

Boosting Public Sector Organisational Competitiveness through Corporate Governance: The Mediating role of Human Resource Management Practices.

James Isabirye¹, Francis Kasekende², Muhammed Ngoma³, Sam Mafabi⁴, Janatti Kyogabiirwe Bagorogoza⁵ and Fiona Mulira⁶

Abstract

The study aims to explore the relationship between corporate governance and organisational competitiveness, with human resource management practices (HRMP) as a mediating variable. The study was anchored in the Resource-Based View (RBV) and the stakeholder theory. Data was drawn from 79 public sector organisations. Four questionnaires were administered to senior managers, and 265 questionnaires were considered in the final analysis. Construct reliability and validity were determined through Smart PLS. The postulated model and hypotheses were evaluated using Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The results reveal that corporate governance, HRMP and organisational competitiveness are significantly related. Additionally, the results show that HRM practices mediate the relationship between corporate governance and organisational competitiveness. The study used cross-sectional data and focused on semi-autonomous public sector organisations for data collection. Therefore, the findings should be cautiously generalised. The results provide a comprehensive valuable understanding for public sector policymakers in terms of crafting and implementing corporate governance practices to improve the human resource function and activities in order to improve public sector organisational competitiveness. Empirically, the study provides evidence that HRM practices mediate the relationship between corporate governance and organisational competitiveness. Therefore, this paper extends the related literature.

Keywords: Competitiveness, HRM Practices, Corporate Governance, Public Sector Organisations.

Introduction

Public sector organisations are operating in a challenging environment characterised by various pressures, including pressures to improve accountability, value for money, customer orientation and efficiency (Buitrago & Camargo, 2021). Previously, the concept of competitiveness was associated with private sector firms and national economies. However, competitiveness has increasingly become relevant for public sector organisations, particularly in developing countries (Buitrago et al., 2023). As governments face mounting pressure to deliver efficient, effective, and equitable services, the need for public sector organisations to adopt competitive strategies has

¹ Makerere University Business School, Uganda
Email: jamesngbk80@gmail.com

² Nkumba University, Entebbe, Uganda & Makerere University Business School, Uganda

³ Makerere University Business School, Uganda

⁴ Makerere University Business School, Uganda

⁵ Makerere University Business School, Uganda

⁶ Makerere University Business School, Uganda

grown (Porter, [1990](#); World Bank, 2017). According to Bennett and Lemoine ([2014](#)), public sector organisations are expected to address the challenges and problems of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA) in the 21st century world. Owing to such pressures, public sector organisations are switching over from traditional administrative models to private-like managerial approaches and methods. The purpose is to make the organisations more accountable, efficient, and more orientated towards value for money and customer satisfaction with a view to making the public sector more competitive (Rkein & Andrew, 2012). So far, however, there seems to be no comprehensive understanding of organisational competitiveness in the public sector and, specifically, in the context of developing countries like Uganda. Villamejor-Mendoza ([2020](#)) argues that competitive governments are improving public service, citing the Cities and Municipalities Competitiveness Index (CMCI), which ranks cities and municipalities by economic dynamism, government efficiency, and infrastructure. The SDGs, Uganda's Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV) 2025–2030, Uganda Vision 2040, and the Competition Act 2023 recognise the importance of a high standard of living, quality of life, sound health, and wellbeing, which public sector organisations aim to achieve through social and economic development. This paper explores how Ugandan public sector organisations achieve competitiveness principle in a complex changing environment

Remarkably, corporate governance and HRM have emerged as crucial factors for developing and providing competitive services in a knowledge- and techno-intensive economy (Lima & Galleli, [2021](#); Talalwa et al., [2024](#)). The integration of HRM and corporate governance is important since both aid institutions in adopting the best practices in their corporate dealings and securing stakeholders' interests in the long run (Markoulli et al., [2017](#)). An organisation's ability to attain goals and achieve missions is dependent largely on employees' behaviours and competencies (Sharma & Malodia, [2022](#)). Research indicates that organisations with robust corporate governance practices and human resource strategies experience accelerated growth, as these contribute to organisational competitiveness and sustainability (Alshirah et al., [2022](#)). Organisations that embrace robust corporate governance and HRMP improve on value for stakeholders, increase quality, and reduce costs, enhancing customer satisfaction. From this, an intriguing question emerges concerning the impact of corporate governance on the HRMP and on organisational competitiveness. Owing to the unique socio-cultural aspects of Uganda's public sector, HRMP and corporate governance practices in this country warrant further exploration.

Though recent research enquiry has focused on exploring how governance affects human resource management (Brestos et al., [2018](#)), little is known about how HRMP and their implementation are related to corporate governance (Ibrahim & Zulkafli, [2016](#)). Moreover, Martin et al. (2016) and Lima and Galleli ([2021](#)) argue that the literature on corporate governance and HRM remains silent on this subject. This study explores how governance practices such as organisational boards and their systems are used to protect and reward stakeholders. In addition, corporate governance, HRMP, and competitiveness in Ugandan public sector organisations are understudied. This study examines HRM practices as a mediator of corporate governance and organisational competitiveness. According to Villamejor-Mendoza ([2020](#)), public sector organisations are required to be competitive within their own institutions and with others in society that are like them, that provide household goods and services. This helps in matching the quantity and quality demanded and supplied, as well as the tax prices paid. Public sector organisations are recognised as institutions that are important for enhancing competitiveness by carrying out three crucial functions (Graham & Naima, 1998). The first function is related to policy or legislation and

regulations by legislative bodies, ministries, and local councils; the second function regards administration and enforcement by regulatory boards and bodies; while the third function relates to implementation by ensuring the provision of goods and services offered by government institutions (Buitrago et al., 2022). However, the deficiencies of organisational competitiveness of public sector organisations while providing public goods and services in Uganda are evident. Within Uganda's public sector, government agencies, parastatals and authorities are not cost-efficient and cost-effective and fail to account for public expenditure which does not match the quality of services provided, and show no value for money. Many times, the public is not satisfied with public services and goods as there are no drugs in hospitals, and utilities such as electricity and water are too costly for the citizens (Tsimpo et al., 2017; Andrews et al., 2021; OAG Report, 2024).

Many empirical studies on competitiveness exist. However, only a few studies show that HRMP mediate the relationship between corporate governance and organisational competitiveness in emerging economies like Uganda. Sabiu et al. (2019) emphasise the importance of HRM in organisational success and competitiveness. Human resource management practices help human capital or employees gain a competitive advantage (Elrehail et al., 2020). Based on these assumptions, the paper proposes a methodology to examine HRMP as a mediator of corporate governance practices and competitiveness. The existing literature demonstrates that organisational competitiveness is in its early stages, and studies have concentrated on conceptualising and determining measures of the competitiveness (Buitrago et al., 2023), with little attention being paid to discovering factors that explain competitiveness, particularly in public sector organisations. The authors further observe that the majority of the previous studies on competitiveness focus on national and international competitiveness. This paper is organised in five sections, as follows: The first section is the introduction. The second section is the review of literature, providing the study setting, empirical literature and theoretical foundation, which has formed the basis for our research question. The third section comprises the methodology. The study findings are discussed in the fourth section. Finally, the fifth section provides the study conclusions, implications and limitations.

Hypothesis and Theory Development

To establish the relationship between corporate governance, HRMP and competitiveness, the stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) and the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory (Barney, 1991) serve as the theoretical foundation. By proposing extended corporate governance that considers the interests driving the participation of various groups in managerial decision making, and structuring as components of stakeholder orientation, the stakeholder theory balances the interests of stakeholders (Freeman, 1984). According to the stakeholder theory, current employees are important internal stakeholders in the effectiveness of the organisation, so HRMP add public value by reducing costs or increasing revenue through acquiring rare talents within the organisation (Lima & Galleli, 2021). The RBV theory postulates that an organisation's performance and competitive advantage are enhanced by deploying and utilising resources and capabilities properly. The RBV theory predicts and explains the relationship between organisational resources, capabilities and performance. The resources are factors owned or controlled by the organisation, while the capabilities are the opportunities or strategies of the organisation to deploy resources to attain the desired outcome (Mansour et al., 2022). Accordingly, organisations that properly utilise resources and deploy capabilities are likely to be more competitive than their counterparts.

Competitiveness and control variables

The concept of public sector competitiveness has emerged, and it is popular among both researchers and practitioners. Competitiveness drives long-term inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. Thus, an empirical study is needed to identify the characteristics of competitiveness in the public sectors of developing economies like Uganda. Public sector service delivery has shifted from being administrative to being commercial in nature (Villamejor-Mendoza, [2020](#); Wahba & Elmanadily, 2015). Competition boosts efficiency, quality, customer focus, and value, according to Cascio (2014) and Im and Hartley. ([2019](#)). However, there is little empirical evidence supporting public organisational competitiveness. New public management concepts emphasise cost efficiency and financial viability, but they also require social responsibility to address community needs and social welfare (Rkein & Andrew, 2012). The concepts also relate to the ability of a government agency, department, or institution to provide quality service, meet goals, and generate value for citizens in a world of limited resources and rising expectations. Organisations need to be competitive in order to survive in the current fast-changing environment and competitive world of business (Otoo, [2024](#)). Competition counts among the major factors affecting performance excellence and competitive advantage (Alosani et al., [2021](#)). In reference to empirical studies, the authors controlled for sector type and workforce size (Kim & Kim, 2015). To assess whether such control variables can account for variations in competitiveness.

Corporate governance practices

Corporate governance regulates organisational ownership and control by creating legal terms for the allocation of property rights among stakeholders (Konzelmann et al., [2006](#)). It requires establishing stakeholder connections and shaping collaboration incentives. Important stakeholders, who produce, defend, and distribute company wealth, are empowered and accountable through corporate governance (Bellavitis et al., [2023](#)). Corporate governance also ensures stakeholder commitment to the organisation's vision and mission and maximises their skills, knowledge, and experience (Martin et al., [2016](#)). Public sector reforms, which aim to improve public sector organisations, lead to corporate governance in the public sector (Kaituko et al., [2023](#)). Corporate governance systems are becoming essential for social and economic development in developing nations like Uganda (Wakaisuka-Isingoma et al., 2016). There are various variables for operationalising corporate governance, for instance, the board structure in terms of size, independence, expertise, gender diversity, and frequency of board meetings (Gafoor et al., [2018](#)), employee participation in decision making (Kim & Kim, 2015), and social responsibility (Bellavitis et al., [2023](#)). Although the concept of corporate governance has been drawn from relevant literature and theory, its dimensions may not perfectly be representative because of its infancy in Uganda's context, specifically in public sector organisations (Nkundabanyanga et al., [2014](#)).

Human resource management practices (HRMP)

Conceptualisation of HRMP depends on the study focus since it is a multifaceted construct (Islami, [2021](#)). This study focuses on HRMP practices in the form of operational, relational and transformational practices. Human resource management practices are a combination of operational, relational and transformational activities which develop individual, team and organisational capabilities and competencies to cope with and manage organisational success (Lepak and Snell, 1998). Human resource management can develop and implement strategies to

accomplish tasks (Hoang Danga et al., 2025). However, the magnitude of the influence of HRM on organisational performance and competitiveness remains a point of debate among scholars (Vuong, 2022). The existing literature suggests that some HRM practices positively impact organisational performance, there have been calls for further research to provide more empirical evidence on the matter (Boon et al., 2019). Research into HRMP is important for documenting best practices and policies to respond to pressures in the knowledge-intensive environment characterised by digital technology and competition (Hoang Danga et al., 2025). Human resource management practices help produce synergies as a result of their interdependence effect (Islami, 2021). To understand HRM practices, Sun et al., (2007) used a relational perspective to examine the association between high-performance HR practices and organisational performance, Bissola and Imperatori, (2013) used operational HR practices, and Hassan et al. (2022) used the impact of transformational HR practices on organisational performance. Despite clear categorisation of HRMP in relation to organisational performance, there has been little attempt to explore the different HRMP perspectives in relation to organisational performance and competitiveness. In order to understand HRM, in an attempt to distinguish between operational HRM, relational HRM, and transformational HRM, Lepak and Snell (1998) make a differentiation. Owing to the unique socio-cultural aspects of Uganda's public sector, HRMP in the country warrant further exploration.

Corporate governance and organisational competitiveness

The primary assumption of this paper is the presence of a significant relationship between corporate governance and competitiveness. As explained by Lopatta et al. (2020), to guard managerial interests, board diversity and employee representation are important structural frameworks for an organisation's board effectiveness. This paper asserts that corporate governance, specifically regarding structuring, has gained the attention of scholars and practitioners in contemporary organisations (Rao & Tilt, 2016). Theoretical foundations, such as the stakeholder theory and the RBV theory, propose that boards that are diverse offer varied perspectives, resources and greater empathy, strengthening the board's ability to guide client-focused strategies (Freeman, 1984; Barney, 1991). Elamer et al. (2024) explain that board composition, including independence and diversity, positively affects organisational performance, while board size and meeting frequency are insignificant. Gender diversity, financial competence, independence, and meeting frequency are crucial to board effectiveness. Kaituko et al. (2023) show that board structure affects financial success. This study examines how corporate governance structuring affects organisational competitiveness in Uganda, where stakeholder involvement has been improving (Ssekiziyivu et al., 2018). Well-structured boards in Ugandan public sector organisations are seen to boost competitiveness. The hypothesis builds on the proposition that corporate governance, such as board structuring with a diverse gender and expertise involving different skills among directors, can impact governance practices like the independence of board members, frequency of meetings, social responsibility and ethical governance, enhancing decision making and resulting in positive organisational outcomes. This investigation is particularly significant in the emerging Ugandan corporate context, contributing novel insights into corporate governance practices and corporate performance. In accordance with the empirical and theoretical understanding and basing on the Ugandan corporate context, we hypothesise that:

H1: *Corporate governance is associated with organisational competitiveness.*

Corporate governance and HRM practices

This study suggests a strong link between corporate governance and HRMP. This paper posits that corporate governance plays a significant role in shaping HRMP. However, there has been limited focus on studying how corporate governance impacts human resource management. Yet, owing to the unique socio-cultural aspects of Uganda's public sector, HRMP and corporate governance practices warrant exploration. Lajili et al. (2020) show that corporate governance mechanisms that support and enhance strategic HRM policies positively affect human resource performance, supporting Konzelmann et al. (2006), who found that corporate governance affects stakeholder relationships and HRMP. Based on the RBV theory and stakeholder theory assumptions (Barney, 1991; Freeman, 1984), we argue that corporate governance practices are idiosyncratic resources that can help modern companies use strategic human resources management to create and maintain knowledge-based competitive advantages. In turn, HRMP influence the effectiveness of governance by shaping the behaviours, competencies, and ethical standards of employees and leadership (Lima & Galleli, 2021). In this case, HRMP are more likely to emphasise commitment, ethical conduct, and participative decision making, recognising employees as key stakeholders whose engagement is vital for sustainable governance (Konzelmann et al., 2006). In accordance with empirical and theoretical understanding and basing on the Ugandan corporate context, we hypothesise that:

H2: Corporate governance is associated with HRMP.

Human resource management practices (HRMP) and organisational competitiveness

Many scholars have studied HRM and competitiveness (Albrecht et al., 2015; Sabiu et al., 2019; Elrehail et al., 2020). Human resource management practices are expected to improve strategic workforce usage and organisational outcomes, including effectiveness and employee loyalty (Chen & Cheng, 2012; Sabiu et al., 2019; Islami, 2021). Human resource management practices boost the significance of human capital and enable competitiveness of the organisation (Gahlawat & Kundu, 2019; Alosani et al., 2021). Human resource management practices in the Ugandan public sector cannot be totally divorced from evidence relating to other developing countries. However, our knowledge base regarding the relationship between HRMP and competitiveness has barely been developed, especially regarding the public sector entities in the developing economies, particularly Uganda. Prominent scholars espouse the premise that HRMP are strategies for influencing employee behaviours and induce positive work behaviour that will improve an organisation's effectiveness, efficiency and productivity (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021; Boon et al., 2019). This substantiates the findings of numerous scholars who assert that HRMP boost organisational effectiveness and service innovation (Otoo, 2024; Jiang et al., 2022). In contrast, the extant empirical studies are constrained and unclear about the mechanisms through which HRMP influence public sector competitiveness in developing economies, as existing studies have been conducted solely in private and profit-making institutions. On that basis, we hypothesise that:

H3: Human resource management practices are related to organisational competitiveness.

The mediating role of HRM practices between the relationship between corporate governance and competitiveness

Studies have explored the relationship between corporate governance and organisational outcomes, HRMP and competitive advantage (Elrehail et al., 2020; Mansour et al., 2022) using mediating variables, in an attempt to further examine the relationships among employee satisfaction, competence, corporate governance and corporate performance. Empirical evidence proposes the relevance of HRMP to the enhancement of organisational performance and competitiveness (Gupta et al., 2020; Otoo, 2024) through the governance intervention of board structures and stakeholder participation (Lajili et al., 2020). Lima and Galleli (2021) posit that corporate governance interventions integrate stakeholder needs and relationships through regulations and the control of behaviours. However, only limited literature provides evidence of the context of HRMP as a mediator of the connection between corporate governance and organisational competitiveness. On the bases of these arguments, we undertake to fill this gap by exploring HRMP in the nexus between corporate governance and organisational competitiveness. The following is hypothesised:

H4: Human resource management practices mediate the relationship between corporate governance and organisational competitiveness.

Data and Methods

This study used the cross-sectional survey design. Because public sector respondents provided data just once, the approach helped establish the association between corporate governance, HRMP, and competitiveness characteristics (Saunders et al., 2019). Public sector entities were selected using stratified selection, whereas respondents were selected using purposive sampling. As advised by Sarstedt et al. (2014), the authors employed PLS-SEM for data analysis and statistical validation to assess construct correlation. This study was carried out in public sector organisations in Uganda that are already implementing HRM practices/policies and have boards of governance independently managing their human resources, without the involvement of the traditional civil service (semi-autonomous). The sample size of public sector entities was 83. However, returns were obtained from 79 organisations, whose institutional characteristics included, among others, 47 (59.5%) implementation agencies, 19 (24%) regulatory bodies, and 13 (16.5%) state enterprises, as indicated in Table 1. The suitability of the government institutional environment is the creation of market opportunities, new activities, innovations, products, services, and jobs.

Study findings

The sample and respondents' characteristics in Table 1 show that most public organisations (58.2%) had above 200 employees, 34.2% had 101–200, and 2.6% had 21–100. This suggests a considerable amount of employment in government. Public sector organisations efficiently and effectively implement government policies, which improve wellbeing, public services, and economic development, creating more jobs and income for citizens (Veiga et al., 2020).

Table 1: Institutional and respondent characteristics

<i>Institution Category</i>	Count	Percent	Cumulative %
Implementation Agency	47	59.5	59.5
Regulation/Policy	19	24.1	83.5
State Enterprise	13	16.5	100.0
<i>Workforce Size</i>	Count	Percent	Cumulative %

21–50	1	1.3	1.3
51–100	5	6.3	7.6
101–200	27	34.2	41.8
Above–201	46	58.2	100.0
<i>Gender</i>	Count	Percent	Cumulative %
Male	141	53.2	53.2
Female	124	46.8	100.0
Total	265	100.0	
<i>Education</i>	Count	Percent	Cumulative %
Diploma	2	0.8	0.8
Degree	101	38.1	38.9
Masters	109	41.1	80.0
Professional Training	33	12.5	92.5
PhD	20	7.5	100.0
<i>Designation</i>	Count	Percent	Cumulative %
HRM	86	32.5	32.5
Finance Manager	77	29.1	61.5
ICT Manager	69	26.0	87.5
CEO	33	12.5	100.0

Source/s: Table by authors.

Table 2: Construct reliability and validity

Variable	Dimension	Item codes	Item loadings	CA	CR	AVE
Corporate governance	Board structuring	CGBS10	0.829	0.916	0.917	0.622
		CGBS12	0.785			
		CGBS14	0.816			
		CGBS2	0.758			
		CGBS4	0.840			
		CGBS5	0.843			
		CGBS9	0.837			
Competitiveness	Customer satisfaction	CPCS11	0.834	0.878	0.881	0.666
		CPCS3	0.820			
		CPCS4	0.814			
	Quality service	CPQS1	0.705			
		CPQS6	0.747			
		CPQS9	0.804			
Human resource management practices	Relational practices	HRRE10	0.762	0.910	0.912	0.615
		HRRE11	0.798			
		HRRE13	0.799			
		HRRE17	0.715			
		HRTR15	0.811			

	Transformational practices	HRTR16	0.830			
		HRTR3	0.783			
		HRTR5	0.770			

Source/s: Table by authors.

Table 3: HTMT ratio

Variable	Competitiveness	Corporate governance	HRM
Competitiveness			
Corporate governance	0.634		
HRM	0.633	0.647	

Source/s: Authors.

Table 4: VIF matrix

Variables	VIF
Corporate governance -> Competitiveness	1.547
Corporate governance -> HRM Practices	1.000
HRM Practices -> Competitiveness	1.550

Source/s: Tables by authors.

Zero order correlations of study variables

The nexus between the study variables was evaluated using correlation analysis. Corporate governance and HRMP ($r = .591, P < .001^{**}$), corporate governance and competitiveness ($r = .637, P < .001^{**}$), HRMP and competitiveness ($r = .568, P < .001^{**}$). According to [Table 5](#), the study variables are positively and statistically associated. This provided a starting point for implementing a variance-based PLS-SEM.

Table 5: Correlations, mean and standard deviation

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
Corporate Governance –1	4.215	.547	1.000		
Human Resource Management Practices –2	4.266	.614	.591**	1.000	
Competitiveness –3	4.494	.575	.637**	.568**	1.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed): * . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Measurement model

Data was analysed with SmartPLS 4. Initial measurement model evaluation focused on construct reliability and validity. Cronbach’s alpha, composite reliability, AVE, item factor loadings, and discriminant validity were evaluated. Then, path coefficients were tested to determine if hypotheses were validated, and R square, effect size, and predictive relevance were assessed (Hair et al., 2019). [Table 2](#) shows that all indicator loadings, Cronbach’s alpha, and CR values are above 0.7, indicating strong latent variable reliability and internal consistency, as indicated by Field (2024). Construct validity was assessed using convergent and discriminate validity. Convergent validity was assessed using AVE. According to [Table 2](#), all calculated AVE values above 0.5, the allowed lower border, indicating convergent validity (Hair et al., 2014). However, corporate

governance was initially conceptualised as a multidimensional construct comprising board structuring, participation, and social responsibility, based on the frameworks of board structure (Gafoor et al., 2018), employee participation in decision making (Kim & Kim, 2015), and social responsibility (Bellavitis et al., 2023). However, CFA results indicated that only board structuring demonstrated a satisfactory psychometric property in the context of this study and the samples employed (factor loadings > 0.7, AVE >0.5) (Hair et al., 2019) while participation and social responsibility failed to meet these criteria. Consequently, the measurement model was re-specified and only board structuring was retained for the structural model (Kline, 2016). This unidimensional representation of board structuring exhibited a good model fit, revealing its appropriateness for further analysis.

Discriminant validity was measured using the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations to determine construct distinctiveness. The HTMT ratio was used owing to its high sensitivity and specificity (Henseler et al., 2015). Table 3 shows that calculated HTMT correlations are < 0.85, indicating discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). This suggests that the designated components assess various phenomena because they meet the criteria and are sufficiently different (Hair et al., 2019). Variance inflation factor multicollinearity was also performed. Table 4 shows no multicollinearity because the VIF was less than 3.0, as indicated by Hair et al. (2022). Kock (2015) claims that multicollinearity is absent if all VIF values are below 3.0. Because VIF was smaller than 3.0, Table 4 shows no multicollinearity between formative constructs (Hair et al., 2020).

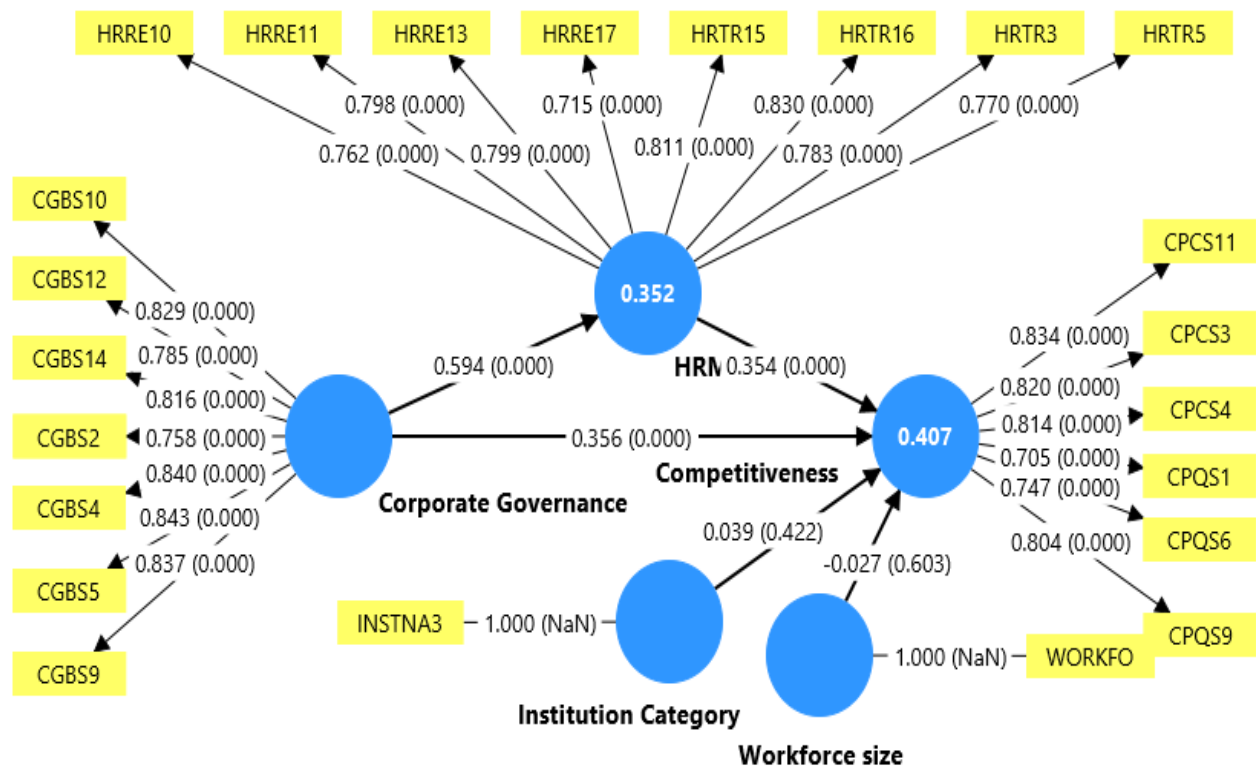


Figure 1: Structure model for the mediating effect of HRMP on the relationship between corporate governance and competitiveness

Table 6: Results of hypothesis testing

<i>Standardised direct effect</i>	Beta coefficients	Critical ratio	P-values	Decision
<i>H1</i> Corporate governance is related to competitiveness.	0.356	4.454	0.000	Supported
<i>H2</i> Corporate governance is related to HRM practices.	0.594	12.923	0.000	Supported
<i>H3</i> HRM practices are related to competitiveness.	0.354	4.899	0.000	Supported
<i>Standardised indirect effect</i>	Beta coefficients	T-statistics	P-values	Decision
<i>H4</i> HRM practices mediate the relationship between corporate governance and competitiveness.	0.210	4.730	0.000	Supported

Control variables

Institution Category -> Competitiveness	0.039	0.802	0.422	Not supported
Workforce size -> Competitiveness	-0.027	0.521	0.603	Not supported

Source/s: Table generated from primary data.

Table 7: Effect size estimates (*f*²), R² square and predictive relevance (Q²)

	<i>Competitiveness</i>	<i>HRM Practices</i>	<i>Q²predict</i>	<i>R²</i>
Institutional Category	.003			
Workforce Size	.001			
Corporate Governance	.138	.544		
HRM Practices	.137		.339	.352
Competitiveness	<i>f-square</i>		.300	.407

Source/s: Table generated from primary data.

The study assessed the effectiveness of the structural model based on the coefficients of determination (R²), effect size, predictive power, and the significance and magnitude of path coefficients (Hair et al., 2019). It employed two comprehensive tests at a 95% confidence interval, indicating a significance level of 0.05 based on 265 valid responses (Hair et al., 2019). The selection of two-tailed tests was informed by the non-directional hypothesis. The coefficient of determination (R²) evaluates the effectiveness of the model. The R² for the good fit of the model's predictive power in this study is 0.407, as illustrated in Figure 1. This study confirms that the explanatory variables are statistically significant, indicating that 40.7% of the variance in competitiveness is explained, as also illustrated in Figure 1. The R² value indicates the explanatory power of the PLS structural model, with values of 0.75, 0.5, and 0.25, classified as substantial,

moderate, and weak, respectively (Hair & Alamer, 2022). In certain studies, R^2 values of 0.1 or lower are considered satisfactory, indicating that the model in this study demonstrates a reasonable degree of effectiveness, as illustrated in [Figure 1](#). The effect size (f^2) functions as a statistical metric for analysing the efficacy of structural models by evaluating the influence of independent factors on dependent variables (Hair & Alamer, 2022). The f^2 statistics measure the change in the R^2 value due to the removal of a predictor variable from the model (Hair et al., 2019). The f^2 values are classified as 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, denoting small, moderate, and substantial effects, respectively. Table (6) demonstrates that HRMP exert more influence than the impact of corporate governance on the exogenous construct. The model also assessed for predictive relevance (Q^2_{predict}). The predictive relevance of the reflecting measurement model for the endogenous construct was evaluated by computing Stone-Geisser's Q^2 via the blindfolding technique in SmartPLS, which assesses the model's ability to reliably forecast the indicator's data points. Values beyond zero signify that the model demonstrates predictive relevance (Hair & Alamer, 2022). The Q^2 values displayed in Table 7 are more than zero, signifying that the predictive accuracy of the route model is satisfactory for the variables. To explore the causal relationship among the four hypotheses, a conceptual framework was developed. The sampling method of bootstrapping was used to assess the structural model on the recommendations of Hair et al. (2019). Three direct and one indirect hypotheses were assessed in total. The results are presented in [Table 6](#) and [Figure 1](#).

Discussion and Testing Hypotheses

Hypothesis one links corporate governance with competitiveness. Table 6 supports the hypothesis. The significant relationship ($\beta = 0.379$, $CR = 4.454$, $p < 0.001$) indicates a favourable and significant effect of corporate governance. Alshirah et al. (2022) found that corporate governance practices boost organisational competitiveness, supporting this concept. The findings lend support to the stakeholder theory of Freeman (1984), which proposes that governance is responsible for structuring relationships of stakeholders to meet their interests in the organisation's actions and outcomes. In this framework, corporate governance should devise mechanisms by which organisations balance power to enhance accountability by key stakeholders who are responsible for generating, protecting, and distributing organisational benefits (Bellavitis et al., 2023). Additionally, well-structured boards in terms of size, independence, expertise, gender diversity, and frequency of board meetings (Gafoor et al., 2018) improve the quality of services delivered to clients. This is because such arrangements offer diverse perspectives and greater empathy, strengthening the board's ability to guide client-focused strategies. This observation is in agreement with Kaituko et al. (2023), who stress that board diversity, board financial expertise, board independence, frequency of board meetings, and representation are significant variables in reducing the likelihood of financial statements fraud. Kaituko et al.'s study, however, was conducted in manufacturing firms in the East Africa Community (EAC), whose objectives, being profit-orientated, are different from those of public sector organisations.

Hypothesis two depicts the relationship between corporate governance and HRM practices. The results indicate that the hypothesis is supported with significant parameter estimates ($\beta = 0.594$, $CR = 12.923$, $p < 0.001$), as shown in [Table 6](#). The study results provide support for hypothesis two. This finding is consistent with observations by Kim and Kim (2015), who explain that stakeholder-oriented governance is positively associated with employee relations such as higher training expenditures, longer average employee tenure, and cooperative industrial relations, along with fewer strikes. This suggests that stakeholder governance promotes HRMP that emphasise

employee development and harmonious labour relations. In addition, Martin et al. (2016) note that a governance framework that strikes a balance between management control concerns and employee-owner interests is important. The findings offer support to the stakeholder theory of Freeman (1984), which suggests that integrating corporate governance practices with HRM practices lead to stakeholder satisfaction. This implies that boards with representation from employees or unions (stakeholder orientation) are more likely to support participative HRMP and sustainable employment policies. Bretos, Errasti, and Marcuello (2018) indicate how corporate governance influences HRM by using multinational worker cooperatives.

Table 6 reveals that there is a positive significant relationship between HRMP and competitiveness ($\beta = 0.354$, $CR = 4.899$, $p < 0.001$). The result demonstrates that there is a direct effect between competitiveness and HRMP. In this respect, HRMP play a highly important role in developing and influencing employee behaviours, knowledge and skills to achieve organisational objectives efficiently. Effective transformational HR practices foster human capital and social capital, which are essential for responsive and innovative service delivery. The findings of this study are in line with those of previous studies (Bondarouk et al., 2009; Rezaei et al., 2021; Islam et al., 2021). In a similar manner, HRMP promote relational people management, which leads to performance and competitiveness. For instance, nurturing positive workplace relationships among employees significantly influences the performance of the organisation. The findings are in line with RBV theory which posits RBV theory the relationship between organisational resources, capabilities and performance (Barney, 1991). Relational people management involves the mechanisms used by managers to nurture positive relationships among people at work while undertaking tasks. In this regard, HRMP such as relational people management are viewed as essential in realising organisational success and performance (Sun et al., 2007; Kim & Kim, 2015; Elrehail et al., 2029; Nalweyiso et al., 2023).

As proposed, a constructive mediation of HRMP is realised in the relationship between corporate governance and organizational competitiveness. Originally, the analysis indicated that the p-values for the direct relationships between corporate governance and competitiveness, corporate governance and HRMP, HRMP and competitiveness were less than 0.05 (Table 6), implying statistical significance. Furthermore, the indirect hypothesis corporate governance – HRMP – competitiveness was also suggestively significant ($\beta = 0.210$, $CR = 4.730$, $p < 0.05$). Table 6, is emphasising its importance. Therefore, the presence of a mediating role for HRMP is confirmed, and the mediation is viewed as partial. HRMP plays a mediating role because when the mediator variable was introduced, the direct relationship between corporate governance and competitiveness remained significant. This proposes that corporate governance balances the power and impact direction of organisational decisions that consider people. This tends to relate corporate governance with HRM practices, which result in positive organisational outcomes (Lima & Galleli, 2021). The findings lend support to stakeholder theory and RBV theory as they postulate that internal stakeholder are important in the effectiveness of the organisation, so HRMP add public value by reducing costs or increasing revenue (De Stefano et al., 2018). In reference to the findings, differences in sector type and workforce size, which were applied in this study as control variables, turned out to be insignificant in accounting for variations in competitiveness. This means that whether a public sector organisation is an implementing agency, a regulator, an enterprise, or has a small or big workforce, it can still remain competitive in the context of Uganda. Corporate governance is important not only for sustaining that competitive advantage of organisations, but also drives the design and implementation of HRMP. In addition, corporate

governance has to effectively translate HRMP into HRM outcomes to enhance the organisational commitment that stakeholders are willing and able to extend to one another. This implication has the strategic outcome of indicating how HRM interact with governance. The mediation results show that corporate governance is an important predictor of HRMP in the context of the public sector. This also tends to demonstrate that if proper governance is exercised in the organisation with a high level of involvement and representation of different stakeholders, both internal and external, it increases the legitimacy of the HR policies and practices, which result in competitiveness.

Conclusions

There is a noteworthy amount of empirical evidence in examining the relationships between corporate governance, human resource and organisational competitiveness. However, this study makes a significant contribution to the area, as it is the first to combine all of these constructs into a single conceptual model. Some academics have argued for better understanding of how corporate governance affects organisational outcomes, as there has been little focus on corporate governance as a prelude to different organisational phenomena in HRM and organisation development studies. In addition to highlighting important elements that mediate this link, such as HRMP, this study builds on previous interpretations of the relationship between corporate governance and organisational competitiveness. The researchers contend that a more comprehensive understanding of the association between corporate governance and organisational outcome may be obtained by including HRMP in the analysis. Consequently, this study provides a more thorough view of corporate governance, HRMP and competitiveness than has been previously reported in the literature, and identifies relationships between the variables.

Implications

The paper proposes several theoretical improvements. The study complements the stakeholder theory (Freeman, [1984](#)) and the RBV (Barney, [1991](#)) by confirming their application to corporate governance practices, HRMP and organisational competitiveness. The findings underscore the importance of incorporating corporate governance practices with HRM practices to facilitate organisational competitiveness. The study findings suggest that HRMP mediate corporate governance and organisational competitiveness, challenging previous findings. Importantly, the suggested operationalisation separates HRMP based on unique public sector traits that affect organisational competitiveness. Since HRMP mediate the relationship between organisational competitiveness and corporate governance in the public sector of a developing economy like Uganda, this study updates the literature. The study found that HRMP partially mediate corporate governance and organisational competitiveness. There has been little evidence, particularly in developing economies like Uganda, of how HRM practices mediates the relationship between corporate governance and organizational competitiveness in organisations. This study extends the literature on the study variables. The study findings offer practical implications of corporate governance practices within Uganda's public sector organisations. These implications act as significant guidelines for organisations planning to use corporate governance practices as effective mechanisms to transform HRMP and elevate organisational competitiveness. Notably, this study ascertained the dimensions of board structuring such as board diversity, representation and independence as corporate governance, while the dimensions of HRMP are relational and transformational practices. Therefore, managers should focus on these determinants that influence the willingness of stakeholders to work together to improve performance. Firstly, managers should structure stakeholder relationships and influence their incentives to secure their

commitment to ensure the success of the organisation. Managers should involve workers (representation) in the strategic discussions of the organisations by allowing them to be actively represented in strategic decision-making processes of the organisations, as this will enhance ownership of work.

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