



Personnel Review

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Article information:

To cite this document:

Suwastika Naidu Anand Chand , (2014),"A comparative analysis of best human resource management practices in the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga", *Personnel Review*, Vol. 43 Iss 5 pp. 798 - 815

Permanent link to this document:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/PR-02-2013-0021>

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A comparative analysis of best human resource management practices in the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to comparatively analyse the best human resource management (HRM) practices in the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga.

Design/methodology/approach – This study examined best HRM practices used by the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga by using self-administered questionnaires. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 73 hotels in Samoa and 66 hotels in Tonga. Out of the 73 self-administered questionnaires that were distributed in Samoa, 58 usable questionnaires were returned resulting in a response rate of 79 per cent. In the case of Tonga, out of the 66 self-administered questionnaires were distributed, 51 usable questionnaires were returned resulting in a response rate of 77 per cent.

Findings – The findings of this study show that there are 28 best HRM practices in Samoa and 15 best HRM practices in Tonga. This study also found that best HRM practices differ based on differences in internal and external environmental factors present in different geographical areas. The findings of this paper support the assumptions of the Contextual Paradigm of HRM and strategic human resource management.

Research limitations/implications – This study is based on a single sector of Samoa and Tonga. A single sector study limits the generalisations that can be made across different sectors in Samoa and Tonga.

Practical implications – Human resource managers should incorporate cultural, political, legal, economic and social factors in HRM practices.

Originality/value – None of the existing studies have examined best HRM practices used by the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga. This study is a pioneering study that comparatively analyses the best HRM practices used by the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga.

Keywords Mixed methodologies, Human resource management, Strategic human resource management, Hotel sector, Contextual Paradigm, Samoa, Tonga

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

The majority of the global service industries are labour intensive industries (Ram, 2000; Cassell *et al.*, 2002; Edgar and Geare, 2005; Meijerink *et al.*, 2013). The hotel sector is not an exception to this. The performance of the hotel sector is determined by the quality its workforce (Gannon *et al.*, 2012; Harris *et al.*, 2012). Hotels can improve the quality of its workforce by implementing best human resource management (HRM) practices. Best HRM practices differ based on differences in internal and external environmental factors in different geographical settings (Cambré *et al.*, 2012; Richards *et al.*, 2012). Hotels need to implement best HRM practices to motivate employees to improve the quality of hotel service delivery. By implementing best HRM practices, right employees can be recruited, developed and retained (Chand, 2001, 2012; Bahn, 2012; Najeeb, 2013). Recently, the number of studies on best HRM practices has increased; however, there are few studies that have comparatively analysed the best



HRM practices in the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga. To date, none of the existing studies have investigated the best HRM practices in Samoa and Tonga.

The main aim of this paper is to comparatively analyse the best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga. In order to achieve this aim, this paper will investigate three sub-objectives:

- (1) investigate the best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Samoa;
- (2) investigate the best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Tonga; and
- (3) comparatively analyse the best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga.

This paper used one sample *t*-test to answer sub-objectives one and two. The one sample *t*-test for the HRM practices for Samoa and Tonga was compared with each other to answer sub-objective three.

This paper focuses on Samoa and Tonga for two reasons. First, Samoa and Tonga have unique internal and external environmental factors. Focusing on Samoa and Tonga allows the authors of this paper to examine the differences in best HRM practices used by the hotels sector of Samoa and Tonga (Naidu, 2012a). Second, existing studies have examined best HRM practices in different geographical settings. However, none of the existing studies have comparatively examined best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga. This paper provides a framework for comparatively analysing the best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga (Naidu, 2012b).

The structure of this paper is as follows. Section 2 presents the theoretical perspectives and literature review. Section 3 presents the research methodology. Section 4 presents the research findings. Section 5 discusses the research findings. Section 6 discusses the contributions of this paper to the existing literature. Section 7 presents the organisational implications of this paper. Section 8 presents the theoretical implications of this paper. Section 9 concludes the paper.

2. Theoretical perspectives and literature review

2.1 Theoretical perspectives on best HRM practices from the HRM and strategic human resource management (SHRM) literature

The global tourism sector is facing four concerns relating to managing employees. These four concerns are skill shortage (Naidu, 2012a, b), negative image of the hotel sector in managing employees (Naidu *et al.*, 2013), cultural barriers that may limit the employment of women (Naidu *et al.*, 2013), poor rewards and benefits structure (Naidu, 2012a, b) and lack of training and development of the employees (Naidu *et al.*, 2013). Hotels need to implement best HRM practices to address these four concerns.

There are six importance of implementing best HRM practices (Naidu and Chand, 2013). First, best HRM practices motivate employees to improve the quality of service delivery. Second, best HRM practices will sharpen the knowledge, talents and skills of employees. Third, best HRM practices will ensure that right employees are recruited and placed at the right jobs. Fourth, best HRM practices will provide equal employment opportunities for all. Fifth, best HRM practices will provide fair compensation and benefits for all. Sixth, best HRM practices will reduce employee stress, workload and improve the quality of work life for all. The theoretical perspectives used in this paper will be drawn from the literature related to HRM and SHRM.

In the literature related to HRM and SHRM, Dewettinck and Remue (2011) presented the Contextual Paradigm of HRM and SHRM. Citing Rousseau and Fried (2001),

Tsui (2004) and Shapiro *et al.* (2007), Dewettinck and his colleague suggested that best HRM practices differ based on differences in internal and external environmental factors present in different geographical areas. Dewettinck and Remue (2011) argued that each nation's cultural, political, legal, economic and social factors differ. The contextual approach to HRM and SHRM emphasises that country specific factors influence best HRM practices used by organisations. Dewettinck and Remue (2011) suggested that future researchers should comparatively analyse best HRM practices used in different geographical settings.

Similarly, Lengnick-Hall *et al.* (2009) also addressed the need for researchers to focus on best HRM practices in emerging economies. Lengnick-Hall *et al.* (2009) highlighted that it is important to examine best HRM practices in emerging economies in order to expand the stream of inquiry in HRM and SHRM. Lengnick-Hall *et al.* (2009) based their arguments on the Contextual Paradigm. Citing Jackson and Schuler (1995), Batt (2000), Martin-Alcazar *et al.* (2005) and Ngo *et al.* (2008), Lengnick-Hall and his colleagues emphasised that five internal environmental factors and six external environmental factors influence best HRM practices used by organisations in different geographical settings. These five internal environmental factors are technology, structure, size, life cycle stages and business strategy. These six external environmental factors are legal, social, political, labour market, industry characteristics and national culture.

Building onto the studies of Lengnick-Hall *et al.* (2009) and Dewettinck and Remue (2011), Dries (2013) emphasised that talent management practices used by organisations differ by geographical areas. Dries (2013) suggested that future researchers should examine talent management practices used by organisations in different geographical settings. Clinton and Guest (2013) suggested that there is lack of consensus in the existing literature on what HRM practices are best HRM practices. Clinton and his colleague based their arguments on the contingency perspective which suggests that best HRM practices are determined by third variable, also known as the contingency variable. Contingency variables are unique internal and external environmental variables that are present in different geographical settings (Clinton and Guest, 2013).

The next sub-section will review the literature on best HRM practices in the hotel sector of developed countries.

2.2 Best HRM practices in the hotels sector of developed countries, developing countries and small island developing states

Managing employees in the hotel sector continues to be a challenge for human resource managers (Baum, 2007). Despite the commitment by government agencies, tertiary institutions and hotels in implementing best HRM practices, there is still strong evidence that shows managing employees in the global hotel sector is becoming more complex. According to Maxwell *et al.* (2000), employers in the hotel sector of India are still discriminating the lower castes from employment. Similarly in the UK, hotel employers are discriminating the disabled people from employment. Due to differences in these contextual variables, best HRM practices that are used by the hotel sector of developed countries, developing countries and small island developing states differ (Baum, 2002). There is lack of consensus in the existing literature on what HRM practices constitute of best HRM practices (Finegold *et al.*, 2000; Devine *et al.*, 2007).

There are a number of studies conducted on best HRM practices in the hotel sector of European Union countries. Some authors have focused on European Union countries (see, for instance, Finegold *et al.*, 2000; Devine *et al.*, 2007) while other authors have focused on emerging European Union countries (see, for instance, Lucas *et al.*, 2004).

Finegold *et al.* (2000) found that best HRM practices in the hotel sector of the UK and Germany are career development and vocational education. Lucas *et al.* (2004) examined best HRM practices in the Slovak hotel sector. Lucas and his colleagues found that there are four best HRM practices in the Slovak hotel sector and these four best HRM practices are performance-related pay; diversified remuneration system; internal resource oriented recruitment and selection policy; and training and development. Maxwell and Watson (2006) emphasised that best HRM practices in the Hilton International's UK hotels are line manager involved in HRM activities. Devine *et al.* (2007) examined best HRM practices used by the hotel sector in Northern Ireland to manage migrant workers. Devine *et al.* (2007) and Boluk (2013) found that five best HRM practices in the hotel sector in Northern Ireland are equal employment opportunities; managing diversity; in-depth induction programmes; training and development; and socialisation activities. Lai *et al.* (2008) identified two best HRM practices in the hotel sector of the UK. These two best HRM practices are casual employment, and employment security. Gallardo *et al.* (2010), Wang *et al.* (2012) and Alonso-Almeida and Bremser (2013) found that best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Spain and Portugal are teamwork; job enrichment; job analysis and job design; training and development; and employee promotion.

Similarly, there are many studies conducted on best HRM practices in the hotel sector of North America (Finegold *et al.*, 2000) and South America (Sledge *et al.*, 2008). Finegold *et al.* (2000) found that best HRM practices in the hotel sector of the USA are career development and vocational education. Testa (2009), Xiao and O'Neill (2010), Dawson *et al.* (2012) and Sourouklis and Tsagdis (2013) emphasised that best HRM practice in the hotel sector of the USA is managing diversity. Sledge *et al.* (2008) drew upon Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of motivation to examine best HRM practices in Brazil's hotel sector. Sledge *et al.* (2008) found that four best HRM practices in Brazil's hotel sector are training and development, good working conditions, fair compensation system and employment security.

There are few authors that have examined best HRM practices in the hotel sector of India (Chand, 2010; Chand and Katou, 2007). Chand (2010) and Chand and Katou (2007) drew upon the Universalistic Perspective, Contingency Perspective and Configurational Perspective to examine best HRM practices that improve firm performance in the Indian hotel sector. Chand (2010) and Chand and Katou (2007) found that there are 12 best HRM practices in the hotel sector of India. These 12 best HRM practices are career planning; harmonised terms and conditions; multi-skilling and experience; formal manpower planning; cross-cultural job design; flexible job descriptions; formal induction; need-based training and development; right staff at the right place of service; use of attitudes survey; social appreciation and recognition; and staff informed about the company's performance. Cooke and Saini (2010) found that best HRM practice in the hotel sector of India is managing cultural diversity. Namasivayam and Zhao (2007), Guchait and Cho (2010) and Kumar and Kumar (2013) found that best HRM practice in the hotel sector of India are quality of work life managements.

The transition of the Chinese economy from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented economy has influenced the HRM practices used by the hotel sector of China. Leung *et al.* (2001) examined best HRM practices in joint venture hotels in China. Leung and his colleagues found that fairness in the pay system between expatriates and locals is a best HRM practice used by the joint venture hotels in China. Zhang and Wu (2004) used hotel perspective, travel perspective and university perspective to

examine best HRM practices in the hotel sector of China. Zhang and Wu (2004), Qiu and Lam (2004) and Kong *et al.* (2011) identified three best HRM practices in the hotel sector of China and these are training and development; proper recruitment and selection; and competitive salary and benefits package. Liu and Wall (2005), Kong and Baum (2006), Hai-yan and Baum (2006) and Mak (2008) found that best HRM practice in the hotel sector of China is training and development. Liu and Wall (2005) argued that human resource development was neglected as the Chinese economy was transiting from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented economy. Gu *et al.* (2012), Kong *et al.* (2012) and Gross *et al.* (2013) found that career planning and development is a best HRM practice in the hotel sector of China.

In the context of small island developing states, few studies have examined best HRM practices in the hotel sector (see for instance, Alleyne *et al.*, 2006a, b). Alleyne *et al.* (2006a, b) found that there are five best HRM practices in the Barbados hotels. These five best HRM practices are recruitment and selection; training and development; employee consultation; communication; and job design. Cunha and Cunha (2004) emphasised that best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Cuba are staffing, employee incentives, career development and performance management. Jayawardena (2002, 2003) and Henry *et al.* (2004) found that five best HRM practices in the hotel sector on Caribbean Islands are equal employment opportunity; recognition of trade unions; job enrichment; fair compensation package and incentives; and training and development. Adam and Urquhart (2009) used the Human Capital theory and Social Capital theory to examine best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Maldives. Adam and his colleague found that two best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Maldives are training and development and teamwork. Chen *et al.* (2012) and Johnson and Bartlett (2013) found that best HRM practice in the hotel sector of Jamaica is training and development.

The HRM and SHRM literature on best HRM practices suggest that best HRM practices differ due to differences in internal and external environmental factors present in different geographical settings. Existing studies have explored best HRM practices in the hotels sector of the UK (Lai *et al.*, 2008), Germany (Finegold *et al.*, 2000), Slovak (Lucas *et al.*, 2004), Northern Ireland (Devine *et al.*, 2007), Spain (Alonso-Almeida and Bremser, 2013), Portugal (Alonso-Almeida and Bremser, 2013), USA (Sourouklis and Tsagdis, 2013), Brazil (Sledge *et al.*, 2008), India (Chand, 2010; Chand and Katou, 2007), China (Gross *et al.*, 2013), Barbados (Alleyne *et al.*, 2006a, b), Cuba (Cunha and Cunha, 2004), Maldives (Adam and Urquhart, 2009) and Jamaica (Johnson and Bartlett, 2013). However, none of the existing studies have examined best HRM practices in the hotels sector of Samoa and Tonga.

The main aim of this paper is to comparatively analyse the best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga. There are four reasons for comparatively analysing best HRM practices used by the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga. First, Samoa and Tonga have unique internal and external environmental factors that influence the best HRM practices used by the hotel sector. Studying best HRM practices used by the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga provide a means of investigating different best HRM practices used by the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga. Second, none of the existing studies have examined best HRM practices used by the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga. This study is a pioneering study that comparatively analyses the best HRM practices used by the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga.

The next section will present the research methodology.

3. Research methodology

The target population for this paper were human resource managers in the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga. According to the South Pacific Tourism Organisation database, there are 92 hotels in Samoa and 83 hotels in Tonga. A total of 73 hotels (80 per cent) were randomly selected from Samoa and 66 hotels (80 per cent) were randomly selected from Tonga to be studied. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 73 hotels in Samoa and 66 hotels in Tonga. Out of the 73 self-administered questionnaires that were distributed in Samoa, 58 usable questionnaires were returned resulting in a response rate of 79 per cent. In the case of Tonga, out of the 66 self-administered questionnaires that were distributed, 51 usable questionnaires were returned resulting in a response rate of 77 per cent.

Out of the 58 respondents in Samoa, 41 (70 per cent) human resource managers were males and 17 (30 per cent) were females. All the respondents were Samoans. In the case of Tonga, out of the 51 respondents, 43 (85 per cent) human resource managers were males and 8 (15 per cent) were females. The majority of the hotels in Samoa (76 per cent) and Tonga (83 per cent) have been in business for one to ten years. Similarly, the majority of the human resource managers in Samoa (89 per cent) and Tonga (82 per cent) have been in the current position for one to ten years. The majority of the human resource managers in Samoa (80 per cent) and Tonga (75 per cent) had formal education for 11 years. The next sub-section will present the variables used in this study.

3.1 Measurement of variables used in this study

The variables measured in this study were HRM practices. Different authors have measured HRM practices differently. This paper adopts the measures of HRM practices used by the studies conducted by Finegold *et al.* (2000), Lucas *et al.* (2004), Alleyne *et al.* (2006a, b), Devine *et al.* (2007), Lai *et al.* (2008), Gallardo *et al.* (2010), Xiao and O'Neill (2010), Chand (2010), Chand and Katou (2007), Dawson *et al.* (2012), Wang *et al.* (2012), Alonso-Almeida and Bremser (2013), Sourouklis and Tsagdis (2013), Boluk (2013) and Gross *et al.* (2013).

A three-step procedure was used to measure the HRM practices. First, six categories of HRM practices were used from the studies conducted by Chand (2010) and Chand and Katou (2007). These six categories of HRM practices were recruitment and selection; human resource planning; job analysis and job design; training and development; employee consultation and cooperation; and employee compensation.

Second, the HRM practices used by Finegold *et al.* (2000), Lucas *et al.* (2004), Alleyne *et al.* (2006a, b), Devine *et al.* (2007), Lai *et al.* (2008), Gallardo *et al.* (2010), Xiao and O'Neill (2010), Chand (2010), Chand and Katou (2007), Dawson *et al.* (2012), Wang *et al.* (2012), Alonso-Almeida and Bremser (2013), Sourouklis and Tsagdis (2013), Boluk (2013), Gross *et al.* (2013) were categorised under the six categories of HRM practices used by Chand (2010), Chand and Katou (2007). In total, 11 items were categorised under recruitment and selection practices and these 11 items were internal recruitment; external recruitment; internal promotion norm; employment test in selection; equal employment opportunities; collaborative decision on terms and conditions of employment; merit-based recruitment; realistic job previews in recruitment and selection; talent- and experienced-based recruitment; behavioural profiling in recruitment and selection; and seasonal recruitment. Four items were categorised under human resource planning practices and these four items were formal and structured manpower planning; collaboration and consultation with the departments; career advancement practices; and

work culture and ethics. Nine items were categorised under job analysis and job design practices and these nine items were team cohesiveness, flexibility in job design, focusing on developing a learning organisation, ethnic diversity in job design, rotation of tasks and activities, job enrichment, job enlargement, flexible job descriptions and employee empowerment. Four items were categorised under training and development practices and these four items were training needs analysis, employee induction, in-house training and development and out-house training and development. Five items were categorised under employee consultation and cooperation practices and these five items were collaboratively setting the goals and objectives of the organisation; right staff at the right place of service; employee involvement in quality control circles; using attitudes survey to control quality; and team briefing. Five items were categorised under employee compensation practices and these five items were merit-based pay; objective performance appraisal; staffs fully informed about the economic condition of the hotel; financial incentives and bonuses for good performance; and appreciation and recognition of good performance.

Third, the respondents were asked to rank each of the HRM practices based on how it is implemented in the hotel. Following the studies conducted by Alleyne *et al.* (2006a, b), Chand (2010) and Chand and Katou (2007), each HRM practice was measured on a six-point Likert scale whereby (1) represented does not exist and (6) represented very high. The Cronbach's α of all the HRM practices is more than 0.7 thus indicating that the scale used to measure HRM practices were internally consistent.

The next sub-section will discuss the statistical analysis methods used in this study.

3.2 Statistical analysis methods used in this study

The Statistical Package for Social Science software was used for analysing the data of this paper. To answer sub-objective one and sub-objective two, one sample *t*-test was calculated for the HRM practices. To answer sub-objective three, one sample *t*-test for Samoa and Tonga were compared. Before the one sample *t*-test for Samoa and Tonga were calculated, means, standard deviations and Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated for six categories of HRM practices. These six categories of HRM practices were recruitment and selection practices; human resource planning; job analysis and job design; training and development; employee consultation and cooperation; and employee compensation. There are two advantages of using one sample *t*-test as a statistical analysis method in this study. First, one sample *t*-test enabled the authors of this paper to compare the sample statistics with the population mean (Weinberg and Abramowitz, 2008). Second, one sample *t*-test is a simple statistical analysis that is easier to analyse and interpret (Naidu and Chand, 2013).

The next sub-section will present the results of this paper.

4. Results

4.1 Means, standard deviation and Pearson's correlation coefficients of the six categories of HRM practices

This sub-section presents the means, standard deviation and Pearson's correlation coefficients of the six categories of HRM practices. Table I shows the means, standard deviation and Pearson's correlation coefficients of the six categories of HRM practices for the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga. Column two shows the mean values for the HRM practices and column three shows the standard deviation for the HRM practices. Column 5-10 shows Pearson's correlation coefficients, significant two-tailed statistics

Six categories of HRM practices	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Recruitment and selection</i>								
Pearson correlation			1					
Sig. (2-tailed)								
<i>n</i>	4.5833	0.88055	109					
<i>Human resource planning</i>								
Pearson correlation			0.777*					
Sig. (2-tailed)			0.000					
<i>n</i>	4.7500	0.79400	109					
<i>Job analysis and job design</i>								
Pearson correlation			0.743*	0.712*				
Sig. (2-tailed)			0.000	0.000				
<i>n</i>	4.5833	0.65386	109	109				
<i>Training and development</i>								
Pearson correlation			0.766*	0.838*	0.632*			
Sig. (2-tailed)			0.000	0.000	0.001			
<i>n</i>	4.7917	0.83297	109	109	109			
<i>Employee consultation and cooperation</i>								
Pearson correlation			0.466*	0.675*	0.627*	0.733*	1	
Sig. (2-tailed)			0.022	0.000	0.001	0.000		
<i>n</i>	4.7083	0.75060	109	109	109	109	109	
<i>Employee compensation</i>								
Pearson correlation			0.653*	0.793*	0.461*	0.838*	0.748*	1
Sig. (2-tailed)			0.001	0.000	0.024	0.000	0.000	
<i>n</i>	4.7500	0.79400	109	109	109	109	109	109

Note: *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed)

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Table I. Mean, standard deviation and Pearson's correlation coefficients of the six categories of HRM practices

and the sample size. The mean values for the six categories of HRM practices are >4.5. This indicates that all the six categories of HRM practices are implemented in the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga.

The Pearson's correlation coefficients are positive and significant at $p < 0.05$ (see columns five, six, seven, eight, nine and ten). This indicates that the data is free from the problem of multicollinearity. The Pearson's correlation coefficients indicate two important aspects of managing human resources in the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga. First, HRM practices in the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga are interdependent on each other. Second, the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga can strengthen all HRM practices by investing in a single HRM practice. For instance, by investing in employee consultation and cooperation's practices, the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga will be able to simultaneously strengthen recruitment and selection practices, job analysis and job design practices, training and development practices and employee compensation practices.

The one sample *t*-test values for the HRM practices in Samoa and Tonga is given in Table II. Columns three and four present the *t*-values and significance levels of the HRM practices, respectively. The *t*-values of the six categories of HRM practices are positive as expected and statistically significant at 0.05 or better. The HRM practices that are statistically significant are best HRM practices.

In the case of Samoa, there are 28 best HRM practices. These 28 best HRM practices are internal recruitment ($t = 13.335$; $p < 0.001$); internal promotion norm ($t = 14.936$; $p < 0.001$); equal employment opportunities ($t = 14.112$; $p < 0.05$); collaborative decision

No.	Variable	<i>t</i> -values (Samoa)	<i>t</i> -values (Tonga)
<i>I Recruitment and selection</i>			
1	Internal recruitment	13.335***	10.795*
2	External recruitment	12.221	7.0539
3	Internal promotion norm	14.936***	10.795**
4	Employment test in selection	17.234	17.234
5	Equal employment opportunities	14.112*	12.522*
6	Collaborative decision on terms and conditions of employment	14.317*	12.845
7	Merit-based recruitment	13.041*	8.042*
8	Realistic job previews in recruitment and selection	14.318	12.845
9	Talent- and experienced-based recruitment	15.978***	16.258*
10	Behavioural profiling in recruitment and selection	12.173	19.282
11	Seasonal recruitment	14.094**	12.410*
<i>II Human resource planning</i>			
1	Formal and structured manpower planning	13.470*	9.931
2	Collaboration between all the departments	14.375*	12.539
3	Career advancement practices	14.182	16.416
4	Work culture and ethics	12.345***	17.234**
<i>III Job analysis and job design</i>			
1	Teamwork cohesiveness	14.481***	16.416*
2	Flexibility in job design	17.234**	16.416
3	Focusing on developing a learning organisation	11.222*	16.416
4	Ethnic diversity in job design	10.135	17.234
5	Rotation of tasks and activities	13.618***	16.416*
6	Job enrichment	14.734	16.416
7	Job enlargement	16.669**	10.795
8	Flexible job descriptions	13.889**	17.234
9	Employee empowerment	14.335*	16.775
<i>IV Training and development</i>			
1	Training needs analysis	14.041*	10.795
2	Employee induction	13.332***	16.502
3	In-house training and development	14.153***	12.845*
4	Outhouse training and development	13.254	8.042
<i>V Employee consultation and cooperation</i>			
1	Collaboratively setting the goals and objectives of the organisation	16.417***	16.258
2	Right staff at the right place of service	13.113*	11.331*
3	Employee involvement in quality circles	17.145**	16.502
4	Using attitudes survey to control quality	14.186	12.539
5	Team briefing	13.173**	17.234*
<i>VI Employee compensation</i>			
1	Merit-based pay	16.317***	17.234*
2	Objective performance appraisal	13.871*	12.845
3	Staffs fully informed about the economic condition of the hotel	13.943	16.258
4	Financial incentives and bonuses for good performance	14.494***	17.982*
5	Appreciation and recognition of good performance	15.258***	17.234*

Table II.
One sample *t*-test values
for the HRM practices

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

on terms and conditions of employment ($t = 14.317$; $p < 0.05$); merit-based recruitment ($t = 13.041$; $p < 0.05$); talent- and experienced-based recruitment ($t = 15.978$; $p < 0.001$); seasonal recruitment ($t = 14.094$; $p < 0.01$); formal and structured manpower planning ($t = 13.470$; $p < 0.05$); collaboration between all the departments ($t = 14.375$; $p < 0.05$); work culture and ethics ($t = 12.345$; $p < 0.001$); team cohesiveness ($t = 14.481$;

$p < 0.001$); flexibility in job design ($t = 17.234$; $p < 0.01$); focusing on developing a learning organisation ($t = 11.222$; $p < 0.05$); rotation of tasks and activities ($t = 13.618$; $p < 0.001$); job enlargement ($t = 16.669$; $p < 0.01$); flexible job descriptions ($t = 13.889$; $p < 0.01$); employee empowerment ($t = 14.335$; $p < 0.05$); training needs analysis ($t = 14.041$; $p < 0.05$); employee induction ($t = 13.332$; $p < 0.001$); in-house training and development ($t = 14.153$; $p < 0.001$); collaboratively setting the goals and objectives of the organisation ($t = 16.417$; $p < 0.001$); right staff at the right place of service ($t = 13.113$; $p < 0.05$); employee involvement in quality circles ($t = 17.145$; $p < 0.01$); team briefing ($t = 13.173$; $p < 0.05$); merit-based pay ($t = 16.317$; $p < 0.001$); objective performance appraisal ($t = 13.871$; $p < 0.05$); financial incentives and bonuses for good performance ($t = 14.494$; $p < 0.001$); and appreciation and recognition of good performance ($t = 15.258$; $p < 0.001$).

In the case of Tonga, the results show that there are 15 best HRM practices. These 15 best HRM practices are internal recruitment ($t = 10.795$; $p < 0.05$); internal promotion norm ($t = 10.795$; $p < 0.01$); equal employment opportunities ($t = 12.522$; $p < 0.05$); merit-based recruitment ($t = 8.042$; $p < 0.05$); talent- and experienced-based recruitment ($t = 16.258$; $p < 0.05$); seasonal recruitment ($t = 12.410$; $p < 0.05$); work culture and ethics ($t = 17.234$; $p < 0.01$); teamwork cohesiveness ($t = 16.416$; $p < 0.05$); rotation of tasks and activities ($t = 16.416$; $p < 0.05$); in-house training and development ($t = 12.845$; $p < 0.05$); right staff at the right place of service ($t = 11.331$; $p < 0.05$); team briefing ($t = 17.234$; $p < 0.05$); merit-based pay ($t = 17.234$; $p < 0.05$); financial incentives and bonuses for good performance ($t = 17.982$; $p < 0.05$); and appreciation and recognition of good performance ($t = 17.234$; $p < 0.05$).

The next sub-section will discuss the empirical results of this paper.

5. Discussions

The main aim of this paper is to comparatively analyse the best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga. Existing studies on best HRM practices in the hotel sector of the UK (Lai *et al.*, 2008), Germany (Finegold *et al.*, 2000), Slovak (Lucas *et al.*, 2004), Northern Ireland (Devine *et al.*, 2007), Spain (Alonso-Almeida and Bremser, 2013), Portugal (Alonso-Almeida and Bremser, 2013), USA (Sourouklis and Tsagdis, 2013), Brazil (Sledge *et al.*, 2008), India (Chand, 2010; Chand and Katou, 2007), China (Gross *et al.*, 2013), Barbados (Alleyne *et al.*, 2006a, b), Cuba (Cunha and Cunha, 2004) and Jamaica (Johnson and Bartlett, 2013) found that best HRM practices differ based on differences in internal and external environmental factors present in different geographical areas. These studies argued that each nation's cultural, political, legal, economic and social factors are different. The finding of this paper expands the existing studies on the Contextual Paradigm. The Contextual Paradigm of HRM and SHRM emphasises that country specific factors influence the best HRM practices used by organisations. The findings of this paper expand the existing state of evidence on best HRM practices in different geographical settings.

Similar to the findings of the existing studies, the findings of this paper support the assumptions of the Contextual Paradigm. The findings of this paper show that there are 28 best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Samoa whereas there are 15 best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Tonga. There are two reasons for the differences in best HRM practices used by the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga. First, Samoa has enjoyed political stability since its independence in 1960s. The legal environment of Samoa is slowly developing. Samoa has a political and legal environment that supports the growth of the hotel sector. Unlike Samoa, Tonga has faced periods of political

instability that has hindered the growth of the hotel sector (Naidu *et al.*, 2013; Naidu and Chand, 2013). Second, the hotel sector of Samoa is more developed than the hotel sector of Tonga (Naidu *et al.*, 2013; Naidu and Chand, 2013).

The findings of this paper can be compared with the existing studies conducted on best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Barbados (Alleyne *et al.*, 2006a, b), Cuba (Cunha and Cunha, 2004), Caribbean Islands (Jayawardena, 2002, 2003), Maldives (Adam and Urquhart, 2009) and Jamaica (Chen *et al.*, 2012; Johnson and Bartlett, 2013). According to Alleyne *et al.* (2006a, b), there are five best HRM practices in the Barbados hotel sector. These five best HRM practices are recruitment and selection; training and development; employee consultation; communication; and job design. The findings of this paper show that these five best HRM practices are also best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Samoa. However, in the case of Tonga, two best HRM practices discussed by Alleyne *et al.* (2006a, b) are not best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Tonga. These two best HRM practices are employee consultation and communication. There are two reasons for this. First, the majority of the hotels in Tonga are owned and operated by sole traders. The sole traders usually prefer to make unilateral decisions without consulting the employees. Second, the majority of the hotels in Tonga are not as large as the hotels in Samoa and Barbados. The owners of the hotel sector of Tonga perceive that committing resources on employee consultation and cooperation will be a waste of the hotels resources.

The findings of this paper are similar to the findings of Cunha and Cunha (2004). Cunha and Cunha (2004) found that there are four best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Cuba. These four best HRM practices are staffing, employee incentives, career development and performance management. Similar to the case of Cuba, this paper found that three out of four best HRM practices discussed by Cunha and Cunha (2004) are also best HRM practices in the hotel sector in Samoa. This paper also found that two out of four best HRM practices discussed by Cunha and Cunha (2004) are also best HRM practices in Tonga. Unlike the case of Cuba, the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga focuses less on career development and performance management practices. There are two reasons for this. First, the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga do not have qualified human resource managers to implement performance management practices. Second, the hotel owners of Samoa and Tonga perceive that committing resources on career advancement practices will be a waste of the hotels resources.

The findings of this paper are also similar to the findings of the studies conducted by Jayawardena (2002, 2003) and Henry *et al.* (2004) on best HRM practices in the hotel sector of the Caribbean Islands. These studies found that five best HRM practices in the hotel sector of the Caribbean Islands are equal employment opportunity; recognition of trade unions; job enrichment; fair compensation package and incentives; and training and development. Similar to the case of the Caribbean Islands, this paper found that three out of five best HRM practices discussed by Jayawardena (2002, 2003) and Henry *et al.* (2004) are best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga. Unlike the hotel sector of the Caribbean Islands, the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga focuses less on recognition of trade unions and job enrichment practices. There are two reasons for this. First, trade unions are not recognised by the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga. The employment law in Samoa and Tonga are outdated and needs to be updated. Currently, there is lack of provision for recognition of trade unions in the employment law of Samoa and Tonga. Second, the hotel owners of Samoa and Tonga perceive that committing resources on job enrichment practices will be a waste of the hotels resources.

The findings of this paper are also similar to the studies conducted by Chen *et al.* (2012) and Johnson and Bartlett (2013) on best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Jamaica. Similar to the case of Jamaica, training and development practices are best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga.

The next sub-section will present the contributions of this study to the existing literature.

6. Contributions of this study to the existing literature

The findings of this paper contribute to the existing literature in three ways. First, the findings of this paper provide both theoretical and empirical support for the Contextual Paradigm of HRM and SHRM. Parallel to the arguments of the Contextual Paradigm, the findings of this paper show that best HRM practices differ based on differences in internal and external environmental factors present in different geographical areas. Second, the findings of this paper not only contribute to HRM and SHRM literature but also to the field of research on organisational behaviour and personnel psychology. Third, existing studies have explored best HRM practices in the hotel sector of the UK (Lai *et al.*, 2008), Germany (Finegold *et al.*, 2000), Slovak (Lucas *et al.*, 2004), Northern Ireland (Devine *et al.*, 2007), Spain (Alonso-Almeida and Bremser, 2013), Portugal (Alonso-Almeida and Bremser, 2013), USA (Sourouklis and Tsagdis, 2013), Brazil (Sledge *et al.*, 2008), India (Chand, 2010; Chand and Katou, 2007), China (Gross *et al.*, 2013), Barbados (Alleyne *et al.*, 2006a, b), Cuba (Cunha and Cunha, 2004), Maldives (Adam and Urquhart, 2009) and Jamaica (Johnson and Bartlett, 2013). However, none of the existing studies have examined best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga.

The next section will present the organisational implications.

7. Organisational implications

This paper has three organisational implications. This paper emphasises that best HRM practices differ based on differences in internal and external environmental factors present in different geographical settings. First, human resource managers should implement HRM practices that are sensitive to the culture of the locals. For instance, in Samoa and Tonga, gifts are given in the form of money or fine woven mats to the deceased employee's families. It is essential for human resource managers in Samoa and Tonga to incorporate these aspects of traditional culture into HRM practices. Second, both Samoa and Tonga have economies that are vulnerable from global economic shocks. Human resource managers need to analyse the economic situation before implementing HRM practices. In an economic crisis situation, human resource managers should implement those HRM practices that will maximise employee motivation and at the same time reduce the cost of managing employees. Third, currently the hotels sector of Samoa is not using ten HRM practices. These ten HRM practices are external recruitment, (2) employment test in recruitment, realistic job previews in recruitment and selection, behavioural profiling in recruitment and selection, career advancement practices, ethnic diversity in job design, job enrichment, out-house training and development, using attitudes survey to control quality and staffs fully informed about the economic condition of the hotel. The hotel sector of Tonga is not using 23 HRM practices. These 23 HRM practices are external recruitment; employment test in selection; collaborative decision on terms and conditions of employment; realistic job previews in recruitment and selection; behavioural profiling in recruitment and selection; formal and structured manpower

planning; collaboration between all the departments; career advancement practices; flexibility in job design; focusing on developing a learning organisation; ethnic diversity in job design; job enrichment; job enlargement; flexible job descriptions; employee empowerment; training needs analysis; employee induction; out-house training and development; collaboratively setting the goals and objectives of the organisation; employee involvement in quality control circles; using attitudes survey to control quality; objective performance appraisal; and staffs fully informed about the economic condition of the hotel. The human resource managers in the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga should use these HRM practices. Using these HRM practices will further enhance employee motivation and commitment.

The next section will present the theoretical implications.

8. Theoretical implications

The findings of this paper have implications for the Contextual Paradigm of HRM and SHRM. The findings of this paper show that best HRM practices differ based on differences in internal and external environmental factors present in different geographical areas. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of other studies conducted in small island developing states, such as, best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Barbados (Alleyne *et al.*, 2006a,b), Cuba (Cunha and Cunha, 2004), Caribbean Islands (Jayawardena, 2002, 2003), Maldives (Adam and Urquhart, 2009) and Jamaica (Chen *et al.*, 2012; Johnson and Bartlett, 2013). The results of this paper go beyond the existing studies by comparatively analysing the best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga.

The findings of this study help to extend the existing studies conducted by Rousseau and Fried (2001), Tsui (2004), Shapiro *et al.* (2007) and Dewettinck and Remue (2011) in two ways. First, studies conducted by Rousseau and Fried (2001), Tsui (2004), Shapiro *et al.* (2007) and Dewettinck and Remue (2011) suggested that future researchers should examine best HRM practices in different geographical settings. This study has extended these studies by examining best HRM practices used by the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga. None of the existing studies have examined best HRM practices used by the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga. This study is a pioneering study that comparatively analyses the best HRM practices used by the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga. Second, the findings of this study are consistent with the arguments of the existing studies conducted by Rousseau and Fried (2001), Tsui (2004), Shapiro *et al.* (2007) and Dewettinck and Remue (2011). This study found that best HRM practices differ based on differences in internal and external environmental factors present in different geographical areas. The cultural, political, legal, economic and social factors in Samoa are different from Tonga.

The next sub-section will present the conclusion of this paper.

9. Conclusion

This study comparatively analysed best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga. The findings of this study showed that there are 28 best HRM practices in Samoa and 15 best HRM practices in Tonga. This study found that best HRM practices differ based on differences in internal and external environmental factors present in different geographical areas. The findings of this paper support the assumptions of the Contextual Paradigm. The findings of this study help to extend the existing studies conducted by Rousseau and Fried (2001), Tsui (2004), Shapiro *et al.* (2007) and Dewettinck and Remue (2011).

There are three limitations of this study. First, this study is based on a single sector of Samoa and Tonga. A single sector study limits the generalisations that can be made across different sectors in Samoa and Tonga. Second, this study is based on two Pacific Island countries. This limits the generalisations of the research findings that can be made for all the Pacific Island countries. Third, this study was a single period study. In this study, the data were collected on best HRM practices in the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga for a single time period. This limited the authors of this paper from examining how best HRM practices used by the hotel sector of Samoa and Tonga have changed in the last decade.

This study has opened new paths for future researchers in three ways. First, future researchers should conduct similar studies in other sectors of Samoa and Tonga and compare the findings of their studies with the findings of this study. Second, this study should be repeated in other Pacific Island countries so that research findings can be generalised for the Pacific Island countries. Further, future researchers should examine how internal and external environmental factors influence HRM practices used in different geographical settings in the Pacific Island countries. Third, future researchers should conduct this study by using longitudinal research design. Longitudinal research design will enable future researchers to examine how best HRM practices used by the hotel sector of the Pacific Island countries have changed in the last decade.

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Further reading

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