

# The Link Between Human Resource Management Strategy and Human Resource Management Programs Orientation

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## Abstract

Human resource management (HRM) strategy is a business's overall plan for dealing with its human capital to align it with its business activities and has the ability to improve employee performance. This study explores the linkages between HRM strategy and HRM programs orientation in hotels and to discover how the management division teams handling employees effectively. The dimensional scale of this study was investigated with a sample of 56 hotels in Klang Valley vicinity, Malaysia ranging from mid-scale to luxury hotel. The respondents for this study comprise of top management positions in the resource management division included vice president, director, group manager or the manager. The findings revealed, HRM programs in the midscale hotel category were externally oriented compared to luxury hotels. Overall, hotels show relatively dynamic with future orientation and accommodating to current needs. The maintenance of a positive image in the community, having open communications with employees and maintaining transparency with employees was the top priority in the HRM programs orientation. The study proposed future research to explore further on HRM systems and the performance of luxury service hotel.

Keywords: HRM Strategy, HRM program, hotel sectors

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Human resource management has endured many modifications over the past two decades. Changes made by the organization potentially have impacted the business survival, growth, competence in addition to excellence, productivity and profitability. More concern has been given to the approaches in which the human resources function can support a business competitive position and enhance the business value to the next level of decision making and problem solving. Hence, the role of human capital has been a critical function in supporting firms to achieve their objectives before specific recommendations can be offered (Tracey, 2010).

The quality of guest service has a direct impact on the image and reputation of the hotel. Human resources department plays an important role in demonstrating the quality of employees. Human resources department responsibilities not only include hiring, selecting, training employees, in fact, human resource department also responsible to formulate detailed strategies for the employees so that the business can move forward in order to meet the objectives of the organization. With that, hotel managers and HR teams needs to develop the skills of its employees to be competent and knowledgeable through regular training so that they can serve the best service. Hotel managers and HR teams need to strategically formulate, planning and implement the best practice for improving the quality and productivity of the employee and for the future success of the organization. Top management and HR teams also need to create a well-managed and dynamic talent management that generates a high-performing culture, continuous employee development and a high commitment to providing employees with an excellent level of service. Therefore, the HRM strategy in the hotel sector is very well correlated with the human being which is the asset of the organization to achieve its goals.

### 1.1 Issues and Challenges

There will be a challenge faced by hotel organizations in planning and implementing a strategic HRM. Challenges faced by the hotel are low wages (Keep and Mayhew, 1999), lack of training, low service quality, and staffing (Davidson and Wang, 2011; Yang and Cherry, 2008). Hewagama (2015) emphasized that hotel confronted of staff turnover that generate the increasing cost on employee replacement, training, loss of efficiency and lack of service quality (Yang and Cherry, 2008). Even, some hotel managers do not see this as a problem, as they believe that knowledge, training and technical skills can be learned easily through the job. Mohan and Arumugam, (2016) discovered that training is the key to attain the business success. Hence, the hotel managers and HR teams need to identify the factors that correlate to HRM strategy and HRM program orientations in order to administer their employees.

The concept of HRM demonstrates a new approach in labor management. Among the main properties of this concept, is the emphasis on strategic approach. This means that resource management that practices organizational people must include the organizational needs of the strategy. According to human resource management, the emphasis on strategy-oriented approaches should result in human resource management practices that have a positive impact on organizational performance. While strategic human resource management can be said to be widely accepted, empirical evidence shows its existence the practice of this concept is quite limited. In fact, recent studies show that HRM strategy as suggested by this concept rarely exist among hotel organizations. There is no convincing that shows HRM strategies serve as determinants of HRM program orientation. Most studies focused more of on the role of HRM and HRM practices, therefore, this study extends a step further to investigate the HRM strategies and HRM program orientation in hotel sector.

### 1.3 Research Objectives

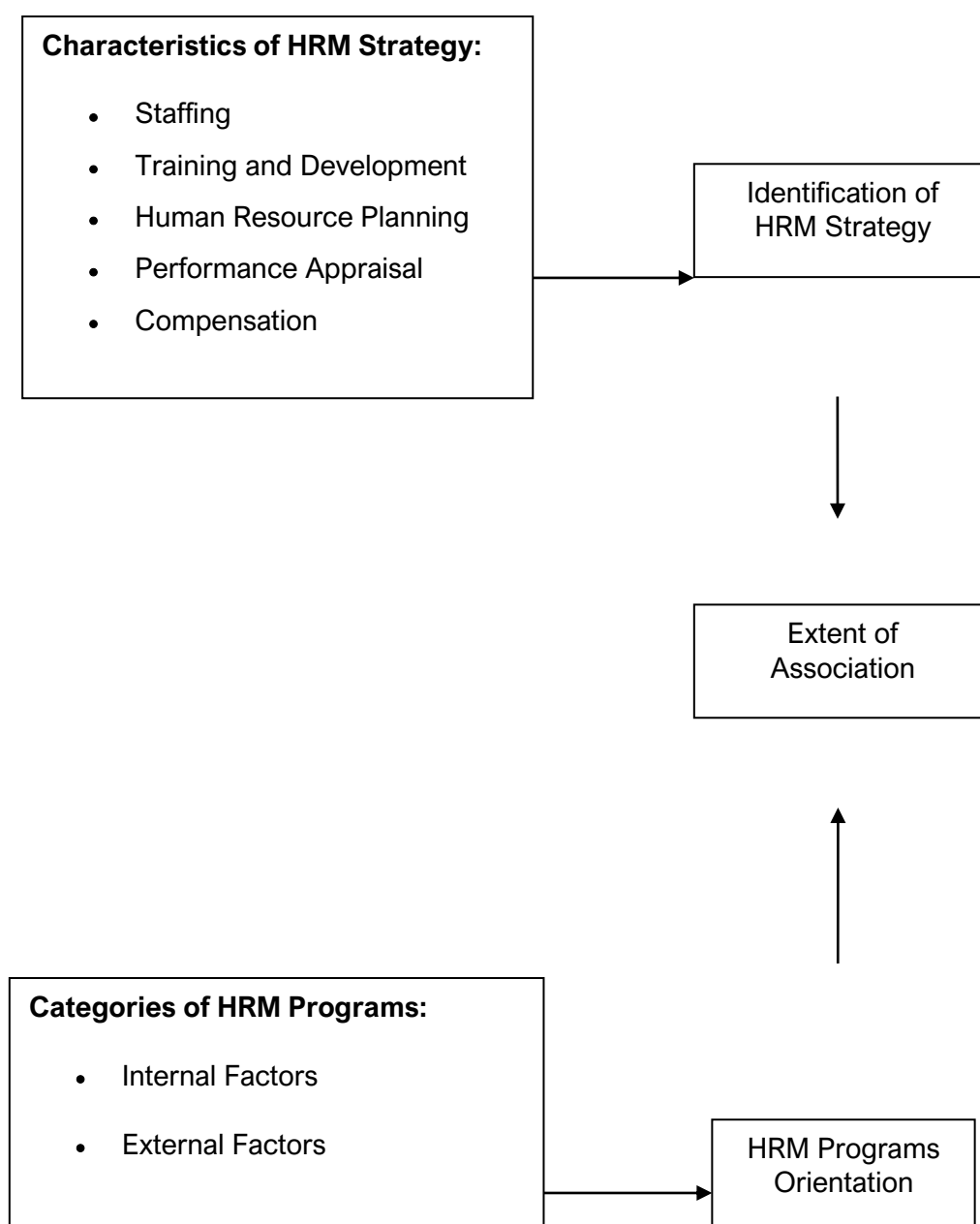
The objectives of the study were to determine the hotel overall HRM strategy, to explore the HRM programs and the programs orientation, to find out the ranking of importance of the

HRM programs in the various hotel categories, and to determine the extent of association between HRM strategy with HRM programs orientation. The study proposed that for a dynamic HRM strategy, the focus would be on external factors, while for a conservative HRM strategy, the focus would be on internal programs.

#### 1.4 Study Framework

To carry out the research work, this research framework (figure 1) is based on conceptualize linkages between identification of HRM strategy and HRM programs orientation. HRM strategy comprises of five dimensions: staffing, training and development, human resource planning, performance appraisal and compensation. Meanwhile, HRM programs comprise of two dimensions internal factors and external factors.

**Figure 1. Research Framework**



## 2.0 OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

One aspect that needs to be considered in HRM research is the method of evaluating the strategy of human resource management. Recent study discovered three components in HRM strategies comprised of employee skills and abilities, employee motivation and organizational financial performance (Collings et al., 2010). Various studies have provided typologies of HRM strategies that a firm can engage in at the business unit level in order to accomplish its goals (Miles and Snow, 1978, Porter, 1980, 1985, Abell, 1980, Mintzberg, 1988 and Arthur, 1992) and numerous efforts have remained to describe its concept, in addition to classifying its factors (Tichy et al., 1982, Dyer, 1984 and Dyer and Reeves, 1995) and foreseeing the consequences of useful strategy formulation processes (Buller, 1988). Mintzberg's (1987) consider HR strategy as a perspective rather than a rigorous procedure for mapping the future. Ulric and Brockbank (2005) emphasized HR needed to turn out to be value adding and more strategic. This indicates that HR compelled to become a better fit with the business strategy in order to provide value.

HRM strategy involves a future-oriented process of developing and implementing HR programs that address and solve business problems and directly contribute to major long-term business objectives. There are several HRM strategy typologies studied in previous literature. The most widely used HRM strategy models are those developed by Miles and Snow (1978) and Porter (1980, 1985). Miles and Snow (1978) indicated that organizations develop comparatively stable patterns of strategic behaviour to achieve a good alignment with perceived environmental conditions. Mathis and Jackson (2016) disclose that HRM strategy implies to organizational use of employees to gain or keep a competitive advantage against competitors. Meanwhile, Storey (1995) added, HRM strategy is a diverse technique which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic implementation of a highly committed and capable workforce using an integrated assortment of cultural, structural and HR techniques. Hence, it is essential that hotel managers and HR teams should be active in designing and implementing HRM strategies particularly in dealing with a challenging environment.

Miles and Snow (1978) typology include four types of strategic comprises of defenders, prospectors, analyzers and reactors. Meanwhile, Porter (1980) typology comprises of three generic strategies which are cost leadership, differentiation and focus strategies. Meanwhile, Mintzberg (1987) describes strategy as a process of four p's: (i) first p stands for plan (ii) second p stands for pattern where the strategy can emerge from reoccurring organizational action in the past, securing the consistency of behavior (iii) the third p stands for position where the strategy of a company should clarify the company's products or services which mark their place in the market and (iv) the last p stands for perspective, which is important to keep separate from position.

A properly formulated of HRM program created for the organization and employee can help to improve business performance. HR Department basically encounters several internal and external factors as part of its function. In order to reduce employee issues, hotel managers must continually monitor internal and external environmental factors and modify HRM

strategy consequently. Genc (2014) revealed that internal and external environmental factors are significantly associated in HR activities. Lilly et al. (2005) indicated three HRM core programs consist of training, performance planning and evaluation and compensation.

### 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Sample and Data Collection

A case study approach was selected to determine the extent of relationship between HRM strategy and HRM programs orientation. The study covered 56 hotels consists of three, four and five start hotel ratings were examined. The primary data was collected via mail survey which took over three weeks to collect. The study using convenience sampling selected from hotels in Klang Valley vicinity as published inside the listing in the directory of hotels by Tourism Malaysia. The respondents represented those holding at least an executive level position in the human resource management. Secondary data was derived from published in reports, newspaper and published data by Tourism Malaysia, Ministry of Tourism, and Economic Reports.

#### 3.2 Instrumentations and Scale

Four major instruments were used for this study. These instruments consisted of structured questions aimed at identifying: (1) Organizational Culture, (2) Soft HRM Practices, (3) Turnover rates, and (4) Organizational profiles. The study using 4-point Likert-like scale to measure the culture and Soft HRM practices variables, a was used. Organizational culture was measured on 3 dimensions: (1) Employee relations, (2) Creativity and risk-taking, and (3) Efficiency/Pride emphasis. The Soft HRM practices variable was also measured with 3 dimensions: (1) Team cohesiveness, (2) Work environments, and (3) Communication flow.

##### A. Instrumentations and Scales

###### A. Human Resource Management Strategy

- Staffing
- Training and Development
- Human resource Planning
- Performance Appraisal
- Compensation

Scale:

1.00 -1.74	1.75 – 2.49	2.50 – 3.24	3.25 -4.00
TYPE A	TYPE B	TYPE C	TYPE D
Conservative with Internal	Relatively Conservative with	Accommodate	Dynamic with

Orientation	Minor Adjustments	to Current and Future Needs	Future Orientation

## B. Human Resource Programs

### 1. External

- Maintaining a positive image in the community.
- Monitoring external factors affecting labour availability.
- Keeping abreast with competitors' HRM practices.
- Ability to attract workers.
- Having open communications with employees.
- Employee feedback in appraisal decisions.
- Maintaining organization's transparency with employees.
- Anticipating future labour requirements.

### 2. Internal

- Protecting the hotel from employees' lawsuits.
- Linking employee evaluation with performance criteria.
- Having objective data available to make employment decisions.
- Retention of present employees.
- Employees' conformity to organization's established policy.
- Minimizing labour costs.
- Establishing career ladders.

Scale:

1.00 – 1.74	1.75 – 2.49	2.50 – 3.24	3.25 - 4.00
Low	Somewhat Low	Somewhat High	High

## 4.0 FINDINGS

### 4.1 Response Rate

A total response rate of 30.9% was received which represents 56 hotels of the 181 hotels that were solicited for participation. From the total 56 hotels, 19 5-star hotel responded which was 37.3% of the total number of 51 hotels solicited in that category. However, all the respondents in this hotel category were holding top management positions in the resource management division such as the vice president, director, group manager or the manager.

In the 4-star hotel category, a total of 83 hotels were invited for participation and 30.1% or 25 hotels responded. Of the 25 respondents in this hotel category, 22 were holding top management positions in the human resource divisions, 1 was the second-tier position while another 2 represents managers from other functional divisions such as sales and accounts. In the 3-star hotel category, 25.5% responded or 12 hotels sent in the completed questionnaires. All 12 respondents were holding top management position. Overall, results show 94.6% of the total respondents held top management position in the human resource divisions, 1.8% held the post of assistant manager and 3.6% held managerial position of other functional divisions.

**Table 1. Sample Size and Response Rate**

<b>Hotel Category</b>	<b>5-Star</b>	<b>4-Star</b>	<b>3-Star</b>	<b>Overall</b>
Sample Size	51	83	47	181
Response Rate	(19) 37.3%	(25) 30.1%	(12) 25.5%	(56) 30.9%

### 4.2 Hotel Organization Overall Human Resource Management Strategy

Table 2 shows the hotel organization overall HRM strategy according to hotel category. The overall results of human resource planning and staffing show an inclination for a slightly long-term focus. Meanwhile, the overall results for training and development show an inclination towards current and future needs and the results for performance appraisal show an inclination towards organizational needs. Overall results of all hotels show relatively dynamic with future orientation and accommodating to current needs.

**Table 2. Hotel Organization Overall Human Resource Management Strategy**

<b>Hotel Category</b>	<b>5 Star</b>	<b>4 Star</b>	<b>3 Star</b>	<b>Overall</b>
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	<b>Inclination for a slightly long-term focus</b> <b>2.93</b> <b>TYPE C</b>
Staffing	Inclination for slightly open with some general criteria 3.03 TYPE C	Focus on mainly current with specific criteria 2.44 TYPE B	Inclination for a slightly long-term focus 2,75 TYPE C	<b>Inclination for a slightly long-term focus</b> <b>2.74</b> <b>TYPE C</b>
Training and Development	Inclination towards Current and Future Needs 3.05 TYPE C	Slight Inclination towards Current Needs 2.13 TYPE B	Inclination towards Current and Future Needs 2.92 TYPE C	<b>Inclination towards current and future needs</b> <b>2.70</b> <b>TYPE C</b>
Performance Appraisal	Inclination towards Organizational Needs 3.07 TYPE C	Slight Inclination towards Organizational Needs 2.51 TYPE C	Inclination towards Organizational Needs 2.89 TYPE C	<b>Inclination towards organizational needs</b> <b>2.82</b> <b>TYPE C</b>
	Inclination towards long term focus	Inclination towards short term focus	Inclination towards long term focus	<b>Inclination towards long term focus</b>



Compensation	2.77 TYPE C	2.17 TYPE B	2.66 TYPE C	<b>2.53</b> <b>TYPE C</b>
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>Relatively dynamic with future orientation and accommodating to current needs</b> <b>2.97</b> <b>TYPE C</b>	<b>Relatively conservative with minor adjustments</b> <b>2.46</b> <b>TYPE B</b>	<b>Relatively dynamic with future orientation and accommodating to current needs</b> <b>2.80</b> <b>TYPE C</b>	<b>Relatively dynamic with future orientation and accommodating to current needs</b> <b>2.74</b> <b>TYPE C</b>

Scale:

1.00 -1.74	1.75 – 2.49	2.50 – 3.24	3.25 -4.00
TYPE A Conservative with Internal Orientation	TYPE B Relatively Conservative with Minor Adjustments	TYPE C Accommodate to Current and Future Needs	TYPE D Dynamic with Future Orientation

#### 4.3 Human Resource Management Programs

HRM programs comprises of 10 anticipating future labour requirements indicated external emphasis in the HRM programs. Table 4 shows the top four ranking of importance in HRM program in the 5-star hotel. In the upscale hotel category, the highest ranking in importance on the human resource management program was of maintaining a positive image in the community. This is an externally focused. The next two ranking in importance, however, were internally oriented programs. They referred to effects leading to the retention of present employees, and the emphasis on employees' conformity to the hotel's established policy. The next two in importance were also externally focused. The factors were the emphasis on having open communications with employees and the need to maintain the hotel's transparency with employees.

**Table 4. Ranking of Importance in HRM Programs in the 5 Star Hotel Category**

Ranking	HRM Programs	Mean Score	
		External	Internal
1	Maintaining a positive image in the community	Very High 4.00	
2	Having open communications with employees	Relatively High 2.71	
3	Employees' conformity to hotel's established policy		Relatively High 2.65
4	Maintaining organization's transparency with employees	Relatively High 2.60	
5	Retention of present employees		Relatively High 2.55
	<b>Importance of HRM Programs</b>	<b>Relatively High 3.10</b>	<b>Relatively High 2.60</b>
	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Relatively High 2.85</b>	

Table 5 shows the two-top ranked HRM programs in the midscale hotel category were externally oriented. Similar with the upscale hotel category, the top priority in the HRM programs was the maintenance of a positive image in the community. The second rank in importance was the emphasis on having open communications with employees. Both those factors are considered as externally oriented. The third and fourth ranking in importance were protecting the hotel from employee's lawsuits and the retention of present employees. They were both internally oriented programs. The fifth ranked in terms of importance in HRM program was the used of employees' feedback in the appraisal decisions, which is an externally focused program.

**Table 5 . Ranking of Importance in HRM Programs in the Midscale Hotel Category**

Ranking	HRM Programs	Mean Score	
		External	Internal
1	Retention of present employees		High 3.63
2	Maintaining a positive image in the community	Relatively High 3.10	
3	Protecting the hotel from employees' lawsuits		Relatively High 2.82
4	Having open communications with employees	Relatively High 2.51	
5	Employee feedback in appraisal decisions	Relatively High 2.50	
	<b>Importance of HRM Programs</b>	<b>Relatively High 2.70</b>	<b>High 3.23</b>
	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Relatively High 2.97</b>	

For the low scale hotel category, almost all the top five rank HRM programs orientation were internally focused, except for the joint ranked in importance which was the emphasis on having open communications with employees. This group of hotels considered protecting the hotel from employees' lawsuits as the most important HRM program followed by the need to retain present employees. The third program of importance was the emphasis placed on employees' conformation to hotel's established policy, while the fourth ranked was activities related to the minimization of labour costs.

**Table 6. Ranking of Importance in HRM Programs in the Low scale Hotel Category**

Ranking	HRM Programs	Mean Score	
		External	Internal
1	Minimizing labor costs		High 3.66
2	Retention of present employees		High 3.35
3	Employees' conformity to hotel's established policy		High 3.26
4	Having open communications with employees	Relatively High 3.11	
5	Protecting the hotel from employees' lawsuits		Relatively Low 2.16
	<b>Importance of HRM Programs</b>	<b>Relatively High 3.11</b>	<b>Relatively High 3.11</b>
	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Relatively High 3.11</b>	

Ranking	HRM Programs	Mean Score	
		External	Internal
1	Minimizing labour costs		High 3.35
2	Maintaining a positive image in the community	High 3.32	
3	Retention of present employees		Relatively High 3.18
4	Having open communications with employees	Relatively High 2.78	
5	Maintaining organization's transparency with employees	Relatively High 2.76	
6	Linking employee evaluation with performance criteria		Relatively High 2.59
7	Employee feedback in appraisal decisions	Relatively High 2.58	
8	Employees' conformity to organization's established policy		Relatively High 2.56
9	Anticipating future labour requirements	Relatively High 2.55	
10	Having objective data available to make employment decisions		Relatively High 2.54
11	Ability to attract workers	Relatively Low 2.49	
12	Protecting the hotel from employees' lawsuits		Relatively Low 2.39

13	Keeping abreast with competitors' HRM practices	Relatively Low 2.34	
14	Monitoring external factors affecting labour availability	Relatively Low 1.99	
15	Establishing career ladders		Low 1.65
	<b>Importance of HRM Programs</b>	<b>Relatively High 2.60</b>	<b>Relatively High 2.61</b>
	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Relatively High 2.61</b>	

**Table 7. Overall Ranking of Importance in HRM Programs**

**Table 8. Association between HRM Strategy with HRM Programs**

Hotel Category	HRM Strategy	HRM Programs	Variance	Extent of Relationship
5-Star	Relatively Dynamic with future orientation and accommodating to Current needs 2.97 TYPE C	External (3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining Positive Image</li> <li>• Open Communication with employees</li> <li>• Maintaining transparency with employees</li> </ul> Internal (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conformity to policy</li> <li>• Employee retention</li> </ul> 2.85	0.12  (3.00%)	<b>Full Relationship</b>
	Relatively	External (3)		

4-Star	Conservative with Minor Adjustments 2.46 TYPE B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining Positive Image</li> <li>• Open Communication with employees</li> <li>• Feedback in Appraisals</li> </ul> Internal (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protecting against lawsuits</li> <li>• Employee retention</li> </ul> 2.97	0.51  (12.75%)	<b>Partial Relationship</b>
3-Star	Relatively Dynamic with future orientation and accommodating to Current needs 2.80 TYPE C	External (1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Communication with employees</li> </ul> Internal (4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimizing labour cost</li> <li>• Employee retention</li> <li>• Conformity to policy</li> <li>• Protecting against lawsuits</li> </ul> 3.11	0.31  (7.75%)	<b>Partial Relationship</b>
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>Relatively Dynamic with future orientation and accommodating to Current needs</b> <b>2.74</b> <b>TYPE C</b>	<b>Relatively High</b>  2.98	0.24  (6.00%)	<b>Partial Relationship</b>

#### 4.4 Association between HRM Strategy with HRM Programs

Table 8 shows the association between HRM Strategy with HRM Programs. The results show 5-star hotel have a full relationship of HRM Strategy with HRM Programs. Overall, results show a partial relationship between HRM strategy and HRM program.

### 5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The success of an organization depends on the extent to which HRM strategy is implemented. Good HRM strategy requires hotel managers to make comprehensive planning by balancing the demand for energy resources either from within or outside the organization with the supply of available resources. If the HRM strategy implemented is able to produce a workforce that meets the needs and requirements of the organization to face and overcome various forms of internal and external challenges, then the organization will be able to take advantage of environmental changes that occur.

This study explores the relationship between HRM strategy and HRM program in hotel across the Klang Valley vicinity. It is studied precisely to match between HRM strategy and the HRM program correlated with the extent of the relationship. Loyalty and customer satisfaction depend on how the hotel service is delivered. Therefore, in order to obtain a high level of customer loyalty and satisfaction, the organization must have more customer-oriented and identify appropriate employee attitudes and behaviors in order to provide excellent service to customers. Important factors such as maintaining a positive image, open communication and maintaining transparency with employees are among the strong elements to help employees provide the best service to customers. In addition, the resource management unit also needs to formulate and plan strategically to improve the quality and productivity of employees for the future success of the organization. Having proven the link between HRM strategy and HRM program orientation, future research should explore further on HRM systems and the performance of luxury service hotel.

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