
**Strategic Human Resource Management in Women's Entrepreneurship:
Challenges, Processes, and Recommendations**

¹Fahri Özsungur

*Mersin University**

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the strategic human resource management (SHRM) challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. Conducted with 142 women entrepreneurs in the manufacturing and service sectors in Adana, Turkey, this research adopts the phenomenology method, a qualitative approach. The study explores SHRM challenges across ten key areas: sustainable competitive advantage, organizational culture and climate, corporate social responsibility, teamwork, career planning and development, conflict management, continuous development and improvement, personal rights management, occupational health and safety, and leadership and management impact. Main findings reveal that women entrepreneurs emphasize the importance of communication, coordination, harmony, empathy, justice, equality, and sustainability in addressing SHRM challenges. The study highlights the influence of demographic factors such as age, education, experience, marital status, and sector on the adoption and implementation of SHRM practices. Additionally, the research uncovers the significant role of spousal influence on less experienced women entrepreneurs. This study contributes to the literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of SHRM challenges specific to women entrepreneurs and offering practical recommendations for policy makers and practitioners to enhance SHRM practices. It underscores the necessity for tailored SHRM strategies to support the unique needs of women entrepreneurs and promote sustainable business growth.

Keywords *Strategic human resource management, women entrepreneur, entrepreneurship, corporate social responsibility.*

Introduction

Human resource management (HRM) is a fundamental aspect of societal dynamics, rooted in the social nature of humanity (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). The management of human resources, which shape societal dynamics, has evolved since ancient times, adapting to economic and technological advancements while maintaining its significance (Stewart & Brown, 2019; Berman et al., 2019). In contemporary settings, human resources are essential not only for traditional roles but also for the maintenance and management of robotic services, highlighting their ongoing importance (Libert, Mosconi, & Cadieux, 2020; Morgeson, Brannick, & Levine, 2019). This necessity is amplified by the continuous growth of businesses and the emergence of new enterprises (Boon, Den Hartog, & Lepak, 2019).

¹ <https://doi.org/10.51659/josi.24.223>

In both the service and production sectors, effective human resource management is crucial for fostering social change within organizations (Wang et al., 2019). The interactions among employees generate energy and synergy, contributing significantly to organizational success (Chaudhry & Loewenstein, 2019). However, HRM challenges can lead to substantial organizational losses. Competitive environments, where employees are given equal rights, can result in internal chaos as individuals vie for superiority (Cropanzano et al., 2017). This situation necessitates thorough risk/cost and benefit analyses, as well as the implementation of cost-benefit strategies (Birtch, Chiang, & Van Esch, 2016). The theory of social exchange elucidates this by balancing the outcomes of human relations arising from mutual conflicts of interest (Wu & Lee, 2017). Organizational relationships are often terminated when the costs outweigh the benefits, which can lead to significant losses impacting larger networks such as customers, suppliers, and stakeholders (Zhang et al., 2018; Huang et al., 2016). Consequently, strategic management of human resources is imperative to mitigate these negative outcomes, aligning with the principles of social exchange theory.

Strategic human resource management (SHRM) emerged to provide a systematic and holistic approach to HRM, addressing the limitations of traditional practices (Gupta, 2020). Traditional HRM often fails to contribute comprehensively to organizational benefits, as it tends to detach from the overall business strategy (Duke & Udono, 2012; Daniels, 2020). In contrast, SHRM integrates HR activities with the organization's mission, focusing on the total success of the enterprise and involving employees at all levels (Hamid, Muzamil, & Shah, 2020). This approach requires meticulous planning and alignment of HR strategies with organizational goals, closely monitoring internal and external environments to ensure effective human resource utilization (Alomari, 2020). The primary objective of SHRM is to achieve long-term organizational goals and success, with entrepreneurs playing a pivotal role in this process (Soemantri, 2019; Sato, Kobayashi, & Shirasaka, 2020).

Entrepreneurs are instrumental in creating new businesses and processes that benefit society (Omri, 2018; Parker, 2018). However, they often face HRM challenges, including efficient resource utilization, neutralizing the negative outcomes of cost-benefit analyses, and maximizing benefits from interactions (Rutherford, Buller, & McMullen, 2003). Key issues include developing and systematizing HRM strategies and aligning them with business strategies (Delery & Gupta, 2016; Han et al., 2019). Addressing these challenges is crucial for enhancing HRM effectiveness in entrepreneurship, particularly in the context of women's entrepreneurship.

Managing human resources is vital for fostering women's entrepreneurship, a critical yet under-researched area in diversity management, social exchange, and HRM (Jones, Pringle, & Shepherd, 2000; Niethammer, 2013; Levent, Masurel, & Nijkamp, 2003; Brush, 2006). This study aims to address SHRM challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, contributing to the broader fields of management, business, HRM, and entrepreneurship.

Literature Review

A comprehensive literature review on strategic human resource management (SHRM) reveals the evolution and significance of HRM practices in contemporary organizations. Armstrong and Taylor (2020) highlight that HRM is an inherent aspect of human society, evolving through various economic and technological phases. The role of HRM has expanded to include not only traditional tasks but also the management of robotic systems, as discussed by Libert, Mosconi, and Cadieux (2020), and Morgeson, Brannick, and Levine (2019).

Boon, Den Hartog, and Lepak (2019) emphasize the growing necessity of HRM in the development of businesses and new enterprises. The energy and synergy generated by human interactions within organizations significantly contribute to organizational success, as noted by Chaudhry and Loewenstein (2019). However, the competitive environment within

organizations can lead to internal conflicts and potential chaos, necessitating effective HRM strategies (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Birtch, Chiang, & Van Esch, 2016).

The theory of social exchange, as explained by Wu and Lee (2017), provides a framework for understanding the balance of human relations in organizational contexts. Zhang et al. (2018) and Huang et al. (2016) discuss the implications of cost-benefit analyses in HRM, highlighting the importance of strategic management to mitigate negative outcomes.

SHRM, as a systematic approach to HRM, integrates HR activities with organizational goals, focusing on long-term success (Gupta, 2020; Hamid, Muzamil, & Shah, 2020). The alignment of HR strategies with business strategies is crucial, as traditional HRM often fails to contribute comprehensively to organizational benefits (Duke & Udon, 2012; Daniels, 2020).

Entrepreneurs play a critical role in SHRM by creating businesses and processes that benefit society (Omri, 2018; Parker, 2018). However, they face significant HRM challenges, including resource utilization and strategy alignment (Rutherford, Buller, & McMullen, 2003; Delery & Gupta, 2016; Han et al., 2019).

Women's entrepreneurship is an emerging area of interest within SHRM, with significant implications for diversity management and social exchange (Jones, Pringle, & Shepherd, 2000; Niethammer, 2013; Levent, Masurel, & Nijkamp, 2003; Brush, 2006).

Methodology

Data Collection

The sample comprised women entrepreneurs affiliated with the Adana Chamber of Commerce and the Adana Chamber of Industry. These entrepreneurs, operating in the production and service sectors, were identified as affiliated with the chamber of commerce and industry. To reach these women, and in accordance with the Law on Protection of Personal Data, contact was made with those who had provided access to their email addresses and phone numbers. Out of 450 women entrepreneurs contacted, 49 declined to participate in the questionnaire, leaving 401 participants.

The sample initially comprised 401 women entrepreneurs, but the study proceeded with only those who responded affirmatively to questions Q1, Q2, Q3, and Q4 ($n = 142$). This criterion ensured that only participants who indicated that their Human Resources (HR) management was executed in a separate department (Q1), had established a strategy for HR management (Q2), executed this strategy in alignment with the business strategy (Q3), and considered HR management indispensable for their business (Q4) were included in the final analysis. This selection process was critical because the study aimed to investigate strategic human resource management (SHRM) practices. Participants who did not meet these criteria were likely not implementing SHRM practices, and their inclusion could have compromised the relevance and validity of the findings. By focusing on respondents who demonstrated engagement with SHRM, the study ensured that the data collected were pertinent to understanding the integration and execution of HR strategies within their enterprises (Maxwell, 1996; Walcott, 1994). Additionally, all participants answered question (d) of Q5. Consequently, the study was conducted with 142 women entrepreneurs operating in the manufacturing and service sectors in Adana, Turkey.

The study was carried out by three interviewers. Participants were informed in advance that participation was voluntary, they could withdraw at any stage, and their personal data and responses would remain confidential. A consent form providing information about the study was presented to and signed by the participants. The questionnaire avoided leading questions or any that might compromise the objectivity of the responses.

Measurements

Qualitative Research Method

The research adopted the phenomenology method, one of the qualitative research methods. Phenomenology allows for an in-depth exploration of social and psychological reasons and is a valuable tool in investigating the underlying causes of social events. The following stages were followed in this method:

1. Formulating the research question, determining research tools, and collecting data.
2. Identifying the main subject related to the research question.
3. Determining the relationships of the investigated case, social events, and individual experiences, and systematically processing the collected data.
4. Theorizing the subject based on the obtained information (Blinded for review).

The questionnaire comprised demographic information and eight predefined questions. The literature on SHRM was reviewed in creating these questions. The scales titled "Strategic Human Resource Management Index" (Devanna et al., 1982), "HR Practices" (Ngo, Turban, Lau, and Lui, 1998), and "SHRM Inventory" (Azmi, 2010) inspired the questionnaire. Additionally, an extensive literature review contributed to the development of the questions. Questions Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, and Q5 were designed to determine the study sample's characteristics of SHRM. Q6, Q7, and Q8 were directed to the participants to identify problems related to SHRM (Table 1).

Table 1. The study questions

Order	Questions	Main Themes
DV1	Entrepreneurship Experience: a) 1-3 years b) 4-6 years c) 7-9 years d) 10 years and over	DI
DV2	Age: a) 20-28 b) 29-37 c) 38-46 d) 47 and over	DI
DV3	Marital status: a) Married b) Single	DI
DV4	Sector: a) Manufacturing b) Service	DI
Q1	Is your Strategic human resource management executed in a separate department? a) Yes b) No	SHRM
Q2	Have you set a strategy as a Strategic human resource management system? a) Yes b) No	SHRM
Q3	If your answer is "yes", do you execute this strategy compatible with the business strategy? a) Yes b) No	SHRM
Q4	Has Strategic human resource management system indispensable importance for your business? a) Yes b) No	SHRM
Q5	Which of the following topic is more important in your business strategy? a) Determining a strategy related to Strategic human resource management b) Executing the strategy determined for Strategic human resource management compatible with the strategy of the business c) HR managers and employees play an active role in the execution of the business strategy d) All e) None	SHRM

Q6	What problems do you experience in the harmonization of the strategies you set for Strategic human resource management with the business strategy?	CS
Q7	Would you give information about the process you put forward when determining a strategy in Strategic human resource management?	SHRM ^P
Q8	What are the most important problems you experience while determining a strategy in Strategic human resource management? Would you share your suggestions for solutions to these problems with us?	SHRM _p

DV: Demographic variable, DI: Demographic information, Q: Question, SHRM: Strategic human resource management, CS: Compatibility of strategies, SHRM^P: SHRM Process, SHRM_p: SHRM Problems

The responses were uploaded to the MAXQDA and Voyant Tools programs to examine the distribution of concepts. Traditional methods of conceptualization, classification, and component analyses were performed, considering the relationships and distribution of concepts (Maxwell, 1996; Walcott, 1994). In qualitative analysis, the responses are carefully read to ensure that the words reflect the participants' true thoughts. If a word does not reflect the true thought, its true meaning is clarified based on its context within the sentence. Thus, concepts are clarified and classified under relevant headings. Each sentence and word is revised after classification, constituting the final component analysis. Inductive processes starting with words, the smallest building blocks in qualitative analysis, are then controlled and revised through deduction, ensuring mutual verification.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Characteristics

The demographic information includes entrepreneurship experience, sector related to the field of activity, age, education, and marital status. These questions were designed to gather descriptive information about the participants' backgrounds in entrepreneurship.

According to the research results, 46.47% of the participants had entrepreneurship experience of 10 years or more. Those with 7-9 years of experience comprised 23.24%, those with 4-6 years 21.13%, and those with 1-3 years of experience 9.16%. Additionally, 41.54% of women entrepreneurs were over the age of 47. The age distribution was as follows: 29.58% were between the ages of 38-46, 16.2% between the ages of 29-37, and 12.68% between the ages of 20-28. Regarding marital status, 71.12% of the participants were married, and 28.88% were single. In terms of education, 71.13% of the participants held a bachelor's degree, 22.53% had a master's degree, and 6.34% were graduates of primary or high school. Female entrepreneurs operating in the manufacturing sector constituted 66.9%, while those in the service sector made up 33.1% (Table 2).

Table 2. Personal demographic variables

V	f	%	V	f	%	V	f	%	V	f	%
Entrepreneurship Experience			Age			Education			Marital status		
1-3 years	13	9.16	20-28	18	12.68	Primary or high school	9	6.34	Married	10	71.12
										1	28.88

4-6 years	30	21. 13	29-37	23	16. 2	Bachel or's degree	10 1	71. 13	Single	41	28.8 8
7-9 years	33	23. 24	38-46	42	29. 58	Master 's degree	32	22. 53	Sector		
10 years and over	66	46. 47	47 and over	59	41. 54				Manufact uring	95	66.9
									Service	47	33.1

n=142, f: Frequency, V: Variables

Content Validity

The clarity of questions posed to participants in qualitative research significantly impacts the inferences drawn from their responses. Therefore, a pretest is recommended (Salant & Dillman, 1994). A pretest provides researchers with information about the content validity of qualitative research tools. The literature suggests that the sample size for this test should range from 50 to 100 (Reynolds, Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmilch, 1993). Consequently, a pretest was conducted with 53 individuals (22 women, 31 men) to validate the research tools. The results, scored on a Likert scale, indicated that the questionnaire was comprehensible, thereby confirming the content validity of the research tools.

Qualitative Findings

The study's findings focus on two main topics: SHRM problems and solution suggestions, and the SHRM process. The qualitative analysis results are shown in Table 3.

Tble 3. The qualitative analysis results

RW	RW1	RW2	RW3	RW4	RW5	RW6	RW7
	Commun ication and interactio n	Coordinati on	Harmony/ compliance	Empathy	Justice and equality	Sustaina bility	Image
	f %	f %	f %	f %	f %	f %	f %
SC	2 1,40	20 14,0	8 5,63	8 5,633	3 2,11	3 26,7	6 4,225
A	8	8	3		2	8 6	
OC	3 22,5	3 2,11	40 28,1	7 4,929	1 0,70	2 1,40	34 23,94
C	2 4	2	7		4	8	3
CS	1 0,70	3 2,11	7 4,92	5 3,521	2 1,40	1 0,70	43 30,28
R	4	2	9		8	4	1
TW	3 21,1	4 2,81	3 2,11	1 9,154	4 2,81	3 2,11	3 2,112
	0 3	6	2 3		6	2	
CP	2 1,40	45 31,6	42 29,5	2 16,19	2 1,40	3 27,4	4 2,816
D	8	9	8	3	8	9 64	9
CM	3 23,2	2 1,40	6 4,22	2 17,6	1 0,70	2 1,40	2 1,408
	3 4	8	5 5		4	8	
CDI	1 0,70	11 7,74	21 14,7	7 4,929	2 1,40	5 35,9	2 1,408
	4	6	9		8	1 15	
PR	2 1,40	43 30,2	6 4,22	2 15,49	4 30,2	1 0,70	4 2,816
M	8	8	5 2	7 3	8	4	
OH	1 0,70	9 6,33	4 2,81	2 18,30	3 26,7	2 1,40	2 1,408
S	4	8	6 6	9 8	6	8	
LM	3 26,7	2 1,40	5 3,52	6 4,225	4 32,3	3 2,11	42 29,57
I	8 6	8	1		6 9	2	7

SCA: sustainable competitive advantage, OCC: organizational culture, and climate, CSR: corporate social responsibility, TW: teamwork, CPD: career planning and development, CM: conflict management, CDI: continuous development and improvement", PRM: personal rights management, OHS: occupational health and safety, LMI: leader and management impact, f: frequency, RW: Repeated words, n=142, f: Frequency

SHRM Problems

The problems identified by women entrepreneurs regarding SHRM were categorized into ten main areas: sustainable competitive advantage, organizational culture and climate, corporate social responsibility, teamwork, career planning and development, conflict management, continuous development and improvement, personal rights management, occupational health and safety, and leader and management impact.

Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Participants significantly associated SHRM with achieving a sustainable competitive advantage, emphasizing the importance of "competition" and "continuity." They noted that maintaining sustainability in a competitive advantage is crucial for developing and implementing effective strategies. One participant mentioned, "Gaining a competitive advantage in women's entrepreneurship is particularly challenging due to gender inequality, which creates significant obstacles."

Social pressure on women entrepreneurs hinders the expression of entrepreneurial ideas. Establishing entrepreneurial businesses requires substantial financial resources, and accessing these resources poses a significant challenge for women entrepreneurs. One respondent stated, "Women benefit less from financial institutions concerning loans compared to men, primarily due to insufficient support for women entrepreneurs." Additionally, women often do not hold positions in many official institutions and non-governmental organizations. The absence of women entrepreneurs in professional organizations, such as chambers of commerce and industry or commodity exchanges, hinders their ability to have their voices heard. Participants suggested that achieving a competitive advantage and sustainability requires making the voices of women entrepreneurs heard. This can be accomplished by improving access to financial resources, managing professional and non-governmental organizations, developing policies to reduce social pressure, and formulating strategies to enhance women's entrepreneurship.

Organizational Culture and Climate

The research results indicated that the environment, situation, and conditions within the organizational culture were frequently mentioned. SHRM and these concepts were closely related. Culture was perceived as a pressure factor for women entrepreneurs, emerging as a barrier in the adaptation of SHRM to business strategy. One participant noted, "Organizational culture is seen as a significant factor influencing SHRM, and the oppressive rules guiding behavior within the organization can impede total success." However, adopting common values and beliefs within the organization could significantly benefit the implementation of business strategy and SHRM. Additionally, organizational culture was viewed as an essential indicator of emotional commitment for women entrepreneurs.

Women entrepreneurs described the organizational climate as the perceived psychological condition of the organization, including the level of visibility, communication, interaction, emotional attachment to the business, and the perception of a place where positive emotions could be developed. Another participant mentioned, "Image is important in women's entrepreneurship, shaped by the employees representing the organization." Therefore, the psychological conditions of employees, the positive atmosphere, and internal relationships were crucial for executing the strategy. SHRM was significantly influenced by this positive climate and relationships.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Women entrepreneurs emphasized the importance of responsibility awareness for business sustainability. One respondent mentioned, "Social responsibility is deemed an indispensable principle in business." Entrepreneurship should be pursued with a strong sense of social responsibility. Women participants also highlighted the importance of balancing responsibilities between home and work. According to them, SHRM was a collaborative outcome created by employers, leaders, and stakeholders, contributing to business sustainability. To ensure this contribution, all stakeholders, leaders, and employees should act with a sense of responsibility, which should be institutionalized.

Teamwork

The data revealed that communication, coordination, and cooperation were essential elements in entrepreneurship, ensuring business continuity. One participant highlighted, "Effective and strategic utilization of these elements is necessary for maximizing human resource efficiency." Creative ideas emerged from sharing experiences, and their implementation depended on coordination and cooperation. The diverse worldviews of women entrepreneurs added vibrancy and creativity to teamwork, contributing to innovation and enhancing individuals' commitment to their work.

Some women entrepreneurs likened teamwork to the relationship between parents and children at home. They compared the workplace to a home, the employer to parents, and the employee to a child needing guidance. Just as parents learn from their children, employers could learn from their employees. Employees, being in close contact with customers, better understood customer satisfaction and expectations. Therefore, sharing mutual knowledge and experiences through teamwork was vital for executing SHRM and business strategy.

Career Planning and Development

According to the research findings, career planning is essential for the strategic management of human resources in entrepreneurship. Female participants emphasized that they do not want their negative career development experiences to be replicated in their businesses. One respondent stated, "Human resources are the most valuable organizational assets." Elements such as vocational and personal training, mentoring, counseling, practical training, orientation, merit, and promotions are crucial components of SHRM, as reported by participants. These elements were categorized under "career planning and development" during the coding process.

Women entrepreneurs believe that process management in SHRM depends on effective career planning for employees. They also consider it important to develop these plans within a system that includes leaders, employees, and all stakeholders. This holistic approach ensures business sustainability and the proper implementation of business strategy. Women entrepreneurs view the employer-employee relationship, employee-stakeholder relationship, and stakeholder-customer relationship as equally important. Hence, factors like education, consultancy, and promotion, which are vital in career planning, are considered significant influences on SHRM by women entrepreneurs.

Conflict Management

For women entrepreneurs, conflict is seen as unnecessary, oppressive, and negative but also as a potential source of creativity. One participant mentioned, "Understanding the causes of conflict and developing solutions are essential for SHRM and business strategy." However, conflicts should be managed efficiently and resolved quickly. Conflicts related to discrimination based on gender, race, religion, and language are viewed as negative outcomes. Conversely, work-related conflicts of ideas can drive innovation. Interviews revealed that women entrepreneurs are particularly sensitive to male-female and work-home role conflicts. It was emphasized that such conflicts should not occur during the adaptation process to SHRM and business strategy.

Continuous Development and Improvement

Participants stated that a major challenge in SHRM is adapting to the changing technological and technical advancements of the era. One respondent noted, "Enhancing the value placed on women in Turkey is crucial, especially with globalization, as women's social and economic contributions are as significant as men's." Physical differences were not seen as obstacles to success; rather, they were considered crucial for organizational success. Women entrepreneurs noted that these differences, along with globalization and the free exchange of experiences and information, foster technological development.

According to the participants, women believe they can contribute more to the macro and micro economy through entrepreneurial activities rather than traditional roles like child-rearing and cooking. One participant mentioned, "Women's participation in the workforce is seen as a driver of continuous improvement and development in the economy." This progress will enable the efficient and strategic utilization of human resources and alignment with business strategy. Continuous development and improvement are also thought to enhance the adoption and applicability of SHRM within the enterprise.

Personal Rights Management

In the interviews, women entrepreneurs highlighted the importance of employees' rights. One respondent emphasized, "Women's personal rights have been neglected for thousands of years, leading to significant social consequences." As a result, women entrepreneurs prioritize the rights of their employees. Factors such as health insurance, wages, and job security, which increase commitment and loyalty to the business and its leaders, are considered vital for sustainability. The continuity of an enterprise depends on employee loyalty and low labor turnover. Dissatisfied employees who leave due to unmet rights can tarnish the business's reputation through word-of-mouth. The financial and corporate image of a business relies on the positive image projected by its employees and stakeholders. A more positive business image correlates with greater institutional strength.

Women entrepreneurs compared this situation to neighborly relations. Some sample expressions are as follows:

- "When your relationships with neighbors break down due to negative behavior, they become negative references for you. Your name becomes associated with being an incompatible neighbor in a community of 60 houses. Nobody wants to meet you. Business is similar. If you do not grant the rights of your employees and do not get along well, they will advertise you negatively."
- "We women entrepreneurs care about the showcase. Employees are our showcase. If the products in your showcase do not attract customers, you cannot sell."

According to the participants, SHRM is not just about managing human resources but also about creating positive resources for the enterprise. Every positive resource an entrepreneur brings to the business contributes to its strategy. Ensuring the personal rights of employees, who represent the business, increases their loyalty and commitment, ensuring the sustainability of SHRM and alignment with business strategy. Therefore, the first rule in SHRM is managing the process of acquiring and retaining human resources.

Occupational Health and Safety

The participants emphasized that health is a crucial factor in all areas of life. One respondent stated, "Health is the most important strategic requirement of an enterprise." Occupational health and safety are paramount when creating and implementing strategies. Epidemic diseases and accidents resulting from non-compliance with safety rules can reduce workplace productivity and cause serious damage. These damages result in labor, time, and income losses. Moreover, employee illnesses or injuries lead to overwork and psychological strain on remaining employees due to the loss of workforce. Effective strategic management under these circumstances is a significant challenge. Therefore, all necessary precautions should be taken

for occupational health and safety in the workplace, and SHRM should be developed with these precautions in mind. Participants highlighted that issues typically addressed in the financial and management context of the business strategy should be predominantly considered in SHRM. Aligning both strategies can present challenges in this regard. The women entrepreneurs stressed that neglecting employee health and safety in SHRM implementation would hinder the achievement of business strategy goals.

Leader and Management Impact

During the interviews, women entrepreneurs emphasized the importance of empathy, humility, non-discrimination, and equality. One participant mentioned, "Effective leadership is not about muscle strength but about psychological management." Additionally, women entrepreneurs stated that management skills involve determining strategies and executing systems, and they believe that obstacles between business stakeholders and leaders should be removed. Participants noted that management power and talent, effective system management, and the interaction between employees and leaders are crucial for SHRM and business strategy.

The participants identified non-objective practices and hierarchical problems as common issues in SHRM implementation. They stated that unfair managerial practices reduce employee commitment and trust, decrease performance, and lead to resignations and workforce losses. Consequently, the management style of the leader is critical for maximizing the benefits of human resources. This factor should be considered during SHRM development. Women entrepreneurs highlighted that leadership and management issues damage business strategy, reduce the likelihood of achieving business goals, and disrupt information flow.

SHRM Process

The SHRM process was examined through specific questions (Q6, Q7, Q8) asked during the interviews. A distinct perspective was identified during the coding and analysis of responses to these questions. The qualitative analysis revealed that female entrepreneurs did not perceive the Q7 problem as an SHRM issue but viewed the process as a constructive and necessary factor. Responses provided extensive information about the development of this process, defining it in relation to SHRM. Based on the analyses, five basic process stages were determined, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Women's Entrepreneurship SHRM process chart



Identification/Determination

Identification and determination involve outlining the paths to be followed in SHRM, including the mission, vision, and the purpose to be achieved concerning entrepreneurship. Female entrepreneurs describe this stage as "giving a name to a child." Similar to choosing a child's name, which involves the parents' opinions, the meaning of the name, spiritual values, and various ethnic and religious considerations, SHRM is founded on making such comprehensive definitions.

At this stage, employees' roles are determined not only based on the quality of their work but also in alignment with the enterprise's objectives. Potential failures, experiences, benefits, and losses are identified, and the strategy becomes clear after these definitions are established. This stage is more detailed and crucial than other processes. As one female entrepreneur put it, "A good start-up ensures a good ending." If an activity that is undefined is later defined, the chain's links may be damaged. Another entrepreneur likened this stage to the emergence of a child in the womb (pregnancy). Birth, maturity, and embryo development do not occur without the child's emergence in the womb.

Strategy Development

According to the qualitative analysis results, the second stage in SHRM is the development of the determined strategy. Participants assert that managing human resources cannot be separated from human nature. Just as humans develop, the emergence of a strategy is possible through its development. A female entrepreneur's example is noteworthy: "If you want to manage human resources strategically, aside from all the business resources, you must thoroughly consider this issue. There may be points you overlooked or disregarded. Therefore, you should develop and refine your strategy by consulting experts."

Women entrepreneurs emphasize the importance of utilizing external resources in strategy development. They also stress the significance of stakeholders in developing strategies. Noting that strategy development is long-term, participants believe this phase should continue even after the SHRM process is completed. They state that entrepreneurial obstacles, arising from changing technology and discrimination, significantly damage SHRM sustainability. Thus, women entrepreneurs suggest making this stage a fundamental principle for process sustainability.

Harmonization with Business Strategy

Compliance is crucial for women entrepreneurs at every stage of life and business. In the SHRM process, compliance involves implementing rules that align with the business strategy. Participants emphasized that for the strategy to be executed effectively, it must be harmonized with the enterprise's overall business strategy. As one participant noted, "You should not expect everyone to have the same thought. However, consensus can be achieved under minimum conditions. For this, you should explain the purpose of your job/business and your goals to the employees and stakeholders in detail."

Women entrepreneurs highlighted the need for harmony among employees, leaders, and stakeholders to achieve this alignment. This involves integration between the organization's units to ensure collaboration and harmonize SHRM with the business strategy. Tools such as teamwork, brainstorming, and projects are essential for adaptation. Additionally, compatibility with the external environment, including government, non-governmental organizations, competitors, and suppliers, is crucial for SHRM. One participant explained, "Integration between units can help harmonize SHRM and the business strategy by ensuring collaboration."

Implementation

The success of SHRM is revealed during the implementation stage. Participants stated that the strategy put forward at this stage is applied to achieve efficiency. Implementation is necessary to identify the outcomes of business strategy practices. This stage considers technical and technological developments, legislative changes, financial data, labor turnover rate, employee

performance, and project and event achievements. One participant described the success indicator of implementation as the variance between expected benefit and cost, stating, "When SHRM is planned and efficiently executed from the beginning, the outcomes will reach maximum benefit." The participants emphasized that the time lost during the pre-implementation stages is less detrimental than the losses that would occur after implementation.

Feedback

Feedback was identified as the final step in the SHRM process. Women entrepreneurs defined feedback as a continuous cycle rather than a process that ends. They emphasized that strategy development should continue especially after feedback. This stage includes acquiring the opinions of business stakeholders about the outputs of SHRM. Women entrepreneurs view the business as an entity that reveals the image, purpose, and objectives of the entrepreneur, provides social benefits, and requires responsibility. Therefore, the satisfaction and thoughts of customers, suppliers, employees, partners, managers, and the state about the enterprise are important. Feedback also reveals the level of compliance of SHRM with the business strategy and its contribution to human resources, efficiency, and performance. One participant noted, "Feedback reveals the level of compliance of SHRM with the business strategy and its contribution to human resources and performance."

Discussion

The literature on women entrepreneurship extensively covers motivational factors, entrepreneurial challenges, sustainability, gender equality, empowerment, and rural entrepreneurship (Ahl, 2004; Ahl, 2002; Akehurst, Amarro, & Mas-Tur, 2012; Brush, De Bruin, & Welter, 2009; Datta & Gailey, 2012; De Bruin, Brush, & Welter, 2007; De Bruin, Brush, & Welter, 2006; Franck, 2012; Goyal, & Parkash, 2011; Hanson, 2009; Hughes et al., 2012; Kumbhar, 2013; Marlow & McAdam, 2013; Moses & Amalu, 2010; Petridou & Glaveli, 2008; Tambunan, 2009; Vossenbergh, 2013). However, research on human resources within the context of women entrepreneurship remains limited. Junquera (2011) identified two critical factors, "gender effect" and "female profile," that influence women's entrepreneurship through accumulated entrepreneurial human capital. Similarly, Verheul, Risseuw, and Bartelse (2002) found gender-based differences in leadership, growth, and diversification levels, emphasizing the need to focus on strategic HRM issues faced by women entrepreneurs rather than merely comparing them with male entrepreneurs.

This study specifically investigated the SHRM problems encountered by women entrepreneurs, a crucial focus for fostering women's entrepreneurship. The findings revealed ten fundamental SHRM challenges: "sustainable competitive advantage," "organizational culture and climate," "corporate social responsibility," "teamwork," "career planning and development," "conflict management," "continuous development and improvement," "personal rights management," "occupational health and safety," and "leadership and management impact." These challenges underscore the strategic importance of HRM in women entrepreneurship, highlighting key areas where women entrepreneurs prioritize vision, sustainability, competitiveness, and employee well-being.

The study identified that resolving SHRM issues and aligning them with business strategies depends significantly on effective communication, interaction, image management, empathy, responsibility awareness, justice, and equality in women entrepreneurship. These factors are essential for maintaining organizational balance, ensuring efficient information flow, and achieving long-term success. Women entrepreneurs view entrepreneurship as managing diversity and adaptation within the organization, crucial for overcoming entrepreneurial barriers.

The SHRM process in women's entrepreneurship, as derived from the analysis, involves several stages: identification, strategy development, alignment with business strategy, implementation, and feedback. Women entrepreneurs perceive this process as a continuously evolving cycle,

emphasizing strategy development at each stage to ensure its alignment with the overall business strategy. The qualitative analysis highlighted that women entrepreneurs place significant emphasis on vision, values, communication, coordination, and sustainability in addressing SHRM challenges.

Demographic analysis revealed that nearly 50% of the women entrepreneurs had over ten years of entrepreneurial experience, highlighting the role of experience in effective SHRM implementation. In contrast, women entrepreneurs with 1-3 years of experience often adopted SHRM practices by modeling their entrepreneur spouses. Additionally, the demographic data indicated that almost 50% of women entrepreneurs were aged 47 and above, with most being married, holding a bachelor's degree, and operating in the manufacturing sector. These findings suggest that age, education, experience, marital status, and industry significantly influence the adoption and implementation of SHRM among women entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

The first rule in SHRM is to make the management process functional to gain human resources. This study identified 10 basic problems related to SHRM and the SHRM process in women's entrepreneurship. These issues are crucial for developing women's entrepreneurship. Therefore, it is recommended to investigate these problems through studies involving women entrepreneurs with diverse socio-demographic characteristics. Women entrepreneurs associate the SHRM-related problems they encounter with concepts such as communication, coordination, harmony, empathy, justice, equality, and sustainability (Table 3). These concepts represent the primary solutions envisaged by women entrepreneurs to overcome SHRM management process challenges. Consequently, it is recommended to compare SHRM management methods and processes between male and female entrepreneurs.

The five-step cycle revealed by the findings from women entrepreneurs regarding the SHRM process needs further investigation with different entrepreneur samples. Given the importance of SHRM in strategic human resource management, alignment with the business strategy, and sustainability, it is recommended to increase academic research in this area. Policymakers should also organize necessary activities to train women entrepreneurs in SHRM practices.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the understanding of SHRM challenges faced by women entrepreneurs and offers insights into strategic HRM practices tailored to their unique needs. The findings emphasize the importance of strategic alignment, effective communication, and continuous improvement in overcoming HRM challenges and achieving sustainable entrepreneurial success.

This study is the first in the literature conducted with women entrepreneurs regarding SHRM implementation and process determination. Despite the study's strengths, there are some limitations. These include the potential variability of qualitative study results with different samples, the subjective evaluation of experiences in women entrepreneurship studies, and the significant time required for interviews and analysis.

References

- Ahl, H. (2004). *The scientific reproduction of gender inequality: A discourse analysis of research texts on women's entrepreneurship*. Liber.
- Ahl, H. J. (2002). *The making of the female entrepreneur: A discourse analysis of research texts on women's entrepreneurship* (Doctoral dissertation, Internationella Handelshögskolan).
- Ahmetoglu, G., Akhtar, R., Tsivrikos, D., & Chamorro-Premuzic, T. (2018). The entrepreneurial organization: The effects of organizational culture on innovation output. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 70(4), 318.

- Akehurst, G., Simarro, E., & Mas-Tur, A. (2012). Women entrepreneurship in small service firms: Motivations, barriers and performance. *The Service Industries Journal*, 32(15), 2489-2505.
- Alomari, Z. (2020). Does human capital moderate the relationship between strategic thinking and strategic human resource management?. *Management Science Letters*, 10(3), 565-574.
- Amberg, J. J., & McGaughey, S. L. (2019). Strategic human resource management and inertia in the corporate entrepreneurship of a multinational enterprise. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 30(5), 759-793.
- Andersén, J. (2019). Resource orchestration of firm-specific human capital and firm performance—the role of collaborative human resource management and entrepreneurial orientation. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 1-33.
- Armstrong, M., & Taylor, S. (2020). *Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice*. Kogan Page Publishers.
- Azmi, F. T. (2010). Strategic human resource management: scale development and validation. *Philippine Management Review*, 17.
- Berman, E. M., Bowman, J. S., West, J. P., & Van Wart, M. R. (2019). *Human resource management in public service: Paradoxes, processes, and problems*. CQ Press.
- Bondarouk, T., Huub, R., Oiry, E., & Guiderdoni-Jourdain, K. (2009). *Handbook of research on e-transformation and Strategic human resource management technologies: Organizational outcomes and challenges*. USA.
- Berman, E. M., Bowman, J. S., West, J. P., & Van Wart, M. R. (2019). *Human resource management in public service: Paradoxes, processes, and problems*. CQ Press.
- Birtch, T. A., Chiang, F. F., & Van Esch, E. (2016). A social exchange theory framework for understanding the job characteristics–job outcomes relationship: The mediating role of psychological contract fulfillment. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 27(11), 1217-1236.
- Boon, C., Den Hartog, D. N., & Lepak, D. P. (2019). A systematic review of human resource management systems and their measurement. *Journal of management*, 45(6), 2498-2537.
- Brush, C. G. (2006). Women entrepreneurs: A research overview. In *The Oxford handbook of entrepreneurship*.
- Brush, C. G., De Bruin, A., & Welter, F. (2009). A gender-aware framework for women's entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Gender and entrepreneurship*.
- Chaudhry, S. J., & Loewenstein, G. (2019). Thanking, apologizing, bragging, and blaming: Responsibility exchange theory and the currency of communication. *Psychological review*, 126(3), 313.
- Costigan, R. D. (1995). Adaptation of traditional human resources processes for total quality environments. *Quality Management Journal*, 2(3), 7-23.
- Cropanzano, R., Anthony, E. L., Daniels, S. R., & Hall, A. V. (2017). Social exchange theory: A critical review with theoretical remedies. *Academy of Management Annals*, 11(1), 479-516.
- Daniels, L. M. (2020). Twenty-First-Century Global Human Resource Management: Strategic Business Partner and Servant Leader. In *Paradigm Shift in Management Philosophy* (pp. 37-63). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
- Datta, P. B., & Gailey, R. (2012). Empowering women through social entrepreneurship: Case study of a women's cooperative in India. *Entrepreneurship theory and Practice*, 36(3), 569-587.
- De Bruin, A., Brush, C. G., & Welter, F. (2007). Advancing a framework for coherent research on women's entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship theory and practice*, 31(3), 323-339.
- De Bruin, A., Brush, C. G., & Welter, F. (2006). Introduction to the special issue: Towards building cumulative knowledge on women's entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship Theory and practice*, 30(5), 585-593.

- Delery, J., & Gupta, N. (2016). Human resource management practices and organizational effectiveness: internal fit matters. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*.
- Devanna, M. A., Fombrun, C., Tichy, N., & Warren, L. (1982). Strategic planning and human resource management. *Human Resource Management*, 21, 11–17.
- Duke, J. I., & Udono, E. N. (2012). A New Paradigm in Traditional Strategic human resource management Practices. *J. Mgmt. & Sustainability*, 2, 158.
- Ferris, G. R., Frink, D. D., & Galang, M. C. (1993). Diversity in the Workplace: The Strategic human resource management Challenges. *Human Resource Planning*, 16(1).
- Franck, A. K. (2012). Factors motivating women's informal micro-entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*.
- Ghosh, R., Shuck, B., Cumberland, D., & D'Mello, J. (2019). Building Psychological Capital and Employee Engagement: Is Formal Mentoring a Useful Strategic Human Resource Development Intervention?. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 32(1), 37-54.
- Goyal, M., & Parkash, J. (2011). Women entrepreneurship in India-problems and prospects. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 1(5), 195-207.
- Gupta, A. D. (2020). Strategic Human Resource Management: Formulating and Implementing HR Strategies for a Competitive Advantage.
- Hamid, Z., Muzamil, M., & Shah, S. A. (2020). Strategic Human Resource Management. In *Handbook of Research on Positive Organizational Behavior for Improved Workplace Performance* (pp. 260-275). IGI Global.
- Han, J. H., Kang, S., Oh, I. S., Kehoe, R. R., & Lepak, D. P. (2019). The Goldilocks Effect of Strategic Human Resource Management? Optimizing the Benefits of a High-Performance Work System Through the Dual Alignment of Vertical and Horizontal Fit. *Academy of Management Journal*, 62(5), 1388-1412.
- Hanson, S. (2009). Changing places through women's entrepreneurship. *Economic geography*, 85(3), 245-267.
- Huang, Y. H., Lee, J., McFadden, A. C., Murphy, L. A., Robertson, M. M., Cheung, J. H., & Zohar, D. (2016). Beyond safety outcomes: An investigation of the impact of safety climate on job satisfaction, employee engagement and turnover using social exchange theory as the theoretical framework. *Applied ergonomics*, 55, 248-257.
- Hughes, K. D., Jennings, J. E., Brush, C., Carter, S., & Welter, F. (2012). Extending women's entrepreneurship research in new directions. *Entrepreneurship theory and practice*, 36(3), 429-442.
- Jones, D., Pringle, J., & Shepherd, D. (2000). "Managing diversity" meets aotearoa/new zealand. *Personnel Review*.
- Junquera, B. (2011) Where does female entrepreneurial human capital come from? A review of the literature, *Innovation*, 13(3), 391-411, DOI: 10.5172/impp.2011.13.3.391
- Kumbhar, V. M. (2013). Some critical issues of women entrepreneurship in rural India. *European Academic Research*, 1(2).
- Levent, T. B., Masurel, E., & Nijkamp, P. (2003). Diversity in entrepreneurship: ethnic and female roles in urban economic life. *International journal of social economics*.
- Libert, K., Mosconi, E., & Cadieux, N. (2020). Human-Machine Interaction and Human Resource Management Perspective for Collaborative Robotics Implementation and Adoption. In *Proceedings of the 53rd Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*.
- Machmud, A., & Ahman, E. (2019). Effect of entrepreneur psychological capital and human resources on the performance of the catering industry in Indonesia. *Journal of Entrepreneurship Education*.
- Marlow, S., & McAdam, M. (2013). Gender and entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*.

- Morgeson, F. P., Brannick, M. T., & Levine, E. L. (2019). *Job and work analysis: Methods, research, and applications for human resource management*. Sage Publications.
- Moses, C., & Amalu, R. (2010). Entrepreneurial motivations as determinants of women entrepreneurship challenges. *Petroleum-Gas University of Ploiesti Bulletin*, (2), 67-77.
- Ngo, H. Y., Turban, D., Lau, C. M., & Lui, S. Y. (1998). Human resource practices and firm performance of multinational corporations: Influence of country origin. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 9, 632–652.
- Niethammer, C. (2013). Women, entrepreneurship and the opportunity to promote development and business. *Brookings blum roundtable policy brief*, 37.
- Omri, A. (2018). Entrepreneurship, sectoral outputs and environmental improvement: International evidence. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 128, 46-55.
- Blinded for review (2020). The effects of ethical leadership on work engagement, intrapreneurship, and service innovation behavior: sample of chambers of commerce and industry. *International Journal of Public Leadership*.
- Parker, S. C. (2018). *The economics of entrepreneurship*. Cambridge University Press.
- Petridou, E., & Glaveli, N. (2008). Rural women entrepreneurship within co-operatives: training support. *Gender in management: an international journal*.
- Ren, S., & Jackson, S. E. (2019). HRM institutional entrepreneurship for sustainable business organizations. *Human Resource Management Review*, 100691.
- Rogers, E. W., & Wright, P. M. (1998). Measuring organizational performance in strategic human resource management: Problems, prospects and performance information markets. *Human resource management review*, 8(3), 311-331.
- Rutherford, M. W., Buller, P. F., & McMullen, P. R. (2003). Human resource management problems over the life cycle of small to medium-sized firms. *Human Resource Management: Published in Cooperation with the School of Business Administration, The University of Michigan and in alliance with the Society of Strategic human resource management*, 42(4), 321-335.
- Sato, Y., Kobayashi, N., & Shirasaka, S. (2020). An Analysis of Human Resource Management for Knowledge Workers: Using the Three Axes of Target Employee, Lifecycle Stage, and Human Resource Flow. *Review of Integrative Business and Economics Research*, 9(1), 140-156.
- Soemantri, A. I. (2019). The Influence of Internal Environment, Strategic Management of Human Resources and Quality of Work Life To Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance Outsourcing Company in East Java Province. *Archives of Business Research*, 7(3).
- Stewart, G. L., & Brown, K. G. (2019). *Human resource management*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Tambunan, T. (2009). Women entrepreneurship in Asian developing countries: Their development and main constraints. *Journal of Development and Agricultural Economics*, 1(2), 27-40.
- Wang, G., Dou, W., Zhu, Z., & Zhou, Z. (2019). Human Resource Management and Firm Performance: A Meta-Analysis. *Academy of Management Proceedings*.
- Wu, W. L., & Lee, Y. C. (2017). Empowering group leaders encourages knowledge sharing: Integrating the social exchange theory and positive organizational behavior perspective. *Journal of Knowledge Management*.
- Verheul, I., Risseuw, P., & Bartelse, G. (2002). Gender Differences in Strategy and Human Resource Management: The Case of Dutch Real Estate Brokerage. *International Small Business Journal*, 20(4), 443–476. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242602204004>.
- Vossenbergh, S. (2013). Women Entrepreneurship Promotion in Developing Countries: What explains the gender gap in entrepreneurship and how to close it. *Maastricht School of Management Working Paper Series*, 8(1), 1-27.

Zhang, X., Zhang, Y., Sun, Y., Lytras, M., Ordonez de Pablos, P., & He, W. (2018). Exploring the effect of transformational leadership on individual creativity in e-learning: a perspective of social exchange theory. *Studies in Higher Education*, 43(11), 1964-1978.