems are undergoing rapid transformation due to rising demand for quality instruction and international accreditation. Indonesia, the region's largest economy and most populous nation has experienced significant growth in business and management

education over the past two decades. Private universities have played a pivotal role in this expansion, yet they also encounter unique constraints in managing faculty talent, given their dependence on tuition revenue, market reputation, and responsiveness to industry trends.

This study examines a leading private university and a prominent public university in Indonesia to explore how each institution manages faculty talent. It investigates how recruitment, retention, and motivation are shaped by organizational culture, organizational commitment, and HR practices. Employing a multi-case study approach and thematic data analysis, this qualitative research aims to provide insights into how both types of institutions can strengthen faculty engagement and sustain long-term competitiveness (Antony et al., 2024).

From a business perspective, the effective management of academic talent is indispensable for sustaining organizational performance in both private and public universities. Human capital, particularly faculty, is among the most influential assets affecting teaching quality, research outcomes, student satisfaction, and institutional reputation. For private universities, sound talent management practices are essential to remain competitive in a dynamic, market-driven environment. Meanwhile, public universities must navigate bureaucratic structures, limited autonomy, and reliance on government funding, all of which may constrain their capacity to attract, develop, and retain top academic talent (Supi et al., 2023).

When faculty talent is poorly managed, institutions face a cascade of negative consequences. High turnover disrupts teaching continuity and curriculum planning; lack of career development reduces motivation and performance; and misaligned incentives hinder collaboration and innovation. Such issues affect not only internal operations but also external perceptions, ultimately influencing student enrollment, funding prospects, international partnerships, and market positioning. In Indonesia's competitive educational landscape, talent shortages or ineffective HR strategies can diminish institutional agility and weaken responsiveness to industry needs. For instance,

if a business school cannot attract faculty with expertise in digital transformation, entrepreneurship, or sustainable business practices, its programs may become outdated, leading to declining interest among students and employers. For public universities, these challenges are exacerbated by strict government regulations that limit flexibility in talent management (Ramaditya et al., 2022).

Findings from previous studies highlight the severity of these issues. Survey data indicate that 42.9% of lecturers in Indonesia earn a fixed monthly income of less than IDR 3 million, and more than half (53.6%) receive less than IDR 1 million in variable income from honoraria or publication incentives. These figures fall below the 2023 national average provincial minimum wage of IDR 2,910,632. The same survey shows that 80% of lecturers believe their compensation does not match their workload (Pertiwi et al., 2023). Faculty members often teach numerous credits due to cost-cutting measures that reduce the number of lecturers, resulting in larger class sizes. Additionally, they must supervise students, conduct research, publish scholarly work, and carry out community service, all while navigating increasingly burdensome administrative systems. Limited administrative support frequently forces faculty to take on extra duties, further straining their capacity (Mousa & Ayoubi, 2019).

These combined pressures significantly affect faculty satisfaction and engagement. Many lecturers divert their time and energy toward more financially rewarding side jobs, which can diminish teaching quality and lead to growing frustration and disengagement. Reports of substandard teaching, including canceled classes due to overextended faculty, have become increasingly common. Financial and operational stress can also harm interpersonal relationships with students and colleagues, contributing to emotional exhaustion, reduced empathy, and overall disengagement. Such conditions reflect a broader crisis within universities, threatening both educational quality and the long-term vitality of academic communities (Amushila et al., 2021).

Viewing talent management through a business lens enables institutional leaders to make more strategic decisions aligned with both educational missions and organizational performance. This approach shifts the focus from administrative personnel management to

value creation through people, ensuring that faculty are not only recruited and retained but also supported, motivated, and aligned with institutional goals. Nevertheless, the data referenced here may not fully represent conditions at the specific institutions studied. Differences between public and private universities, including bureaucratic constraints, funding mechanisms, and autonomy, underscore the need for nuanced, context-sensitive strategies for managing academic talent.

Problem Formulation

Based on the above background, the problem formulation in this study is as follows:

1. How are the current faculty talent management practices and primary retention challenges at a leading public and a leading private Indonesian university?
2. How do organizational factors, specifically culture, HR practices, and commitment, shape faculty perceptions of motivation, engagement, and their intent to stay?

Research Objectives

This study has several objectives, namely:

To identify the current faculty talent management practices and primary retention challenges faced by a leading public and a leading private university in Indonesia.

To explore how faculty perceive the influence of organizational culture, HR practices, and organizational commitment on their motivation, engagement, and intent to stay.

Research Benefit

The benefits of this research can be seen in two key dimensions, namely its theoretical contribution and its practical contribution.

Theoretical Contribution

This study enhances talent management theory in higher education by clarifying how recruitment, retention, and faculty motivation function across different institutional contexts. It extends HRM perspectives through the integration of organizational culture, organizational commitment, and institutional variations, while adding empirical insights from the underrepresented Southeast Asian region.

Practical Contributions

For Students: This study provides insights that can support the improvement of teaching quality and faculty engagement, which ultimately enhances students' learning experiences, access to guidance, and overall academic outcomes.

For Teachers/Lecturers: The findings offer a deeper understanding of the factors influencing faculty motivation, workload, and satisfaction, thereby helping educators advocate for better working conditions, professional development opportunities, and more supportive institutional policies.

For Schools/Universities: The research equips educational institutions with evidence-based recommendations to strengthen talent management practices, improve faculty retention, optimize resource allocation, and build a more effective, competitive, and supportive academic environment.

For Future Researchers: This study expands the existing literature on talent management in higher education and provides a strong foundation for further research, offering conceptual frameworks, thematic findings, and methodological insights that future scholars can build upon.

Method

This study uses a qualitative exploratory multi-case study to analyze faculty talent in University X and University Y. A qualitative design is chosen to capture complex, context-dependent factors such as motivation, culture, leadership, and retention (Creswell, 2023).

Following Yin (2017), the case study approach enables in-depth examination of real-life institutional practices. The research process includes issue mapping, literature review, development of a conceptual framework, purposive sampling, semi-structured interviews, thematic analysis, and formulation of practical recommendations.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 6–8 purposively selected participants, including faculty members, HR staff, and academic leaders. Interviews (45–60 minutes) were held in person or online, recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. This method captures detailed perceptions of recruitment, motivation, organizational culture, and retention.

Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, involving familiarization, coding, theme development, review, definition, and reporting. Deductive and inductive coding were combined to build themes such as motivational factors, leadership and culture, and retention challenges. Rigor was ensured through triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, and audit trails. The analysis provides a clear understanding of faculty experiences and informs actionable talent management strategies for Indonesian business schools.

Result and Discussion

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected to understand faculty experiences with talent management practices across two contrasting institutional environments. Using Eisenhardt's inductive case study approach (Eisenhardt, 1989), the findings were developed through a systematic process beginning with within-case analysis, followed by cross-case comparison to identify common patterns, key differences, and underlying mechanisms. The results also serve as the basis for abductively refining the conceptual framework introduced in Chapter 2, providing deeper insight into how institutional factors shape faculty motivation, engagement, and performance. These analytical insights form the empirical foundation for the business solutions and recommendations presented in the following sections.

1. Analysis

A. Analytical Foundations

This study examines two distinctly different institutional environments to contextualize faculty members' lived experiences: Case A, a resource-stable private university operating under a corporatized model with formalized systems for recruitment, performance management, and faculty development, and Case B, a public university functioning within a state-regulated governance structure characterized by limited resources, administrative complexity, and uneven institutional support. These contextual contrasts shape how faculty interpret their roles, expectations, and career trajectories. The analysis is based on 12 semi-structured interviews gathered through purposive and snowball sampling, ensuring variation in academic rank, structural and non-structural roles, recruitment pathways, and institutional tenure, with particular attention to early- and mid-career faculty who are most affected by inconsistencies in talent management practices. The selection of the two institutions as polar cases follows Eisenhardt's (1989) replication logic, enabling clearer identification of emerging patterns and enhancing the analytical rigor of both the within-case and cross-case analyses.

B. Within Case Findings

Building on the contextual foundation established in the previous section, this part presents the Within-Case Findings for each institution. To capture their unique operational environments and faculty experiences, Case A (Private University) and Case B (Public University) were analyzed independently across key dimensions of talent management. This structured, individual examination is crucial for revealing each university's distinctive practices, governance models, and the specific psychological contracts formed with their academics, before proceeding to the synthesis and comparison in the cross-case analysis.

	Key drivers are expectations of financial and career stability and perceptions of institutional reputation and growth.	and now influenced by state regulations. Key drivers are pragmatism (family/location considerations), and strategic career building within Indonesian academia
Faculty Development	Highly structured, monitored, and mandatory. Managed by dedicated centralized units ⁸⁸⁸ . Obligations extend beyond the conventional three pillars to include required self-development tracked via a points system. Institution is proactive in providing support.	Primarily functional and compliance-driven, focused on improving instructional service quality for accreditation. Limited emphasis on individualized growth or long-term planning. Formal mentorship is lapsed or inconsistent, shifting developmental responsibility to the faculty.
Performance Management & Rewards	Formal 4-pillar system (including self-development). Anchored in quantified KPIs (metrics). Internal units proactively monitor and issue reminders. Multifaceted reward structure (financial, formal recognition, developmental) aimed at reinforcing performance and retaining talent ¹⁸¹⁸¹⁸¹⁸ .	In structural transition; moving from autonomy to centralized regulation. Compensation shifted to a micro-itemized ("printilan") system, perceived as opaque and prone to delays. Performance is measured by minimum Tridharma/BKD standards. Rewards are described as fragmented and reduced due to efficiency reforms.

C. Cross Case Analysis

The analysis is meticulously structured across five core dimensions, Talent Attraction Logic, Capability Development Infrastructure, Performance Management Philosophy, Career Mobility Structures, and Faculty Identity Formation, to delineate the differential enactment of talent management practices. The objective is to elucidate how these contrasting institutional rationalities fundamentally shape the faculty psychological contract, yielding significant variations in motivation and retention, and ultimately identifying the paramount operational tension between high structural accountability and pervasive

Table 1. Comparison between Case A (Private University) and Case B (Public University)

Aspect	Case A (Private University)	Case B (Public University)
Recruitment & Attraction	Systematized and market-oriented	Historically relational, flexible,

professional discretion across the higher education typology.

Table 2. Comparison of Governance and Resource Models

Aspect	Case A: High Structure, High Expectation	Case B: High Discretion, Low Support
Institutional Logic	Corporate Managerial Logic (structure, performance differentiation, continuous capability-building).	Bureaucratic Collegial Logic (procedural compliance, professional autonomy, state regulation).
Psychological Contract	Transactional Developmental Contract (High performance exchanged for structured support, mobility, and competitive rewards).	Relational Survival Contract (Faculty relies on identity and intellectual belonging to compensate for lack of systemic support or recognition).
Core Tension	Optimizes clarity and system support but risks overload (Structured Performance Ecosystem).	Optimizes autonomy and discretion but risks stagnation and disengagement (Ambiguity and Stagnation).

D. Theory Building

The cross-case comparison identifies deeper generative mechanisms that transcend differences in HR practices, showing how institutional logics, resource structures, and governance models shape faculty attraction, development, motivation, and retention.

Synthesizing patterns across the two cases, the analysis reveals three overarching mechanisms: the degree of system formalization, the strength of development infrastructure, and the alignment between institutional identity and individual professional self-concept. These dynamics form the basis of an emerging theory of faculty talent management in Indonesian higher education.

- (1) First, system formalization strongly influences faculty clarity and performance norms. In highly formalized environments, expectations are codified and monitoring is intensive, producing consistency but also heightened pressure. In less formalized settings, autonomy increases but ambiguity and uneven engagement emerge. Thus, formalization enhances clarity but risks overload, whereas low formalization promotes freedom but may weaken motivation.
- (2) Second, development infrastructure determines faculty motivation and perceptions of support. Institutions with structured, well-resourced development systems cultivate stronger motivational climates and a clearer sense of organizational investment. Fragmented systems, by contrast, lead faculty to rely on personal initiative or external networks, resulting in inconsistent development and variable academic productivity.
- (3) Third, performance philosophies differ significantly across cases. Differentiation-oriented systems reward excellence and maintain accountability but may overwhelm faculty. Equalization-oriented systems reduce pressure and standardize expectations but risk demotivating high performers and diminishing perceptions of fairness.
- (4) Fourth, career progression structures shape institutional commitment. Explicit, well-supported pathways signal mutual investment and strengthen retention, whereas bureaucratic or stagnant pathways

erode motivation and create a sense of limited growth.

Finally, identity alignment emerges as the strongest mediator of faculty engagement. When institutional values and governance logics align with faculty self-concept, engagement and commitment are reinforced. Misalignment generates disillusionment, detachment, and eventual turnover intention.

Together, these mechanisms form a theoretical model explaining how structural features, formalization, developmental support, performance logic, career scaffolding, and identity alignment interact to shape faculty experiences in contrasting institutional contexts. This framework clarifies why faculty interpret similar responsibilities differently across settings and offers conceptual grounding for the practical strategies proposed in the subsequent section.

2. Business Solution

Moving beyond diagnostic insights, this section translates the identified mechanisms, role clarity, developmental support, performance differentiation, career mobility, and identity alignment, into actionable and institutionally adaptable frameworks. By integrating insights from organizational theory and empirical evidence across the two cases, the proposed strategies aim to strengthen faculty motivation, engagement, and long-term retention through coherent, system-level interventions. These solutions also acknowledge the multi-stakeholder nature of higher education governance, ensuring that each recommendation is aligned with the structural realities and institutional logics of diverse academic environments.

A. Stakeholder Landscape

The analysis identifies a broad constellation of actors who collectively shape faculty experiences across the entire talent lifecycle. These stakeholders include institutional leadership, HR or Human Capital Development units, academic program directors, heads of academic groups, senior faculty members, and the faculty themselves. In public universities, central university administration also plays a decisive structural role due to its authority over promotion systems, workload regulations, and financial

governance. Each group exercises influence over different touchpoints, ranging from recruitment, onboarding, and daily workload distribution to performance evaluation, development opportunities, and recognition practices. Consequently, the effectiveness of faculty talent management depends not on isolated interventions but on the coordinated actions and aligned priorities of these interdependent actors. Their decisions collectively shape role clarity, developmental access, institutional fairness, and ultimately, faculty motivation and well-being.

B. Strategic Pillars for Faculty Talent Management

Building on the empirical mechanisms identified in the cross-case analysis, four strategic pillars are proposed as the foundation for transformative faculty talent management. Each pillar responds to specific structural and psychological challenges observed across institutions while offering adaptable, system-level solutions.

- (1) Pillar 1: Faculty Role Clarity Framework (FRCF). This pillar focuses on reducing ambiguity in academic responsibilities, expectations, and evaluative standards. Informed by Role Theory, the Job Demands-Resources Model, and Organizational Support Theory, it positions role clarity as a fundamental job resource that minimizes cognitive overload, enhances performance consistency, and signals institutional competence and care.
- (2) Pillar 2: Faculty Development Architecture (FDA). Addressing disparities in capability-building, this pillar proposes a structured and equitable development ecosystem that cultivates competence, autonomy, and professional connection. Drawing on Self-Determination Theory, Talent Management Theory, and Social Exchange Theory, it emphasizes the need for systematic learning pathways, revitalized mentorship, and development opportunities that reinforce reciprocal commitment between faculty and institution.
- (3) Pillar 3: Balanced Performance and Recognition Model (BPRM). This pillar redesigns performance evaluation and recognition mechanisms to promote fairness, transparency, and motivational

strength. Grounded in Organizational Justice Theory, Expectancy Theory, and Perceived Organizational Support, the model rewards diverse forms of academic excellence and reestablishes a meaningful link between effort, performance, and institutional appreciation.

(4) Pillar 4: Faculty Career Mobility & Identity Alignment Framework (FCM-IAF). The final pillar strengthens long-term engagement by clarifying career progression routes and aligning them with faculty identity and institutional values. Based on Psychological Contract Theory, Work Identity Theory, Career Construction Theory, and Institutional Logics Theory, it addresses stagnation, restores a sense of growth, and reinforces faculty belonging through coherent career narratives.

C. Integrated Strategic Model

These four pillars operate not as isolated interventions but as components of an integrated strategic architecture.

- (1) Pillar 1 (Clarity) establishes the structural foundation for coherent academic work.
- (2) Pillar 2 (Development) builds capability and intrinsic motivation to meet expectations.
- (3) Pillar 3 (Recognition) reinforces desired behaviors through fair and meaningful evaluation.
- (4) Pillar 4 (Career Mobility) provides long-term direction, purpose, and institutional attachment.

Together, they generate a comprehensive motivational ecosystem in which structural clarity supports growth, development enhances performance, recognition validates achievement, and career pathways cultivate sustained commitment and identity alignment. This holistic configuration ensures that improvements in one area amplify benefits across the broader faculty experience.

D. Theoretical Integration and Abductive Reasoning

The development of this integrated framework was guided by an abductive reasoning approach, consistent with Eisenhardt's theory-building methodology. The process involved iterative movement between

empirical patterns in the two case institutions and established theoretical constructs, allowing for refinement, reinterpretation, and contextual adaptation of relevant theories. Through this iterative synthesis, the study advances a contextually grounded model that extends the conceptual foundation introduced in Chapter II. The resulting framework provides a coherent and theoretically informed strategic direction for addressing faculty motivation, engagement, and retention within diverse and evolving higher-education environments.

Implementation Plan and Justification

This section outlines an implementation plan that operationalizes the four strategic pillars into concrete, actionable steps aimed at improving faculty role clarity, development, performance management, and career mobility across higher-education institutions. The plan specifies implementation processes, responsible stakeholders, timelines, and empirical justification, ensuring that each intervention is both theoretically grounded and practically feasible for institutions with varying governance systems and resource conditions, such as Case A and Case B.

The first component, the Faculty Role Clarity Framework (FRCF), proposes systematic role blueprinting, expectation mapping, structured communication mechanisms, and continuous monitoring. Supported by empirical studies demonstrating the positive effects of role clarity on engagement, satisfaction, and retention, this framework is expected to reduce ambiguity, improve workload fairness, and enhance institutional trust.

The second component, the Faculty Development Architecture (FDA), involves establishing structured development tracks, revitalizing mentorship systems, creating institutional training calendars, and evaluating developmental progress. Empirical research shows that coherent and sustained development ecosystems significantly improve research productivity, intrinsic motivation, and institutional commitment. The FDA therefore aims to build long-term capability pipelines and reinforce the reciprocal relationship between faculty and the institution.

The third component, the Balanced Performance and Recognition Model (BPRM), redesigns evaluation metrics through balanced scorecards, introduces transparent appraisal cycles, formalizes recognition systems, and establishes feedback and appeals mechanisms. Empirical evidence from performance-management research highlights that fair, transparent, and multidimensional evaluation systems enhance motivation, perceived organizational support, and discretionary effort. BPRM is thus expected to strengthen fairness, improve accountability, and reduce disengagement linked to inconsistent evaluation practices.

The fourth component, the Faculty Career Mobility & Identity Alignment Framework (FCM-IAF), focuses on creating dual career pathways, institutionalizing career dialogues, developing transparent promotion indicators, and integrating identity socialization practices. Research demonstrates that clear career structures and identity alignment significantly increase faculty engagement, career satisfaction, and retention while reinforcing psychological contract fulfillment. This framework provides faculty with coherent growth trajectories and strengthens their sense of belonging within the institution.

Collectively, these implementation plans offer a comprehensive and evidence-based roadmap for enhancing faculty motivation, engagement, and retention. By aligning structural clarity, developmental support, recognition fairness, and career identity coherence, the proposed strategies form an integrated model that is adaptable to diverse institutional contexts and responsive to the core challenges identified in the cross-case analysis

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that faculty talent management in Indonesian higher education is fundamentally shaped by

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contrasting institutional logics, resource environments, and governance structures. Through a multi-case analysis of a leading private university and a prominent public university, the findings reveal that system formalization, development infrastructure, performance philosophy, career mobility structures, and identity alignment collectively determine faculty motivation, engagement, and retention. Private institutions benefit from structured systems that enhance clarity and capability-building but risk generating excessive pressure, while public institutions offer autonomy yet struggle with ambiguity, limited support, and stagnant career pathways.

The cross-case insights culminate in a theory-driven strategic model anchored in four pillars, role clarity, faculty development, performance and recognition, and career mobility with identity alignment. When integrated, these pillars create a coherent motivational ecosystem capable of strengthening faculty commitment and enhancing institutional effectiveness. The implementation plans proposed are empirically justified, operationally feasible, and adaptable across diverse higher-education contexts, providing a clear roadmap for universities seeking to improve faculty experiences and long-term competitiveness.

Overall, this research reinforces the centrality of faculty as a core institutional asset and highlights the need for context-sensitive, system-level approaches to talent management. By aligning organizational structures with faculty psychological needs and professional identities, universities can cultivate sustainable academic environments that support excellence in teaching, research, and service. The study also offers theoretical contributions to HRM and organizational studies in higher education and provides a strong foundation for future research on talent management within Southeast Asian academic institutions.

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