

The Alignment Between Hotel Organizational Strategy and Human Resource Management Strategy in Malaysian Hotels.

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Abstract

This study examines how the hotel industry leaders formulate and integrate human resource management (HRM) strategy to align with the organisation's business strategy. This study offers insight into the researchers to test the relationship between hotel organisational strategy and human resource management strategy and provide hotel managers with more useful approaches for designing HRM systems. The dimensional scale of this study was investigated with a usable sample of 56 hotels located around the vicinity of Klang Valley, in Malaysia; comprising 3-star, 4-star and 5-star hotels. The respondents represented those holding at least an executive-level position in human resource management. Findings revealed that functional emphasis shows a mixed emphasis on internal and external orientation for the hotel organisational strategy. The results show a complete correlation between hotel organisational strategy and human resource management strategy specifically for 5-star hotels. The results support the study proposition where the higher-star hotels required conformance to systems and processes; meanwhile, the three-star hotels approached to the soft aspects of the HRM practices. HR planning and performance appraisal are highlighted as the central aspect of strategic HRM as the people employed to ensure the organisation can achieve its objectives. The study proposed future research to explore further the alignment between HRM strategy and hotel financial performance.

Keywords : Hotel Organizational Strategy, Human Resource Management Strategy, Strategic Alignment, Hotel Industry, HRM Planning

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Introduction

There has been an increasing number of scholars to study on HRM strategy as a critical indicator of human management over the past 30 years. Few study evolutions can be tracked to the competitive advantage and business growth based on few works of literature (Harris and Ogbonna, 2001; Boxall and Purcell 2008; Ikhlās and Aldehayyat 2011; Hamadamin and Atan, 2019). Few studies discovered that the HRM strategy provides a correlation between the business requirement and the activity of a firm (Greer 2001; Fındıklı et al., 2015). Meanwhile,

Hamadamin and Atan (2019) revealed that HRM strategies have positively influenced human capital development and the commitment of employees.

HRM can be identified as a comprehensive and integrated system to manage the workforce effectively to achieve organisational goals. Human resources are an important area in the organisation that accelerates and executes employee recruitment, selection, retention, training and development. Every manager will be involved in human resource management human resource managers coordinate even tasks related to human resources. The HRM system needs to cover all aspects related to human needs. Sharing the idea of the effectiveness of employees' service, human resources enhance not only the intellectual ability but also skills appropriate to the current developments needed to equip oneself with the ability in terms of emotional and physical health.

The firms will face a challenge in formulating and implementing HRM strategy. However, many firms are unwilling to establish an efficient HRM in their long-term process as they discover that establishing a long-term human resource strategic plan incurs high cost. A study carried out by Jassel (2012) found that the challenges of HRM strategy include the absence of clearly defined HR-related key performance indicators, labour scarcity and government policies relating to labour and education. Hence, every organisation needs to improve its mechanisms to achieve its objectives by using the functional and relational structure and strategies to make and manage its choices. While the objectives, policies and strategies of human resources need to be formulated considering the organisation's strategies, goals and objectives. This allows the competencies needed to meet the organisation's overall objectives to be identified. Effective organisations by establishing systems, can support their market strategy (Djharuddin et al., 2018). Regardless of the industry's concern with human resources, however, the HR function is improbably disconnected from the line function.

The study's objectives were to determine the hotel organisation strategy, identify the organisation's human resource management strategy, understand the human resource management practices and examine the relationships among the hotel organisation's competitive and human resource management strategies.

Literature Review

Competitive Strategy

Among the effective competitive strategy, typologies are Porter's (1980, 1985) typology, Abell's (1980) typology and the Miles and Snow typology (Miles et al., 1978). The most used competitive strategy types are those developed by Porter (1980, 1985) and Miles and Snow (1978). Porter's (1980) typology categorizes competitive strategies into low-cost, differentiation and focus (low-cost or differentiation in a narrow market segment), which distinguish into different strategic orientations available to a company to compete with their competitors. Porter also stated that a company that engages in any of these strategic orientations would acquire a competitive advantage that would facilitate it to outperform industry competitors. Other typologies in competitive strategy were developed by Miles and Snow (1978). Figure 2 shows the competitive strategy developed by Miles and Snow (1978) using

four main types: (1) defender strategy, where the firm's emphasis is on tight control of the operations, extensive division of labour, a high degree of formalisation and centralisation, and there is little change in the external environment; (2) analyser strategy where there is moderate centralised control, tight control over routine activities, slightly loose control over new projects undertaking, and the environment is seen as changing, but the direction of change can still be predicted; (3) prospector strategy which loosely controls the firm's activities, there is a low division of labour, a low degree of formalisation and centralisation, and the environment is seen as turbulent; and (4) reactor strategy, which has the similar structure as the firm with a defender strategy, but the firm respond to change very reluctantly. Therefore, the management of the reactor strategy type firm is unlikely to make any significant adjustments in its operations until it is forced by pressure from the external environment.

Human Resource Management (HRM) Strategy

Evolutions in the field of HRM strategy are now well documented in the management literature (Amit and Shoemaker, 1993; Barney, 1991; Karadjova and Mujtaba, 2009; Boxall and Purcell, 2011). The HRM strategy approach focuses on implementing best practices in adapting human capital with organisational strategies at both horizontal and vertical levels. A specific HRM typology model can help maintain a consistent and complementary nature in internal management (horizontal fit) and congruence with organisational goals (vertical fit). HRM practices contributing to horizontal and vertical adjustments are closest to HRM best practices. Among the best HRM practices that have been identified to achieve the 'best match 'is the selection of the most suitable person to meet agency requirements, performance appraisals, incentives, job design, and competency development required to meet agency objectives.

HRM strategy is concerned with two types of resources. The first resource is an organisation's human capital, its employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities (Walsh et al., 2010). Amit and Shoemaker, (1993) and Barney (1991) stated that the challenge for HRM strategy was for the decision makers to transform human capital into a firm capability that is valuable, rare and difficult to imitate. The second resource is an organisation's systems, specifically HR policies and practices that support the development of human capital. The challenge with this resource is to select the appropriate cost-efficient bundle that will help employees perform best. Hence, the hotel industry leaders need to ponder what resources are required to make HRM strategy the best choice.

HRM strategy relates to how people should be managed, and current thinking strongly suggests that HR is distinctively significant in sustaining business achievement. This is exceptionally realistic for an organisation that depends heavily on its employees' willingness and desire to extend quality service. Day and Wensley (1988) suggested an organisation must have a groundwork for better performance when it possesses skills that provide exceptional value to customers. The organisations, consequently, will gain a competitive advantage through their able and willing employees, through their expertise and ingenuity, to work within the work systems effectively.

Methodology and Data

This case study design was selected to determine the extent of the relationship between culture and soft HRM orientations. The dimensional scale of this study was investigated with a sample of 181 hotels consisting of 3, 4 and 5-star hotels. Data was collected over three weeks via a mail survey. The study uses convenience sampling selected from hotels in the Klang Valley vicinity as published inside the listing in the directory of hotels by Tourism Malaysia. The respondents represented top management positions such as the vice president, director, group managers, and managers in the human resource management function. Secondary data was derived from reports, newspapers and published data by Tourism Malaysia. Four instruments were required for the study. These instruments consisted of structured questions aimed at identifying Hotel Competitive Strategy and HRM Strategy. These instruments were combined in the form of a questionnaire that was mailed out to the hotels. The following Table 1 to Table 3 were the dimensions of the two variables:

Table 1. Competitive methods and competitive strategy based on functional emphasis

1.00 -1.59	1.60 - 2.19	2.20 - 2.79	2.80 - 3.39	3.40 - 4.00
Defender	Analysers - Defender	Analysers	Analysers- Prospector	Prospector
Conservative with internal orientation	Relatively Conservative with internal orientation with a minor external focus	Mixed emphasis on Internal and external orientation	Relatively Dynamic with external emphasis and minor internal focus	Dynamic with mainly external orientation

Table 2. Functional emphasis

Operations	Price	Cost Maintenance	Product	Marketing Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining operating efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature of objectives Emphasis on price leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orientation over cost control Financing source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offerings of product/services type 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining image and reputation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour cost % of revenue • Conservative capital structure • Quality control activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on price Competitiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for new projects • Monitoring employee productivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services/product innovations • Services/product differentiation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring guest satisfaction • Responding to the market conditions • Tracking competitors
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Table 3. Human Resource Management Strategy

Human Resource Management Dimensions				
Human Resource Planning	Staffing and Recruitment	Training and Development	Performance Appraisals	Compensation
Human Resource Management Practices Characteristics				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs development • Planning activities Focus • Job Descriptions • Job flexibility • Job Responsibilities • Determination of future requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring emphasis • Promotional opportunities • Criteria for promotion • Used of procedures and policies • Promotional availability • Nomination for job opening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs design • Programs Orientation • Program emphasis • Programs focus • Programs objectives • Programs target 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs development • Evaluation criteria • Evaluative purpose • Nature of Process • Programs needs assessment • Evaluation focus • Unit of assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjustments in wages • Determination of based salary • Compensation package • Impact consideration of a package • Fringe Benefit package

		• Prog ram initiators		• Emp loyment security
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Scale:

1.00-1.59	1.60 – 2.19	2.20 – 2.79	2.80 – 3.39	3.40 - 4.00
Type A	Type B	Type BC	Type C	Type D
Conservative with internal orientation and meeting current needs	Relatively conservative with internal orientation and minor adjustments to future needs	Mixture with some focus on Internal, current needs and with some on external, future factors	Relatively dynamic with future orientation and accommodating to current needs	Dynamic with mainly external and future orientation

Results and Discussion

Response Rate

The results in Table 4 show that the sample size for the 5-star hotel category consists of 51 hotels and the response rate was 37.7% or 19 hotels. In the 4-star hotel category, 83 hotels were solicited for participation; however, only 30.1% or 25 hotels responded. For the 3-star hotel category, 12 hotels or 25.5% responded, with 47 hotels contacted for participation in the study. Overall, a total of 181 hotels were contacted, and 56 hotels or 30.9% responded. The results in Table 5 show a review of the responding individuals' profiles, 94.6% or 52 of the 55 responding individuals held the top management position such as the vice president, director, group managers and managers in the human resource management function. Only one respondent held the second-tier position as the assistant manager, and two held managerial positions in other functional areas.

Table 4. Sample size and response rate

HOTEL CATEGORY	5 -Star	4-Star	3-Star	OVERALL
Sample Size	51	83	47	181

Response Rate	(19) 37.3%	(25) 30.1%	(12) 25.5%	(56) 30.9%
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Table 5. Profile of responding individual

HOTEL CATEGORY	5 STAR	4-STAR	3-STAR	OVERALL
Human Resource Vice President, Director, Group Manager, Manager	18	22	12	52 (94.6%)
Assistant HR Manager, Assistant Directors, Executive Assistant HR Manager		1		1 (1.8%)
HR Executives, Training Manager				0
Others (Other Managers)		2		2 (3.6%)
OVERALL	18	25	12	55 (100%)

Overall Hotel Organizational Strategy based on Functional Emphasis

Table 6 shows the overall hotel organisational strategy based on functional emphasis comprised of five dimensions: operations, product, price, marketing and finance. The overall results for operations strongly emphasise efficiency with scored 1.78 Analyser-Defender. The overall product results show hotel emphasis on innovation and differentiation with scored 2.28 Analyser. The overall price results show hotel relatively low emphasis on price leadership and competitiveness with scored 1.92 Analyser-Defender. The product marketing results show hotel response fast to external environment threats with scored 3.21 Analyser-Prospector. The financial results show hotels are relatively conservative and depend mainly on internal funding. Overall functional emphasis shows a mixed emphasis on internal and external orientation for the hotel organisational strategy.

Table 6. Overall hotel organisational strategy based on functional emphasis

FUNCTIONS	HOTEL CATEGORY			
	5-STAR	4-STAR	3-STAR	OVERALL
1. Operations	Slightly low emphasis on efficiency 2.81 Analyzer-Prospector	Very heavy emphasis on efficiency 1.24 Defender	Very heavy emphasis on efficiency 1.28 Defender	Relatively heavy emphasis on efficiency 1.78 Analyser-Defender
2. Product	A quite Heavy emphasis on innovation and differentiation 3.20 (Analyzer-Prospector)	Moderate emphasis on innovation and differentiation 2.32 (Analyser)	Low emphasis on innovation and differentiation 1.32 (Defender)	Moderate emphasis on innovation and differentiation 2.28 (Analyser)
3. Price	Moderate emphasis on price leadership and competitiveness 2.40 (Analyze)	Moderate emphasis on price leadership and competitiveness 2.22 (Analyser)	Low emphasis on price leadership and competitiveness 1.13 (Analyser-Defender)	Relatively low emphasis on price leadership and competitiveness 1.92 (Analyser-Defender)
4. Marketing	Response fast to external environment threats 3.10 (Analyser-Prospector)	Response fast to external environment threats 3.22 (Analyzer-Prospector)	Response fast to external environment threats 3.31 (Analyser-Prospector)	Response fast to external environment threats 3.21 (Analyser-Prospector)

5. Finance	Moderate - use both Internal and external funding sources 2.57 (Analyser)	Relatively conservative and depend mainly on internal funding 2.09 (Analyser-Defender)	Mainly use Internal funding sources 1.53 (Defender)	Relatively conservative and depend mainly on internal funding 2.06 (Analyser-Defender)
OVERALL	Analyser - Prospector 2.82 Relatively Dynamic with external emphasis and minor internal focus	Analyser 2.22 Mixed emphasis on Internal and external orientation	Analyser-Defender 1.71 Relatively conservative with internal orientation with minor external focus	Analyser 2.25 Mixed emphasis on internal and external orientation

Human Resource Management Strategy

Table 7 shows the hotel organisation overall human resource management strategy consists of four dimensions: human resource planning, staffing, training and development, performance appraisal and compensation. The overall results show hotel inclination toward a slightly long-term focus with score 2.93 for Type C. The results for training and development show overall mixture with some mainly on current with specific criteria with scored 2.74 Type BC. The results for performance appraisal show overall inclination toward organisational needs with score 2.82 for Type C. The results for compensation show an overall mixture of short and long-term focus with score 2.53 for Type BC. The overall result shows a mixture of some focus on internal, current needs and with some on external and future factors.

Scale:

1.00-1.59	1.60 – 2.19	2.20 – 2.79	2.80 – 3.39	3.40 - 4.00
Type A	Type B	Type BC	Type C	Type D
Conservative with internal	Relatively Conservative	Mixture with	Relatively Dynamic with	Dynamic with

orientation and meeting current needs	with internal orientation and minor adjustments to future needs	some focus on Internal, current needs and with some on external, future factors	future orientation and accommodating to Current needs	mainly external and future orientation
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Table 7. Hotel organisation overall human resource management strategy

HOTEL CATEGORY	5-STAR	4-STAR	3-STAR	OVERALL
Human Resource Planning	Inclination for a slightly long-term focus 2.93 Type C	Inclination for a slightly long-term focus 3.07 Type C	Inclination for a slightly long-term focus 2.80 Type C	Inclination for a slightly long-term focus 2.93 Type C
Staffing	Inclination for slightly open with some general criteria 3.03 Type C	Mixture with some mainly on current with specific criteria 2.44 Type BC	Inclination for Short Term 2.75 Type C	Mixture with some mainly on current with specific criteria 2.74 Type BC
Training and Development	Current and future development and current needs 3.05 Type C	Inclination towards current needs 2.13 Type B	Inclination towards training needs 2.92 Type C	Mixture with some focus on current and with some on external needs 2.70 Type BC

Performance Appraisal	Inclination towards future organisational needs 3.07 Type C	Inclination towards both organisational and employees' needs 2.51 Type BC	Inclination towards organisational needs 2.89 Type C	Inclination towards organisational needs 2.82 Type C
Compensation	A mixture of short- and long-term focus 2.77 Type BC	Slightly more on short term focus 2.17 Type B	A mixture of fixed and long-term focus 2.66 Type C	A mixture of short- and long-term focus 2.53 Type BC
Overall	Relatively Dynamic with future orientation and accommodating to current needs 2.97 Type C	Mixture with some focus on Internal, current needs and with some on external, future factors 2.46 Type BC	Relatively Dynamic with future orientation and accommodating to current needs 2.80 Type C	Mixture with some focus on internal, current needs and with some on external, future factors 2.74 Type BC

Relationship between Hotel Organizational Strategy and HRM Strategy

Table 8 shows the relationship between the hotel competitive strategy and human resource management strategy based on the hotel star category. The results show a complete correlation between the hotel organisational strategy and HRM strategy, particularly for the 5-star hotel. Overall, the results show a partial correlation between the hotel competitive strategy and HRM strategy. However, there is no relationship between the hotel organisational strategy and HRM strategy for the 3-star hotel.

Table 8. Relationship between hotel competitive strategy and human resource management strategy

Hotel Category	Hotel Competitive Strategy	Human Resource Management Strategy	Variance	Extent of Relationship
5-STAR	Analysar - Prospector Relatively Dynamic with external emphasis and minor internal focus 2.82	Relatively Dynamic with future orientation and accommodating to current needs 2.97	0.15 (3.75%)	Full Relationship
4-STAR	Analysar Mixed emphasis on Internal and external orientation 2.22	Mixture with some focus on Internal, current needs and with some on external, future factors 2.46	0,24 (6.0%)	Partial Relationship
3-STAR	Analysar-Defender Relatively Conservative with internal orientation with a minor external focus 1.71	Relatively Dynamic with future orientation and accommodating to Current needs 2.80	1.35 (27.25%)	No Relationship

OVERALL	2.25	2.74	0.49 (12.25%)	Partial Relationship

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study explores the alignment between the hotel organisational strategy and HRM strategy. The result indicates a correlation between the hotel organisational strategy and HRM strategy, specifically for the luxury hotel. This report offers interesting results for hotel industry leaders. The hotel industry leaders must take the decisive challenge of discovering the financing return from what is typically viewed in the short term and profit and loss expenses. This research also provides insights into HRM strategies that may help to improve the staff's performance. The Miles and Snow typology has been convincing and supportive in improving our comprehension of firms' business systems in the hotel industry. For instance, this study found that HR planning and performance appraisal are the main factors for the hotel organisation to accomplish its goal. Human resource planning should serve as a link between HRM strategies and the strategic plan of the organisation. The HR manager should work towards facilitating and enhancing the performance of the employees by creating a good work environment and providing maximum opportunities to the employees to participate in organisational planning and decision-making process. Having proven the link between hotel organisation strategy and HRM strategy, this study proposed future research to explore the alignment between HRM strategy and hotel financial performance.

Managerial Implications

Findings from our study present some pertinent implications for hotel managers and decision-makers. Integration of Human resources into the business strategy has a number of benefits, which among them are; guaranteeing the complete implementation of organisations strategy, giving a wide range of solutions for resolving complex strategic or tactical issues, and playing a crucial role in attaining and maintaining successful business performance.

Results from the study also indicated HR planning and performance appraisal are the main factors for the hotel organisation to accomplish its goal. Therefore, managers need to ensure Human resource planning should serve as a link between HRM strategies and the strategic plan of the organisation.

Based on this, hotel managers should ensure The HR manager should work towards facilitating and enhancing the performance of the employees by creating a good work environment and providing maximum opportunities to the employees to participate in organisational planning and decision-making process. To achieve all these, hotel managers have to align HRM with business strategy can boost employee satisfaction and performance, ensure teams are aligned to help the business achieve its strategic objectives, and increase their influence and decision-making power across the organization.

Limitations and Directions for Future Studies

There are a few limitations in this study where the respondents comprise 3, 4 and 5-star hotels located in Klang valley where the findings may not generalize if the study is conducted among hotels with 2-star ratings and below. The respondents are from local hotels whereby the findings can be dissimilar if international chain hotels are being asked about the alignment of organizational strategy and HRM strategy where many international chain hotels are influenced by headquarters decisions. Future studies can be conducted to include the local and international chain hotel participation to see whether there are different findings on the alignment. The data used for this study were obtained mainly from Selangor State, thus leaving out 12 other states, including Wilayah Persekutuan as the capital territory of Malaysia. Extending the survey to a bigger sample size from other states in Peninsular Malaysia would allow for more generalization of findings.

Lastly, this study examined the alignment of organisational strategy and HRM strategy among 3,4 and 5-star hotels in Klang valley, there were no possible mediating variables on the mediating effect of employee strategic alignment or financial performance that might influence the relationship between hotel organisational strategy and HRM strategy alignment. This will provide hotel managers with more useful insights for designing HRM strategies. Non-alignment is sometimes due to the lack of employees' skills, expertise, attitudes, and competencies. Also, it can comparably be a result of a lack of management vision at the stage of strategy formulation. The study can also propose future research to explore further on the alignment between HRM strategy and hotel financial performance.

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