

Factors Influencing Human Resource Practices in Employee Retention of Vietnamese Small and Medium Size Construction Firms: A Case of Construction Corporation No.1 Joint Stock Company

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Abstract:

The Vietnamese construction industry is growing rapidly, competition is intense. There is high staff turnover, and additionally, it is costly to train new employees and to get them "up to speed" with the same level of ability as those who have resigned. In this context, this study seeks to examine the relationship between the current Human Resource Management (HRM) practices, and the macro-environmental factors in this sector of the Vietnamese construction business in order to assess their impact upon HRM outcomes. Four propositions are presented on the relationships between HRM practices, macro-environmental factors, and the HRM outcomes. This study comprised two major phases. Prior to conducting in-depth interviews with seventy-two individuals from twenty-four construction firms, five case studies were conducted involving interviews with five senior managers from five major construction businesses in Vietnam to explore specific variables relative to HRM practice and HRM outcomes. A qualitative methodology was employed through semi-structured interviews questions. The seventy-two target respondents in the second phase of the research focused on managers and non-managers from fourteen small-sized and ten medium-sized firms which are either subsidiary of Construction Corporation No.1 Joint Stock Company or joint venture (JV) partners. The results of interviews show that rewards create the greatest job satisfaction for employees within the firms while the organizational characteristics (internal factor) were ranked as secondary factors. The study showed that environmental factors (external factor) influenced managers of medium-sized firms because they were seen as beneficial to employees and promoted organizational growth while the non-managers stated that these factors were less important and did not influence their decision to remain with a particular firm. This is because the non-managers considered that organizational characteristics (internal factor) impacted on firm performance and competency to a greater degree than the environmental factors (external factor). In addition, new graduates entering the construction industry preferred medium-sized companies which were seen as efficient rather than entering family-owned businesses. New graduates also sought to maximize salary and other allowances. Once graduates gained three or more years of working experience they often joined family-owned businesses. A lack of awareness of these influential variables can lead to inefficient practices and negative HRM outcomes in the management of small and medium size firms within the Vietnamese construction industry.

Keywords: construction industry, employee retention, human resource management, HRM practice, HRM outcomes, small and medium size construction firms.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The construction market in Vietnam, while of limited size, is set for above average growth rates through to the end of the decade. Construction spending in 2012 was some US\$18.6 billion, which accounted for roughly 20 percent of the country's GDP. The property market in Vietnam is currently subdued, challenging market conditions including a lack of capital resources have resulted in developers being unable to complete projects, while buyers are finding it difficult to afford property because of a lack of access to loans. There are also signs of distressed property assets throughout the country. There is currently a mismatch between demand and supply in the Vietnamese property market. Demand persists for affordable housing but developers of mid to high end properties are struggling to attract buyers. Meanwhile it was estimated that the total value of inventory in housing development projects as of May 2013 was at more than VND125 trillion (US\$6 billion) in 55 cities and provinces. A further problem is high land prices, which have increased due to speculative activities at the peak of the market. As a result, developers are holding on to land purchased Vietnam overview at relatively high prices and are unwilling to sell at a loss during the current downturn. To address the over-supply problem, adjustments to the apartment size and level of development are essential.

Infrastructure investment, particularly transport infrastructure, such as highways, rail and ports, will be a major growth area through to the end of the decade. However, the government is likely to have limited capacity for funding much of this because it is likely to be constrained by public debt levels. As a result, Vietnam is set to offer significant opportunities through privately financed infrastructure projects, with the funding likely to take the form of foreign direct investment or public-private partnership (PPP) joint ventures.

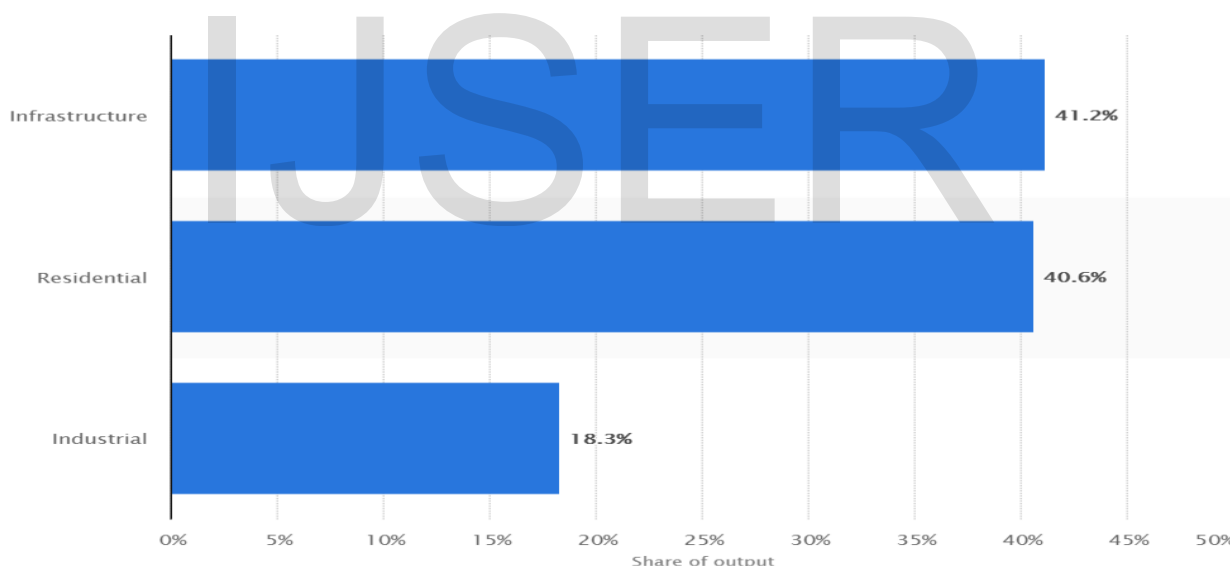


Figure 1: Distribution of construction output in Vietnam in 2014, by sector

(Source: <https://www.statista.com>)

Geographically, much of the investment will be focused on the cities of Ho Chi Minh and Hanoi and the North-South corridor in between. Construction is a large, labor - intensive sector in the Vietnam that accounts for twenty percent of the GDP and employs approximately 21 million people (GSO, 2007). It is project- based where individual projects are usually custom-built to client specifications (Bresnen, 1990; Loosemore et al, 2003), and one of the most dynamic and complex industrial environments. There are considerable variations in the number, size and type of projects undertaken by construction organizations; these variations in the organizational workloads cause significant challenges for construction FIRMS in their strategic intention and staffing needs.

A key characteristic of the industry's output is that the finished product is largely non-transportable and therefore has to be assembled at a point of use, usually outside, and often geographically dispersed (Bresnen, 1990; Fellows et al, 2002). This requires construction organizations to establish temporary organizational structures at dispersed geographical locations, frequently at a distance from central management. The project team thus forms the focus of working life in construction, operating with a significant and necessary degree of independence. Delegation and empowerment have become essential to the effective management of construction work (Dainty et al, 2002; Nesan and Holt, 2002), however, the characteristics of staff allocated to project teams also have a crucial effect. Because every construction project is different, a bespoke team is usually created for each project. However, the time available between contract award and the mobilization of the project is usually extremely limited (Druker et al, 1996), making strategic planning complex.

Construction projects form autonomous business units with their own multifunctional teams and objectives. Within project teams, line managers thus become partially or completely responsible for the Human Resource Management (HRM) function as well as many other technical and financial aspects. This devolution often occurs without any proper training or central support and is a unique characteristic of the industry. Loosemore et al (2003) confirm that due to this approach, tension occurs between the short- term objectives of the project and the longer-term strategic needs of the wider organization, often resulting in people-related issues adopting a lower priority to the core procurement challenges of meeting project targets.

The sensitivity of the level of construction industry economic activity to wider economic activity creates a further challenge for HRM. Construction has always suffered from being one of the first industries to be affected by economic downturn and one of the last to recover from it. This cyclical construction demand makes it very difficult for companies to retain directly employed workforce and make long-term investments in its core professional staff (Lingard, 2002) as well as defend against uncertainty of workload, economic slump and unstable demand (Langford et al, 2000).

Whilst the increasing use of subcontractors has acted as a defense against this cyclical demand and has allowed contractors to pass on risk and achieve greater organizational flexibility, it provides a number of challenges. It further fragments the industry, as these firms and individuals are not directly employed by the main contractor, and there is no responsibility for them apart from payment for work completed, resulting in the creation of more small firms and higher levels of self-employment and casual labor (Langford et al, 2000). In turn this has consequently made project co- ordination more complex and has increased the need for highly skilled and experienced management (Druker and White, 1995; Fellows et al, 2002; Loosemore et al, 2003).

The above characteristics make HRM extremely difficult within the context of the construction industry. In particular, the current competitive recruitment climate has increased the need for construction organizations to retain their professional employees in order to remain competitive. Those companies who fail to meet the psychological expectations of employees stand to lose their most able and ambitious personnel to their competitors in an increasingly competitive marketplace for good people (Druker and White, 1996). Employee turnover is an extremely important issue for the strategic HR planning of construction companies, however, a culture of mobility has emerged and often employees drift from job to job with little sense of loyalty to their employers. Within the Vietnam, there are concerns that staff turnover may continue to increase as staff shortages intensify and competition between different employers intensifies. In a survey of construction professionals, forty-two percent stated that they were actively looking for new positions (Ford, 1997). The need for companies to retain staff has thus become a major HRM issue throughout the construction industry.

The construction industry presents challenges that have the potential to undermine the applicability and effectiveness of HRM. Construction activity relies on skilled manual labor supported by an integrated project management and design team. Despite this, these functions often remain disjointed right up to the point of delivery causing fragmentation within the project delivery process that makes construction one of the most difficult project-based industries in which to apply good Human Resource Management (HRM) practices (Moore and Dainty, 2001).

GDP from Construction in Vietnam increased to 224464 VND Billion in the fourth quarter of 2018 from 57511 VND Billion in the third quarter of 2018. GDP from Construction in Vietnam averaged 94422.46 VND Billion from 2013 until 2018, reaching an all-time high of 224464 VND Billion in the fourth quarter of 2018 and a record low of 24018 VND Billion in the first quarter of 2013.

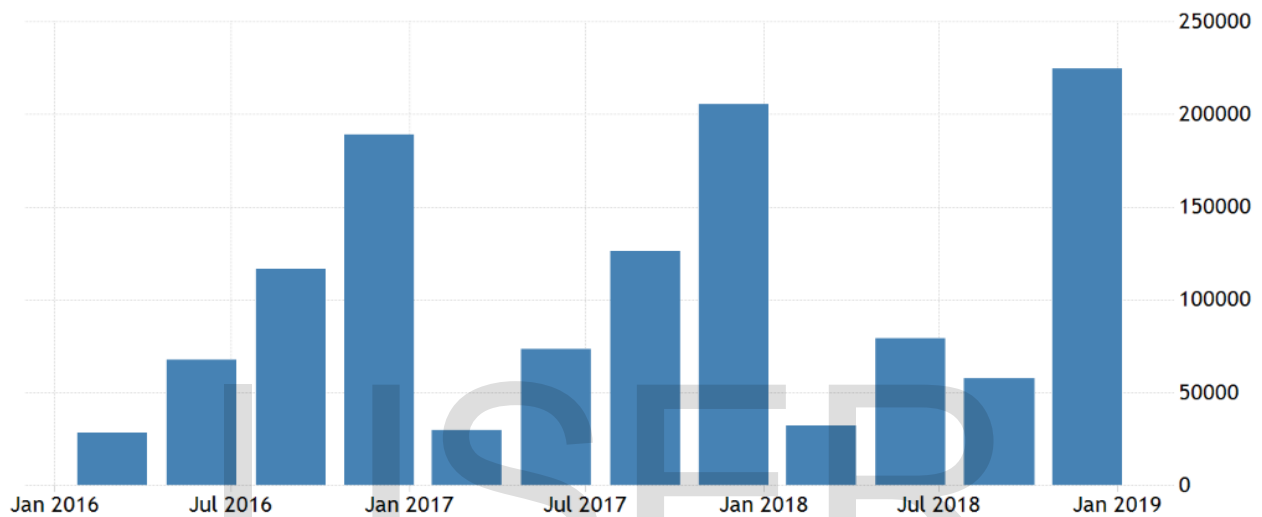


Figure 2: Vietnam GDP from Construction - General Statistics office of Vietnam

(Source: Tradingeconomics.com)

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Vietnamese companies are currently viewed as having a cheap and dispensable labor supply; however, increases in the standard of living locally, followed by the increasing minimum wage, the stronger role of local government and labor unions, global exposure and competition demands, are causing a shift that warrants a more strategic focus.

Understanding which factors are being utilized offers not only a significant contribution to our knowledge of the strategy - human resource link, but will also have significant implications for HRM practice in Vietnamese construction industry.

It is important to understand the situation of employee retention and the challenges that Construction Corporation No.1 Joint Stock Company has to address in attracting and retaining talent in view of the stiff competition faced by the industry.

III. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The operation of construction businesses in Vietnam, be the small-medium or large-sized, depends heavily on ample available manpower. Therefore, in the construction business, apart from capital equipment and construction technology, human capital is integral to achieving a firm's goals.

As there are high levels of competition in the construction industry, the importance of good HRM practices is a key to effective management. In this competitive environment, employees have a chance to pick and choose jobs offering better remuneration and security. Consequently, HRM practices are a key ingredient to successfully competing and surviving in this highly competitive market environment.

The research questions are to examine HRM practices and their influence and effect on HRM outcomes with reference to how they influence the ability of construction companies' to compete successfully. The research questions are twofold:

- **General Question**

To examine how both organizational characteristics and environmental factors affect HRM practices and HRM outcomes in Vietnamese construction industry.

- **Specific Questions**

- How may the current state of HRM practices worldwide be described?
- How an integrated framework for HRM practices related to organizational characteristics and environmental factors, consistent with achieving good HRM outcomes in Vietnamese construction industry is developed?
- What can be recommended to HRM practitioners in Vietnamese construction industry in relation to their HRM practices?

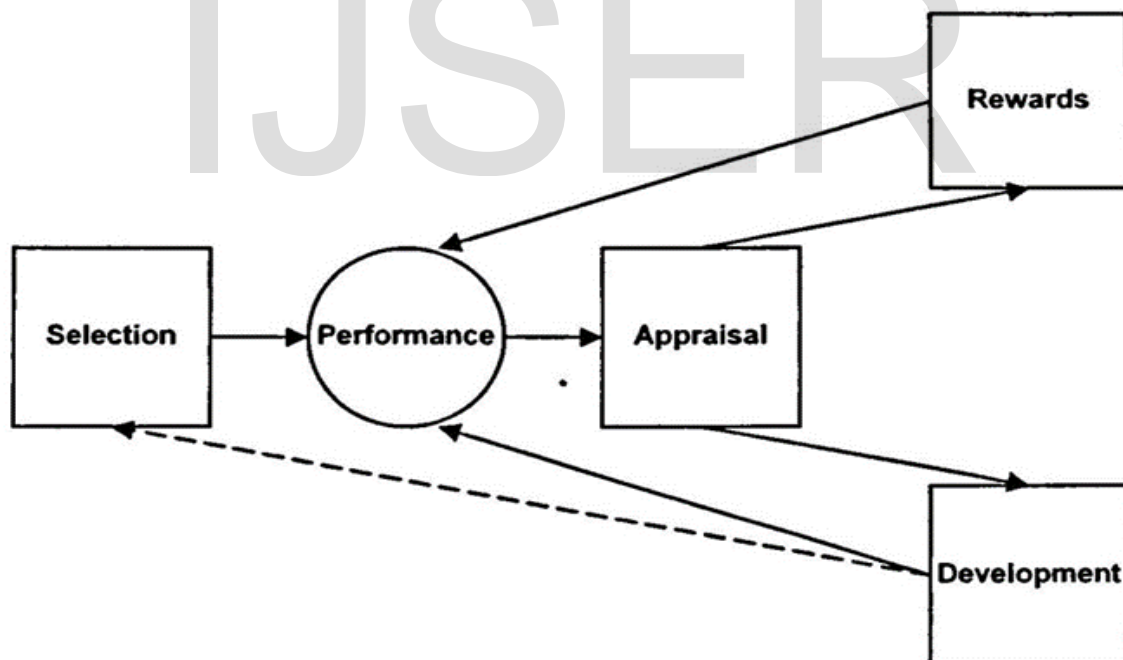
IV. SCOPE AND DELIMITATION

The study uses Construction Corporation No.1 Joint Stock Company as the object of the case study. Also the method of study is interview only. Therefore, the result may not be generalized and cannot apply to all industries.

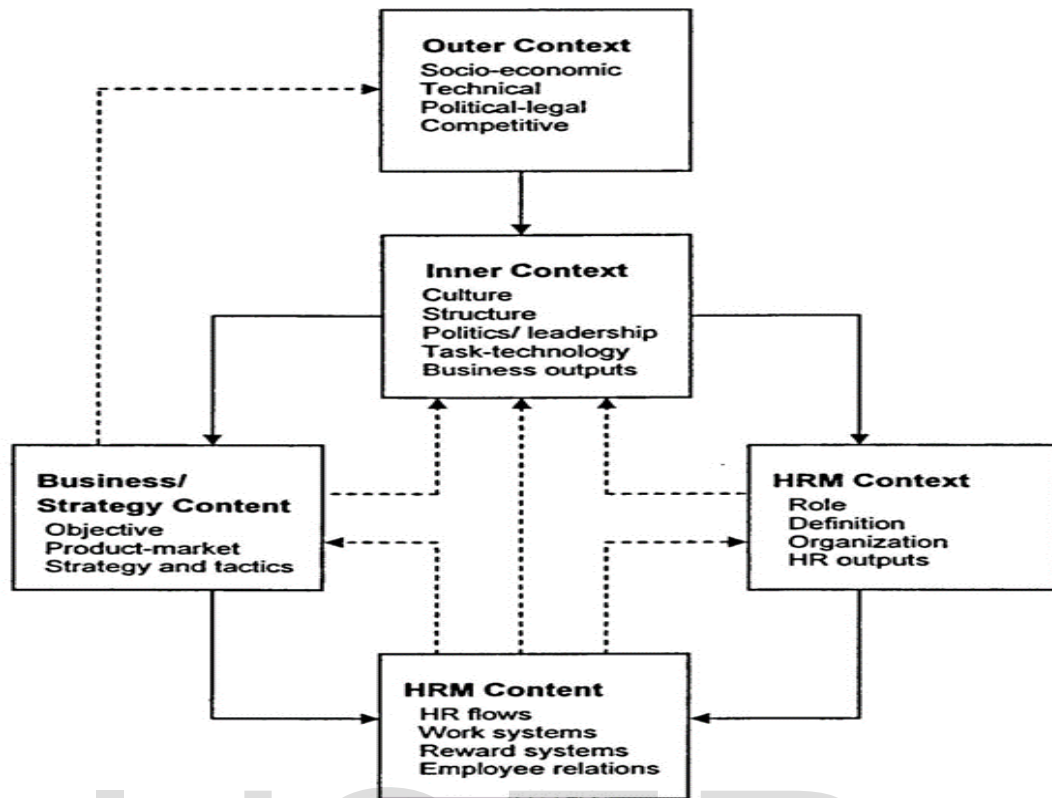
V. RELATED THEORIES, LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

- **Related theories:**

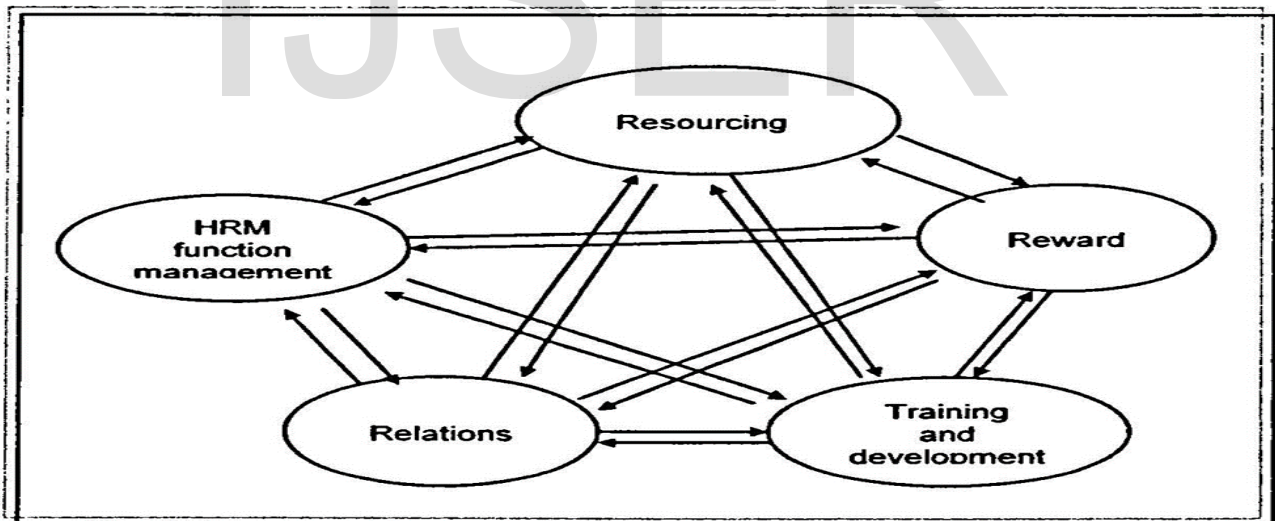
1. *The Michigan model of HRM*



2. *The Warwick model*



3. The integration of HRM systems model



- Literature review

1. Five types of employee involvement (Marchington, 1995; Corbridge and Pilbeam, 1998)

| Type of Employee Involvement | Objective | Techniques |
|--|---|---|
| Downward communication | Managers to provide information to employees to develop their understanding of organisational plans and objectives. | Formal and informal communications: reports, newspapers, videos, presentations, team briefings. |
| Upward problem-solving | Utilise the knowledge and opinions of employees to, for example, increase the stock of ideas within the organisation, encourage co-operative relationships and legitimise change. | Suggestion schemes, total quality management (TQM) and quality circles, attitude surveys. |
| Task participation | Encourage employees to expand the range of tasks they undertake. | Job rotation, job enrichment, teamwork, empowerment, semi-autonomous work groups. |
| Consultation and representative participation | An indirect form of employee involvement, aiming to support effective decision-making, air grievances, and 'sound out' employee views on organisational plans. | Joint consultation, discussions between managers and employees or their representatives. |
| Financial participation | Relate the employees' overall pay to the success of the organisation with the assumption that employees will work harder if they receive a personal financial reward from the organisation's success. | Profit-sharing schemes, employee share ownership plans. |

2. Relevant Literature on HRM Practices

| HRM practices | Relevant Literature | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| | Schuler and Jackson (1987) | Eneroth and Larsson (1996) | Tsui and Gomez-Mejia (1998) | Paauwe and Richardson (1997) | Guest (1997) | Pfeffer (1998) |
| Analysis and design of work | | | ✓ | | | |
| HR planning | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Recruiting | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Selection | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Training and development | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Compensation | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Performance Appraisal | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Employee Relation | | | ✓ | | | |
| Rewards | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Socializing | | ✓ | | | | |
| Staffing | ✓ | | | | | |
| Job design | | | | | ✓ | |
| Involvement /Participation | | | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Coaching | | | | ✓ | | |
| Formalized procedures | | | | ✓ | | |
| Status and security | | | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Decentralization | | | | ✓ | | |

Remarks: "✓" means the item that has references in literature. Those HRM practices identified by the pilot study shaded.

Source: Developed for the current research by the author.

3. Strategic approaches to managing human resources in the construction industry

- The personnel' perspective
- People management strategies
 - Training and development
 - Employee relations.

4. Environmental Factors and Organizational Characteristics on HRM Practices and Outcomes

According to Paauwe (1998) model, firms are constrained by several factors when developing their HRM policies. These factors are grouped into three categories: factors concerning the nature of the product, market, and the technologies used, factors concerning the organizational configuration and administrative heritage, and social, cultural and legal factors. Within these constraints, the stakeholders of the firm determine the final choice of HRM policies.

Budhwar and Khatri (2001) analyzed the influence of a number of contingent variables, such as age of the organization, size, life-cycle stage, ownership and presence of unions. Driven by significant internal and external forces, HRM has grown from being perceived as a purely maintenance function,

often dismissed as a cost of doing business, to what many scholars and practitioners now regard as a source of sustained competitive advantage for organizations.

The following four propositions are put forward:

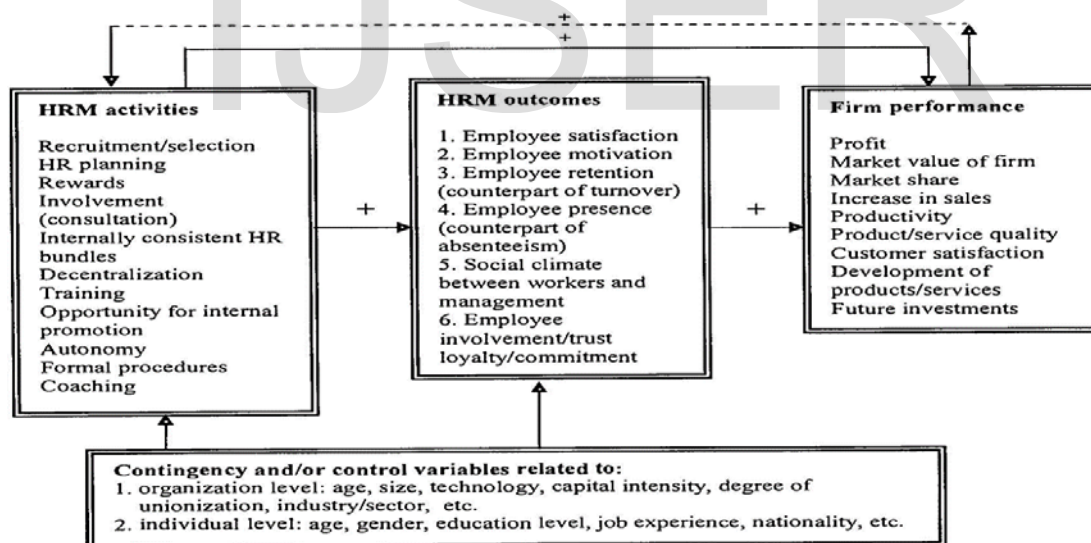
- The greater the practices of HRM, the better the HRM outcomes for both managers and non-managers in Construction Corporation No.1 Joint Stock Company's offices.
- The greater the practices of HRM, the better the HRM outcomes for both managers and non-managers in Construction Corporation No.1 Joint Stock Company's partnership companies.
- The greater the impact of both organizational characteristics and environmental factors, the greater the practices of HRM as perceived by both managers and non-managers of Construction Corporation No.1 Joint Stock Company's offices.
- The greater the impact of both organizational characteristics and environmental factors, the greater the practices of HRM as perceived by both managers and non-managers of Construction Corporation No.1 Joint Stock Company's partnership companies.

• Conceptual Framework

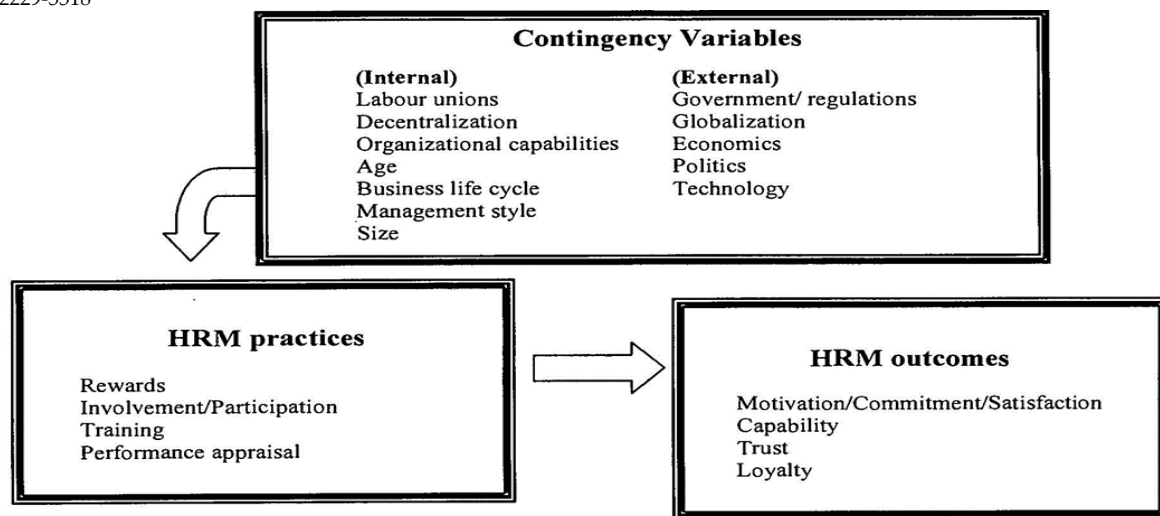
1. HRM Strategy, Practices and Outcomes

| HRM Strategy | HRM Practices | HRM outcomes |
|------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Differentiation (Innovation) | Selection | Commitment |
| Focus (Quality) | Training | Quality |
| Cost (Cost-reduction) | Appraisal | Flexibility |
| | Reward | |
| | Job design | |
| | Involvement | |
| | Status and Security | |

2. HRM Activities in Relation to HRM Outcomes and Firm Performance



3. Conceptual Model



IV. RESEARCH DESIGN, POPULATION AND SAMPLE

- **Research design**
 - Qualitative methods provide rich opportunities to explore viewpoints, allowing the researcher to gain a better initial understanding of the problem and to identify phenomena, attitudes, and influences (Healy and Perry, 2000; Maxell, 1996). Other works have shown that a qualitative case study approach works quite well for exploring how HR develops in firms (MacMahon and Murphy, 1999).
 - The study comprised two major steps. Prior to conducting in-depth interviews a pilot study using five case studies was conducted to identify the key variables with respect to HRM practices and HRM outcomes in the construction industry in Vietnam.
 - The second phase of the research involved case studies using twenty-four construction businesses within the group of Construction Corporation No.1 Joint Stock Company and its joint venture partners.
- **Population and Sample**

| Type of Firms/ Position in Firms | Small-sized enterprises | | Medium-sized enterprises | | Total |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|-------|
| | Managers/managing directors/ owners (one interviewee per firm) | Non-managers (two interviewees per firm) | Managers/managing directors/ owners (one interviewee per firm) | Non-managers (two interviewees per firm) | |
| Subsidiary Companies | 7 | 14 | 5 | 10 | 36 |
| JV Partnership | 7 | 14 | 5 | 10 | 36 |
| Total | 14 | 28 | 10 | 20 | 72 |

V. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS AND DATA COLLECTION

- **Research Instruments**

Semi-structured Interviewing Process

 - Interviews were conducted with those who managed construction firms and those who were in a sense "at the coal face" supervisors and site managers who interfaced directly with the labourers on construction sites.
 - HRM practices in this research were measured at two different strata within organizations: managerial employees and non-managerial employees
- **Data Collection**

Pilot Study Process

- The pilot study indicated that there were four key success factors common to successful construction industry in Vietnam, namely, reward, involvement or participation, training and performance appraisal.
- The results identified HRM outcomes as motivation, commitment, satisfaction, capability, loyalty and trust.
- The environmental factors identified were, government rules and regulations, globalization, economics, politics and technology were key factors
- The key organizational characteristics were identified as labor unions, decentralization, organization capability, age, business life cycle, management style and size

Interview Process

- The interview process involved a semi-structured interview style, and interviews were conducted with one manager and two non-managers from each business.
- Overall a total of seventy-two interviews were conducted over a period of one year.

VI. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

1. HRM Practices and HRM Outcomes

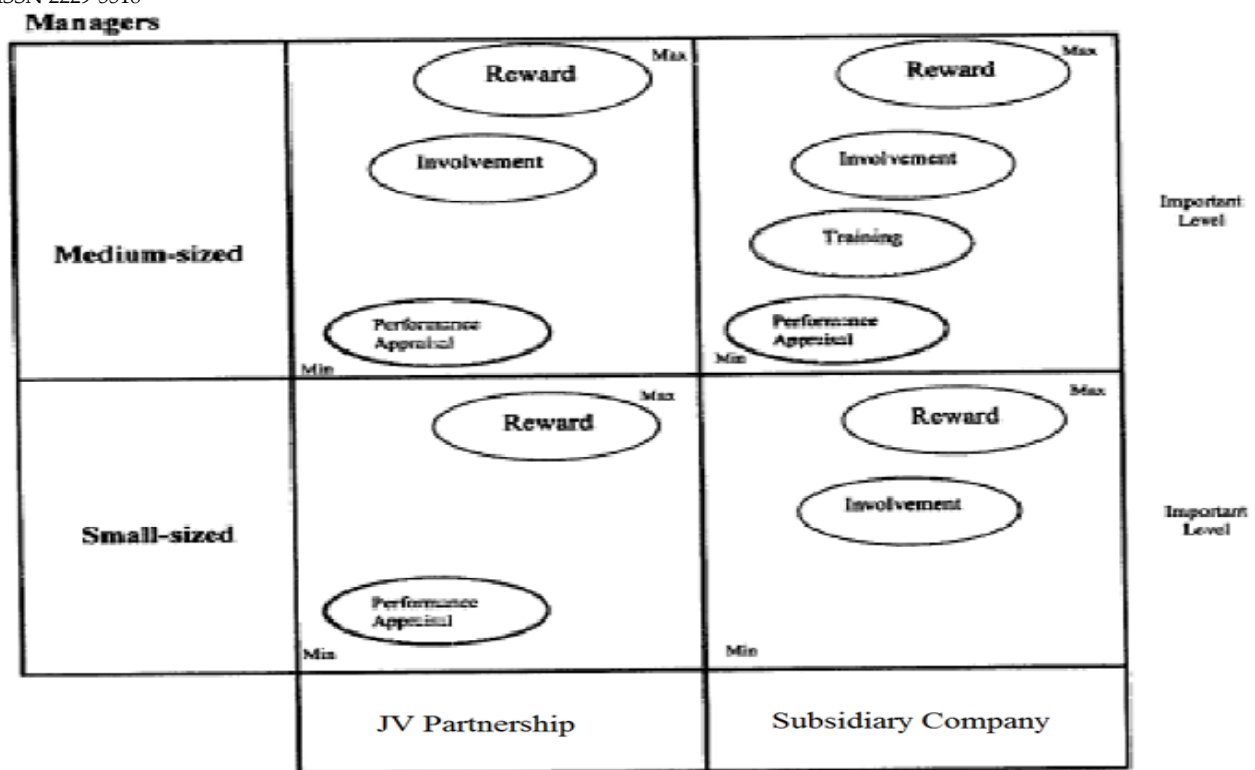
Table : HRM Practices and HRM Outcomes

| | <i>SmallSized JV Partnership</i> | | | | <i>MediumSized JV Partnership</i> | | | | <i>SmallSized Subsidiary Company</i> | | | | <i>MediumSized Subsidiary Company</i> | | | |
|----------|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Managers | | Non-managers | | Managers | | Non-managers | | Managers | | Non-managers | | Managers | | Non-managers | |
| | agree (%) | disagree (%) | agree (%) | disagree (%) | agree (%) | disagree (%) | agree (%) | disagree (%) | agree (%) | disagree (%) | agree (%) | disagree (%) | agree (%) | disagree (%) | agree (%) | disagree (%) |
| <i>A</i> | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 |
| <i>B</i> | 14.29 | 85.71 | 14.29 | 85.71 | 10 | 90 | 0 | 100 | 28.57 | 71.43 | 28.57 | 71.43 | 60 | 40 | 10 | 90 |
| <i>C</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 60 | 40 | 30 | 70 |
| <i>D</i> | 10 | 90 | 7.14 | 92.86 | 30 | 70 | 7.14 | 92.86 | 0 | 0 | 7.14 | 92.86 | 10 | 90 | 0 | 0 |

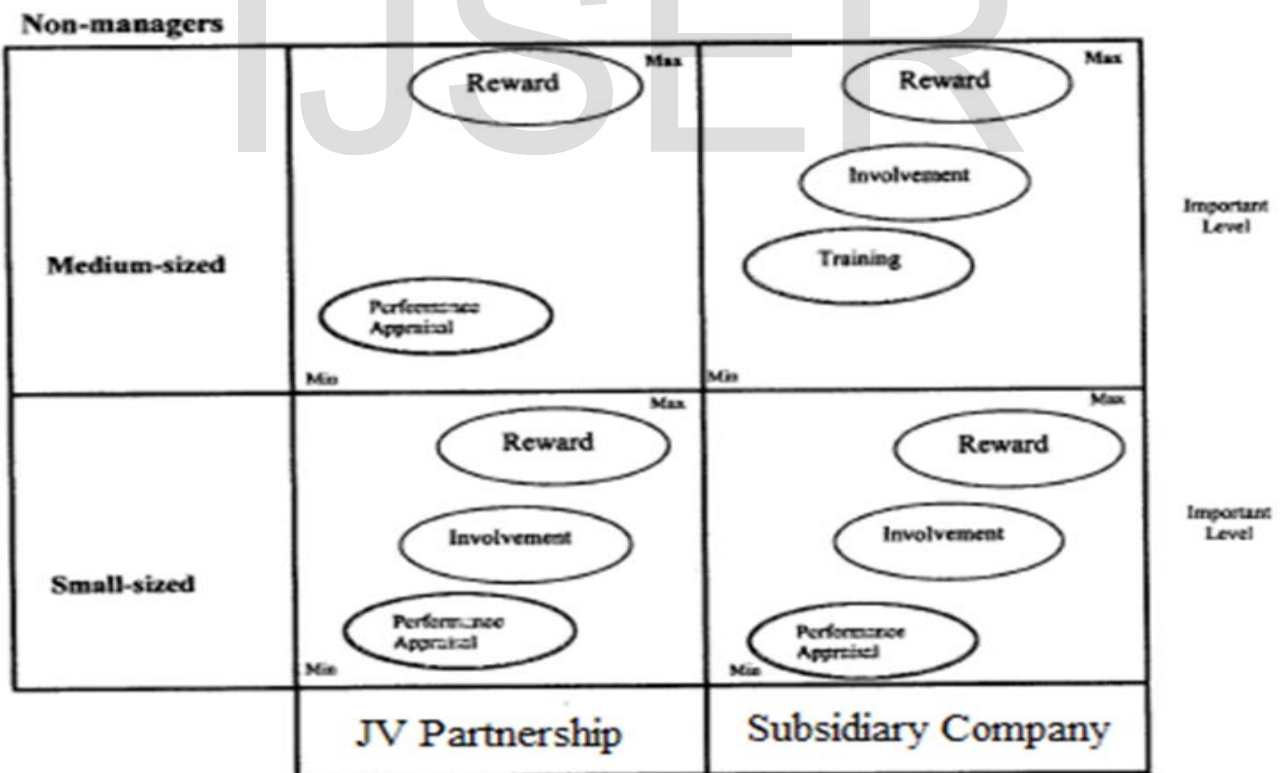
Remarks: 0 or (zero) means no opinion from interviewee's result.

A : Reward B: Participation C: Training D: Performance Appraisal

2. Findings with respect to the Relationship between HRM Practices and HRM Outcomes in the Construction Industry in Vietnam.



Remarks: Position of ○ in the picture represents the level of importance of each factor.



Remarks: Position of ○ in the picture represents the level of importance of each factor

3. The Relationship HRM Practices and HRM Outcomes based on Environmental Factors

Table : The Relationship HRM Practices and HRM Outcomes based on Environmental Factors

| Environmental factors/ Arguments based on company characteristics | Small-sized | | | | Medium-sized Partnership | | | | Small-sized Company | | | | Medium-sized Company | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Managers | | Non-managers | | Managers | | Non-managers | | Managers | | Non-managers | | Managers | | Non-managers | |
| | agree (%) | disagree (%) | agree (%) | disagree (%) | agree (%) | disagree (%) | agree (%) | disagree (%) | agree (%) | disagree (%) | agree (%) | disagree (%) | agree (%) | disagree (%) | agree (%) | disagree (%) |
| Government rules and regulations | 14.29 | 85.71 | 7.14 | 92.86 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14.29 | 85.71 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Globalization | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 20 | 80 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Economics | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Politics | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 80 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Technology | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 50 | 50 | 60 | 40 | 14.29 | 85.71 | 100 | 0 | 20 | 80 |

Remarks: 0 or (zero) means no opinion from interviewee's result.

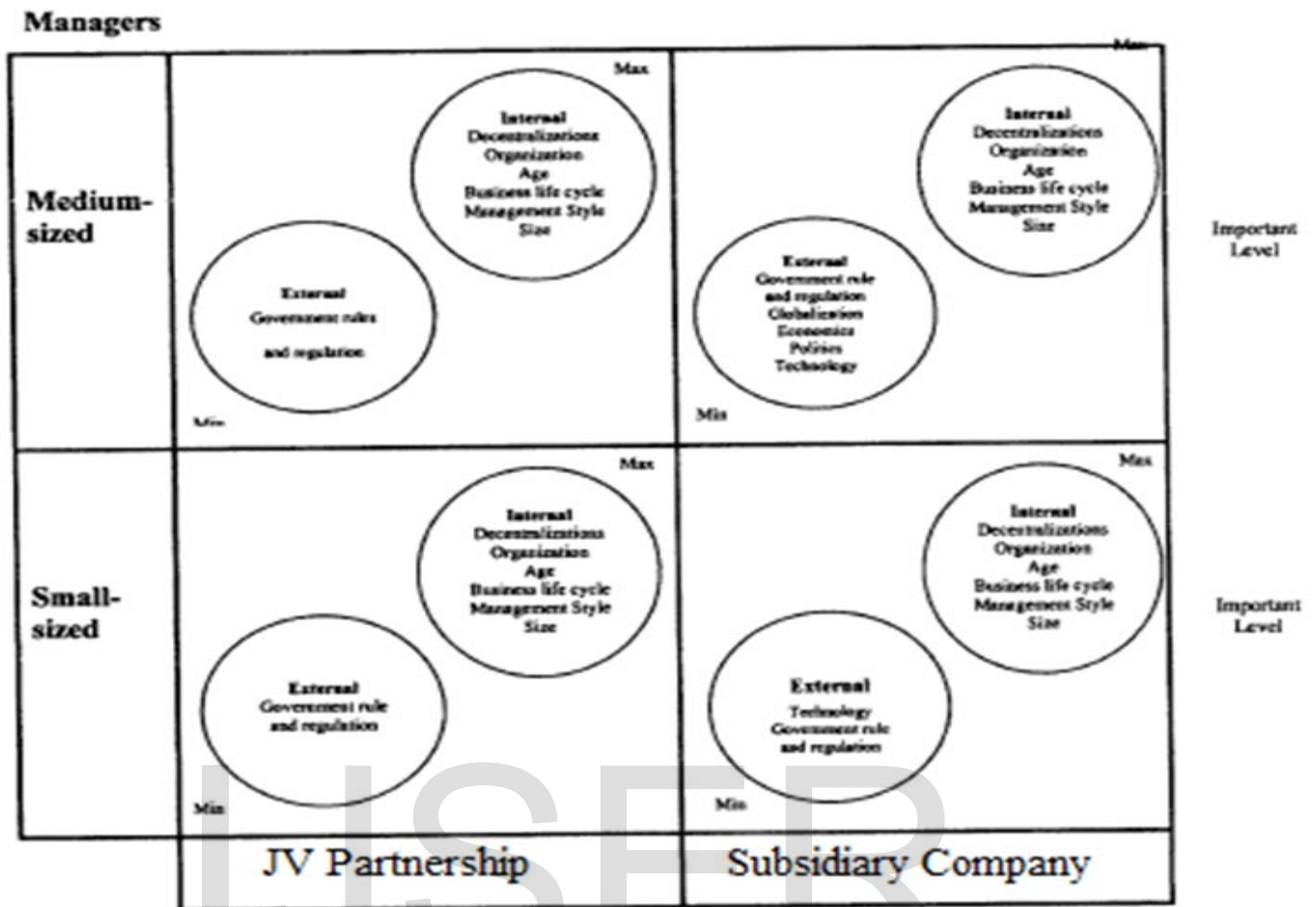
4. The Relationship between HRM Practices and HRM Outcomes based on Organization Characteristics

Table : The Relationship between HRM Practices and HRM Outcomes based on Organization Characteristics

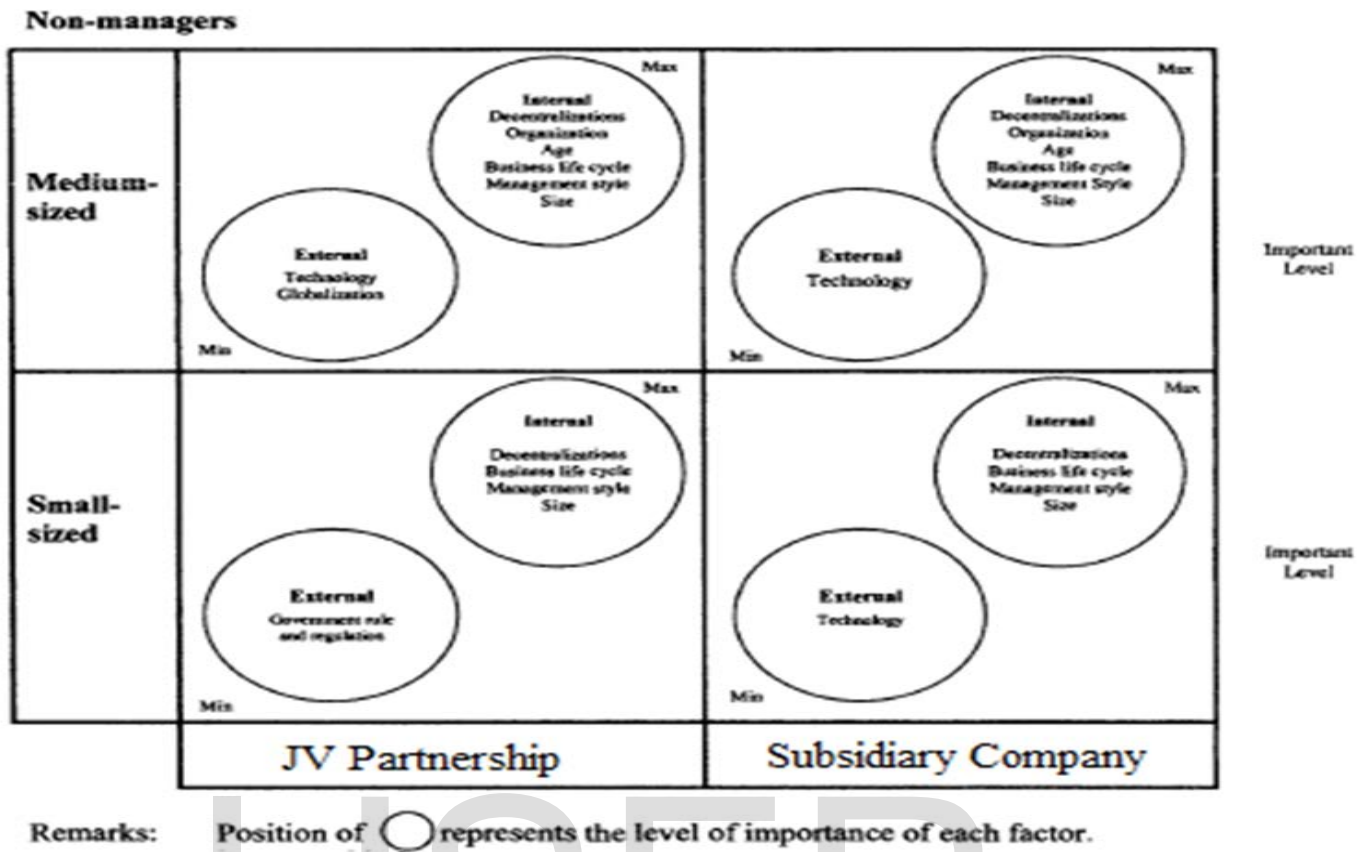
| Organization characteristics/ Arguments based on company characteristics | Small-sized Partnership | | | | Medium Partnership | | | | Small-sized Company | | | | Medium-sized Company | | | |
|---|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Managers | | Non-managers | | Managers | | Non-managers | | Managers | | Non-managers | | Managers | | Non-managers | |
| | agree (%) | disagree (%) | agree (%) | disagree (%) | agree (%) | disagree (%) | agree (%) | disagree (%) | agree (%) | disagree (%) | agree (%) | disagree (%) | agree (%) | disagree (%) | agree (%) | disagree (%) |
| Labour Union | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Decentralization | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 |
| Organization | 100 | 0 | 14.29 | 85.71 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 7.14 | 92.86 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 |
| Age | 7.14 | 92.86 | 14.29 | 85.71 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 14.29 | 85.71 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 |
| Business life cycle | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 |
| Management style | 7.14 | 92.86 | 21.43 | 78.57 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 |
| Size | 28.57 | 71.43 | 28.57 | 71.43 | 100 | 01 | 14.29 | 87.71 | 14.29 | 85.71 | 35.71 | 64.29 | 100 | 0 | 14.29 | 85.71 |

Remarks: 0 or (zero) means no opinion from interviewee's result.

5. Findings with respect to the Impact of both the Organizational Characteristics and Environment Factors between HRM Practices and HRM Outcomes



Remarks: Position of ○ represents the level of importance of each factor.



The analysis of HRM practices within Vietnam construction industry in terms of rewards, levels of participation or involvement, training, and individual performance appraisals are as follows:

- **Rewards**

- Generally, both managers and non-managers in the construction industry see remuneration levels as important.
- This research indicates that non-managers and managers in medium-sized subsidiary companies seek to which change of employment by moving to small-sized organizations, generally to a medium-sized JV partnership. This is because the management of small-sized and medium-sized JV partnerships can offer employees a range of compensation packages. Small-sized JV partnerships can be more flexible in terms of wages and functionality than small-sized subsidiary companies.
- Small-sized and medium-sized JV partnerships are able to motivate staff and offer job satisfaction in return for trust and loyalty. This raises core competencies more easily and quickly than occurs in the small-sized and medium-sized subsidiary companies.
- Small-sized construction companies aim to train employees on-the-job rather than through structured training courses. In contrast larger companies run structured training programs and will seek to motivate and retain employees through incentives programs and promotion.

- **Involvement or Participation**

- The managers of small-sized and medium-sized subsidiary companies and medium-sized JV partnerships place importance on their level of involvement within their organizations. In contrast to small-sized or medium-sized JV partnerships, small-sized and medium-sized subsidiary companies and JV partnerships in the construction industry place a lot of emphasis on teamwork in circumstances where projects are bigger, involve larger workforces, and hence, require more systematic and coordinated effort.

- Employees in smaller organizations have the opportunity to show their ability, and their managers and supervisor are better able to evaluate their performance. Such evaluation can then result in increased compensation relative to the employee's individual ability. Job promotions may come more quickly. Correspondently, those who cannot perform efficiently are weeded out.
- Non-managers and managers in small-sized and medium-sized JV partnerships have greater involvement in projects and this gives them the opportunity to show their abilities. This in turn results in ongoing performance evaluations and compensation adjustments relative to their abilities. Additionally, greater levels of involvement result in higher levels of commitment and satisfaction in the work place.
- **Training**
 - Training in medium-sized subsidiary companies is more systematic than in small-sized and medium-sized JV partnerships.
 - Systematic management training for both managers and non-managers in large organizations entitles them to receive higher compensation.
 - Training expenses are often deemed to be compensation for employees in small-sized and medium-sized JV partnerships. As discussed earlier, small-sized and medium-sized JV partnerships and small-sized subsidiary companies offer higher rates of salary to get employees who already have skills and so place less importance in the training programs than do medium-sized or larger firms.
- **Performance Appraisal**
 - Small-sized and medium-sized JV partnerships and medium-sized subsidiary companies, which tend to be more flexible than their larger counterparts, are able to adjust rates of compensation depending on each employee's ability.
 - In small-sized and medium-sized JV partnerships, most of which do not have a systematic HR management evaluation regimes, performance appraisals depends solely on the business owner and may be haphazard, not reflecting ability of employees.
 - The larger organization the greater the emphasis placed by employees' performance evaluation as higher compensation as well as promotion is directly dependent on formalized appraisal
- **Impact of environmental factors on HRM practices and HRM outcomes**
 - The current research indicates that HRM in the Vietnam construction industry is affected by a range of environmental factors and organizational characteristics in particular, government legislation and regulations, and government policy initiatives.
 - Vietnamese firms may be able to look overseas for projects and workers, both skilled and unskilled, can work overseas. This increases levels of competition in the employment market which in turn is beneficial to employees.
 - The Vietnam economy is relatively healthy and the government is currently funding a number of large infrastructure projects; these include the new airport, train extensions, the road system, and expressways, intersection bridges and underpasses both in Hanoi and regionally.
 - The use of technology is now essential and is also cost effective on larger projects. Employees need to learn new techniques and manage complex technology more than ever before. Thus, especially in the firms, construction industry, job training to enable employees to master new technology is essential. With greater skill comes the chance of higher compensation.
- **Impact of organizational characteristics on HRM practices and HRM outcomes**
 - The construction industry is different from most other businesses in Vietnam, given the importance of teamwork and the fact that the success or failure of a project in terms of customer's satisfaction is immediately assessable.
 - There are higher levels of participation in smaller organizations, in contrast to the medium-sized subsidiary companies.

- The smaller organizational management structures in construction industry firms, with fewer levels of managers enables decisions to be made more quickly and increases overall efficiency. Thus, quick decision making promotes efficiency and this will influence remuneration outcomes for employees.
- In the smaller the organizations training is less formal but more hands-on for employees.
- The age of employees is not a factor which influences job security. Levels of compensation relate to ability and age does not directly affect this.
- The size of the organization directly affects HRM practices. HRM outcomes suggest that employees feel that working in a larger organization offers more security. The employees may also have better training opportunities.
- Working in a smaller organization, or family-partnership may offer considerably less security, dependent on the business owner or supervisor's personal assessments of an employee abilities.
- There are both advantages to employees in choosing to work in small-sized or medium-sized subsidiary companies or correspondingly small-sized or medium-sized JV partnerships.
- **HRM Practices towards HRM Outcomes of Managers and Non-Managers**
 - Managers who come from large firms have more opportunity to successfully apply for positions in small-sized and medium-sized construction firms because they gain valuable experience through well-organized and gain training through structured training programs.
 - In contrast, managers from small-sized firms have the possibility of successfully applying to work in larger companies but gaining higher compensation may be difficult.
 - Career development prospects for managers in both small-sized and medium-sized JV partnerships are still ambiguous. It depends on the owners' relationship with individual employees as to how they fare.
 - Managers who need long-term career development, training courses, and know-how, especially with respect offered by teamwork and technology need to consider small-sized or medium-sized subsidiary companies as their priority.
 - Managers who have long-term work experience should consider the prospects offered by small-sized and medium-sized JV partnerships.
 - Fresh graduates as managers in the first year of work experience appear to adopt a pattern of behavior in seeking employment in either small-sized or medium-sized subsidiary companies to gain work experience for 3-5 years prior to moving to work for small-sized or medium-sized JV partnerships.
 - Non-managers with 1-3 years work experience working in small-sized and medium-sized subsidiary companies have the chance to learn the basic work systems and practices in the construction industry through work and training programs. With 3-5 years work experience, they are in an excellent position to change their jobs and move to the level of supervisors or managers in small-sized and medium-sized JV partnerships.

VII. CONCLUSION

• **Reward, Involvement or Participation, Training and Performance Appraisal**

As the analysis of the interview results with the managers and non-managers indicated, reward is the most important HRM factor motivating the managers and non-managers of small-sized and medium-sized subsidiary companies and JV partnerships. Reward emerges as the most important factor in creating motivation and satisfaction for employees in each category of organization. However, this finding is less clear with respect to small-sized JV partnerships due to the absence of structured management systems and formalized performance appraisal, and where reward levels may be at the discretion of the owner.

Managers of small-sized and medium-sized subsidiary companies and small-sized and medium-sized JV partnerships considered involvement the second most important HRM practice which directly relates to firm outcomes. In contrast, in small-sized and medium-sized JV partnerships the dominant role of the owner manager may prelude high levels of involvement on the part of managers and non-managers, yet managers and non-managers still considered it the second most important factor. Managers and non-managers of small-sized and medium-sized subsidiary companies stated training as the third most

important aspect of HRM practices directly related to HRM outcomes. Small-sized and medium-sized subsidiary companies generally have systematic procedures for training employees in a wide range of skills; both on-the-job and off-site. Managers and non-managers in small-sized and medium-sized JV partnerships rated training as less important. A characteristic of partnerships, particularly small-sized JV partnerships, is the lack of formalized training procedures; training may be sporadic and then only task or project specific. Managers and non-managers of small-sized and medium-sized JV partnerships and small-sized and medium-sized subsidiary companies expressed the view that performance appraisal as the least important factor influencing HRM outcomes. In small-sized and medium-sized subsidiary companies, employees may be systematically evaluated by supervisors who report to more senior managers who take decisions. In contrast, effective, objective or systematic evaluation is not common practice in small-sized or medium-sized JV partnerships.

- **Organizational Characteristics and Environmental Factors**

Managers of small-sized and medium-sized JV partnerships and small-sized and medium-sized subsidiary companies view organizational characteristics as important, however, the larger the business the more important the environmental factors. Organizational characteristics are seen as more important to managers and non-managers in small-sized and medium-sized subsidiary companies as small-sized and medium-sized JV partnerships tend to lack systematized management. In terms of environmental factors, managers see issues related to economics and politics, which may result in larger infrastructure projects being approved and funded, as of greater significance than non-managers in companies and managers and non-managers in partnerships. Managers and non-managers in small-sized and medium-sized JV partnerships consider government rules and regulations as important because they influence basic salary levels, termination payments and social security entitlements. Such environmental factors, as globalization, foreign investment in Vietnam and the prospect of workers being employed overseas, influence all construction industry employees in Vietnam. Furthermore, employees are influenced by the use of technology, which brings with it training and the prospect of higher reward, and hence this factor is of greater significance to managers and non-managers in small-sized and medium-sized subsidiary companies than to their counterparts in the smaller businesses where new technology is less frequently adopted.

- **Other Factors**

Small-sized and medium-sized JV partnerships offer higher levels of salary but lower levels of training and lower levels of job security. As a consequence of new graduates tend to be employed initially in small-sized and medium-sized subsidiary companies but within a relatively short period of time may move to a small-sized or medium-sized JV partnership as they seek to improve their levels of remuneration. Small-sized and medium-sized JV partnerships seek to employ pre-skilled employees and do not run training courses. Another factor that emerges from the current research is that small-sized and medium-sized subsidiary companies, which have systematic and organized management structures, have a greater chance to expand and grow further.

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