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HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT POLICY INTERVENTION IN THE CONTEXT OF CULTURAL HARMONY

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	This article aims to analyze the effectiveness of human resource development (HRD) policies in Papua by considering aspects of local cultural harmony. This research is motivated by the many failures of the implementation of HR management techniques and practices adopted directly from developed countries without adjustment to the local cultural context. Through a qualitative literature study approach, the author reviewed literature from figures such as Hofstede, Robbins, and Mendonca & Kanungo to understand cultural incompatibility as a major obstacle in HR development. The results showed that Papuan cultural values such as collectivism, high power hierarchy, and preference for short-term orientation, contradict the universalistic HR management model that emphasizes individualism and efficiency. It was emphasized that effective management practices must be adapted to local cultural characteristics, including paternalistic leadership approaches, community empowerment based on traditional values, and the use of honest and open communication styles. Intervention strategies rooted in the local cultural context have been shown to increase the effectiveness of HR development programs. The discussion confirms that the success of HRD policy interventions in Papua is highly dependent on the ability to ensure harmony between local cultural norms and modern management techniques. Therefore, strategic adjustments that are context-specific

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1. INTRODUCTION

Facing the era of globalization, the competitive advantage of a community institution is primarily dependent on the development of human resources. With the assumption that the success of advancing human resources, the dimensions of natural resources and other resources, such as: finance, technology, and material resources will be managed by human efforts creatively and innovatively (Rabiul, et al, 2025). Therefore, it is not surprising that recently there has been a new awareness of the importance of good management of human resources, and has even colored various policies and strategies for Papua's future development.

As attention to human resource management has increased, so has the *development of* human resource management *practices and techniques* in Papua that are intended to be an important part of future development investments. The development of human resource management practices and techniques is aimed at improving work motivation and performance of the community (public and government). This is primarily implemented through ongoing socialization and mentoring programs, *link-match* formal education, and technical and functional skills training on performance management, job design, reward systems, supervision, organizational development and organizational change strategies (Mustofa, 2025; Awal & El-Sayed, 2025).

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It is realized that the efforts that have been made so far are still faced with various obstacles, so that the hope of enabling increased innovation and creation and encouraging and strengthening work effectiveness in order to sharpen the ability to compete, has not been fully achieved (Nabila, 2025). Many institutions (public sector, private sector, and social community institutions) in Papua still need *remedies.* Some cases of weak competitiveness can be seen in the decline of various institutions in the past decade. *Recovery*, which is constantly voiced by various groups, political elites, government elites, the world of higher education, and even by community leaders, seems to be drowned out by the hustle and bustle of the discourse of "authority" both within the framework of regional autonomy and special autonomy.

This short paper is intended to examine the implementation of human resource management approaches in Papua in terms of cultural harmony. It is understood that in an effort to develop the quality of human resources, the Papua Provincial Government, Regency / City Governments throughout Papua, and universities, have taken various approaches as part of *policy interventions.* However, it is unfortunate that the aspect of cultural harmony has not *been* accommodated.

In addition, related to the reports of several scientific studies, it is stated that the failure of the implementation of a human resource management approach can be related to issues of cultural harmony. In practical terms, the issue of cultural harmony can be examined through four important questions: *First,* can human resource management practices and techniques that are designed or developed in a universalistic socio-cultural context, be equally successful when practiced in a local context that has a fundamentally different socio-cultural environment from other regions? *Second,* since humans are fundamentally the same in nature (except for socio-cultural differences), are there core elements of human resource management science practices that have generally the same cultural applications? *Third,* are there critical aspects of the work culture of other regions, which may facilitate the utilization of human resource management practices?; and *Fourth,* What specific strategies can be used to utilize cultural facilitators and overcome cultural limitations in order to ensure effective implementation of human resource management techniques and practices?

2.   RESEARCH METHOD

The research approach in this article uses a literature study method which is a qualitative approach based on the review of relevant and contextual scientific literature. The literature study in this article is intended to explore and analyze the extent to which human resource management (HRM) theories and practices can be applied in the context of local Papuan culture. The author explores various theoretical frameworks from figures such as Hofstede (2003), Gibson et al. (2003), Robbins (2003), and Mendonca & Kanungo (1996) to highlight the significant cultural differences between developed and Papuan societies. By comparing HRM practices from developed countries that often rely on the principles of efficiency and individualism, the authors emphasize that the successful implementation of HRM policies in Papua must consider distinctive elements of the local culture such as collectivism, high power hierarchies, and strong social affiliations. In this literature study approach, the author not only presents theory, but also relates it to the socio-cultural reality of Papuan society, in order to formulate a more contextual and adaptive policy model.

3.   RESULTS AND ANALYSIS
a.   Cultural Harmony: Issues & Barriers

The first question concerns the issue of cultural compatibility as it relates to human resource management practices, generally based on western thinking and value systems. There has been an assumption (even a dogmatic belief) held by some people that human resource management techniques and programs that have proven successful in one area should, by the same logic, also be successful in other areas. On the other hand, there is an assumption (with a dogmatic spirit as well) that is *diametrically* opposed to the first assumption, namely that within the socio-cultural environment of a region (e.g. in Papua), there are aspects that are not only not conducive to human resource development and economic development but even contradict the spirit of development itself. For example, the development motto of one of the ethnic groups in Papua, taken from the cultural fusion of the major tribes in Mimika (*Kamoro and Amungme*), is: "*Eme Neme Yauware*" which means "united, brothers to build. The motto has a deep philosophical meaning, in which the community is motivated to move forward based on a spirit of togetherness.

The prominent aspects that have hindered the development of human resources over the years are: the absence of a *work ethic*; fatalism, which is an *external locus of control* for individuals; *religiosity*, which causes individuals to neglect their own advancement in order to further nurture an attitude of resignation; and kinship, which makes individuals more concerned with the welfare of extended family and relatives. Therefore, a strategic approach is needed that can integrate traditional work cultures with modern human resource management techniques and practices.

Many studies have been conducted (among others by Riggs, 1987; Robbins, 2003; Gibson, et al. 2003) showing that the transfer of human resource management techniques and practices based on ideas and value systems

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from *developed countries* to *developing countries* without customization has failed. Programs that succeed in developed countries and fail in developing countries are not due to the shortcomings or inadequacies of the program but due to the *uncritical* adoption of the program by ignoring its compatibility with the internal work culture. It should be clearly understood that people in developing countries still need efficient human resource management techniques and practices, but in the context of internal culture. For example, experts and professionals have agreed that job performance in any culture can be improved through the practices of goal setting, performance feedback, and valuable rewards.

Since the psychological principles underlying work motivation (incorporated into the practices/programs) are universally valid, they are easily applicable across cultures. Thus, the question is how are these practices/programs implemented? In North America (Mendonca & Kanungo, 1996) feedback during the performance appraisal *revieuw* process that tends to be confrontational is common. This is consistent with the highly individualistic North American culture that characterizes *low power distance* societies. In contrast, the confrontational model does not fit the context of a typical developing country society, where the culture of avoiding embarrassing others is considered more important than the learning process through performance appraisal reviews. The important thing about this example is that regional autonomy, for the central government, is a form of granting high-value authority (Maslow's term: *actualization needs*). In contrast, for regions (e.g. Papua Province), regional autonomy is needed to start organizing aspects that are still at the level of value as (*basic needs)* fulfillment of *basic* economic and social *needs*.

The success of programs, techniques and processes, especially those related to social systems, must take into account the norms, beliefs and values of the internal culture of the community for the effective implementation of program activities and processes. Programs and practices that are consistent and rooted in cultural values and norms will be successful and sustainable (Tata & Prasad, 2015). The phenomenal success of South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Japan in advancing their industries is widely attributed to both management styles and traits rooted in *Confucian social values*, kinship, and institutional structures that are not necessarily European or American. An important lesson that can be observed in this regard is that human resource management practices in Papua need to be adapted to the context of the cultural values and beliefs of the Papuan people themselves. In other words, it must consider critical aspects of the internal work culture that can facilitate Papuan human resource development policies and programs (Nathaniel, 2022; Tjilen, 2019).

This requires "*intervention policies"* that internally co-modulate to ensure the compatibility of management practices and local culture. For example, in general, Papuans prefer to show "what it is in a straightforward manner", disliking things that are "wrapped up". Papuans, therefore, have traditionally practiced "transparency and honesty". So, if there is an unclear development policy, especially with regard to human resource development, Papuans will respond spontaneously to fight for their cultural reality. They do not like the approach of "avoidance or diversion" as a form of disappearance, but on the contrary they really like real aggressiveness behavior. Thus, in the context of organizations (public, business, social), human resource development policies require a cultural approach with local wisdom (Hasyem, 2022; Zuhri, et al, 2019).

In his writing delivered at the Seminar and National Work Meeting of the Cooperation Agency for the Development of Administrative Sciences throughout Indonesia in Pekanbaru 28-30 November 2005, Djadja Saefullah, stated that *social responsibility* describes the balance of responsibility for the welfare of many people with the interests of the organization concerned. In other words, every policy taken in dealing with problems that occur in people's lives must combine the interests of both parties. Indeed, policy makers face a tug of war between the public interest and the interests of the organization or institution. If faced with priority considerations, which one comes first? A difficult question to answer. If it is related to the existence of government bureaucracy in the government system in Indonesia, it will be able to answer which one is prioritized first (Turner, et al, 2022).

b. **The Role of Culture in Msdm Practice: Ensure Harmony**

The second issue is whether there are no core elements of human resource management practices that have equally good general cultural applications, to be applied in all regions? To answer this question, we need to identify the characteristics of the socio-cultural environment and work culture of the community. Referring to the results of research on cultural differences between developed and developing countries, in his study, Hofstede (2003), used five basic dimensions to measure high-low socio-cultural differences, namely

First, Power Distance. The extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in an institution is distributed unequally. The dimensions range from relatively balanced (*low power distance*) to very unbalanced (*high power distance*). If a society accepts that power in an institution is distributed relatively equally, it is categorized as having a *low power distance*. Meanwhile, if a society accepts that power is distributed in a very unbalanced manner, it is categorized as having a *high power distance*.

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Second, Uncertainty Avoidance. The extent to which a society prefers structured situations to unstructured ones or the extent to which a society feels threatened by uncertainty and ambiguous situations through the provision of more formal rules, does not tolerate different ideas and behaviors, and believes in absolute truth and the work of experts. Societies that place a high value on uncertainty avoidance have high levels of anxiety which manifests in high *nervousness*, stress, and aggressiveness.

Third, Individualism versus Collectivism. Individualism denotes a loosely bound social framework where one is perceived to be concerned only with oneself and immediate family, whereas collectivism is characterized by a strong social framework where one is differentiated between in-group and out-group; they expect that the people in their group take care of them and in return they will be absolutely loyal. Collectivism is equivalent to *low individualism*.

Fourth, Masculine versus Feminine. If the dominant value in a society is masculine then it shows assertiveness, passion for money and goods, and indifference to others, quality of life or society. In contrast, Quality of Life shows a society that places value on relationships, shows its sensitivity, and concern for the welfare of others;

Fifth, Long-Term versus Short-Term *Orientation.* People with a Long-Term Orientation culture look to the future and value frugality and perseverance. In contrast, people with a Short-Term Orientation culture look to the past and the present. They value tradition and social responsibility.

Based on these dimensions, the characteristics of the socio-cultural environment in developing societies are relatively high in uncertainty avoidance and power distance, relatively low in individualism and masculinity and short-term orientation, compared to developed societies. Relatively high uncertainty avoidance indicates an unwillingness to take risks and accept organizational change, which is manifested in a reluctance to take personal initiative beyond what has been outlined. Each member of society has been assigned a specific role. Deviation from these prescribed roles is discouraged and even penalized. As a result, individuals tend to be dependent on outside forces. Resignation is their approach to life.

For this reason, it is very important to develop policies and strategies for developing human resource management to manage performance through involving Papuans in planning their future. From a socio-cultural perspective, the low level of individualism in Papuan society means that group success is more of a concern than individual work success. Individual identity is derived from membership of family, *clan*, *clan* and community. For Papuans, individuals must accept the norms and values of the family, *clan*, *clan* and community without *reserve*. Each individual works in the sense of maintaining the family, providing welfare to parents, spouses and children. In work cultures characterized by low individualism, people tend not to seek satisfaction from *doing a* good job but from *finding a* good job. In societies with a low individualism culture, leaders should try to encourage consensus decision-making by taking into account customary and cultural values. The relatively high power distance implies that indigenous and community leaders accept their respective positions in the social hierarchy and operate from those fixed and definite positions.

In this case, the leader does not see the individuals in the community as human beings like themselves, and vice versa, the individuals in the community do not see the leader as themselves. In high power distance cultures, leadership is more paternalistic. In this kind of culture, a leader is more required as a wise man who can be used as a role model for his community, not only in social life but also in personal life. Leaders will make rules for subordinates that are different from those for superiors and everyone expects that superiors will get more preferential treatment. In contrast, in societies with relatively low power distance subordinates are less dependent on the Leader. They expect that the leader will always consult with the people. A low level of masculinity in the work context implies that the orientation of the society is more towards human or *person* relationships than towards performance relationships. Masculine cultures include capitalist societies, which emphasize appearance, money and material possessions, ambition and achievement. In contrast, societies - such as in Papua - where mutual cooperation is still strong can be categorized as having an orientation towards quality of life and effective human and environmental relationships. In societies with low masculine culture, job satisfaction is not derived from achieving work goals, but is derived from *affiliative* needs. Another manifestation of a low masculine culture is that job performance can be easily designed in order to carry out social tasks that have been mutually agreed upon in the context of interpersonal relationships.

Societies with a long-term orientation culture always encourage and reward future-oriented behaviors, such as planning and investing for the future and delaying pleasure. This is in contrast to societies with a short-term orientation culture that emphasizes the fulfillment of short-term pleasures, places less value on planning and investing for the future. In relation to the cultural dimension, long-term and short-term orientation. Kadia & Bhagat (1996), show the dimensions of *Abstractive and Associative thinking* (*abstractive vs associative thinking*). In associative cultures, people use associations between events that may not have much logical basis; whereas in abstractive cultures, people predominantly use cause-and-effect relationships. In associative cultures, most people use sensitive contexts, whereas in abstractive cultures people tend to use free contexts.

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Developed societies are found to be relatively high in abstractive thinking (*context-free*) and relatively low in associative thinking (*contextsensitive*). A culture high in associative thinking (*context-sensitive*) has directed the behavior of members of social community organizations towards thinking with a predetermined context rather than thinking with dominant principles. Such a pattern shows how they approach work. In undeveloped societies, they are not guided by relevant and appropriate work ethic norms or by abstract organizing principles of work behavior but are mostly determined by the *immediate context* that they consider important. Therefore, their behavior reflects *a sense of always living in the present*. Meanwhile, the "now" is constantly changing. This means that people who have a high culture of associative thinking will prove difficult to predict in the context of organizing work behaviors that are jointly demanded. Setting specific goals with time targets and developing specific action plans are contrary to the lifestyle and mindset of a culture of associative thinking that does not emphasize planning for the future. This mindset is well suited for a *management by crisis* approach, but not for effective performance management.

The next issue of cultural fit is formulated in the question of what critical aspects of the work culture are likely to facilitate the utilization of human resource management practices? To help unconducive conditions become conditions suitable for the needs of effective human resource management practices, according to Mendonca & Kanungo (1996), there is no need to adopt policies and practices that would force people with their deeply held cultural values and beliefs to give up on cultural values and beliefs that they do not believe in. Instead, consider a systematic approach to shifting cultural limitations and building on cultural beliefs and values that have the potential to enhance the effectiveness of human resource management practices. This means that it is necessary to design and implement human resource management practices that ensure proper cultural fit (Tumiran, 2024).

To ensure that human resource management processes are consistent with the cultural characteristics of developing countries, the following steps need to be taken: *First*, designing specific and challenging but achievable and feasible goals for community development. This means that this approach begins by designing targets that are still within the competence level of the community "as is" and then gradually increases the level of complexity and responsibility along with increasing capability and reliability, both through formal education and *life-skills*. This policy intervention is intended to overcome the effects of a *high uncertainty avoidance* culture. Meanwhile, to overcome the dysfunction of the *high power* distance culture, the government can act as a facilitator or motivator. This approach is in line with the concept of "students", not "students", where personal relationships between the government as a policy initiator and the community as the object of human resource development. This kind of relationship will create trust in the community and motivate them to jointly succeed in developing their future existence.

The limitations resulting from a *low masculinity* culture can be overcome through policy intervention. It must be remembered that the characteristics of low masculine culture are oriented towards quality of life, human relations and the environment. In societies with low masculine culture, job satisfaction is not derived from achieving job goals but from *affiliative* needs. Therefore, to overcome this low masculine culture, the goals of human resource development programs must be defined in the context of meeting the needs of people to improve their performance in the face of competitive globalization.

Furthermore, how to overcome the obstacles due to the existence of a culture of *low abstractive thinking*, which is characterized by a lifestyle and mindset that does not emphasize planning for the future? For this reason, design performance objectives in the context of behaviors to be achieved and which are easily seen in specific and clear time targets and are not ambiguous. At the same time, communicate the possible negative impact on the work unit, colleagues and the organization of failing to achieve these goals within the set time frame. During and after the performance time period, feedback is emphasized on the subordinate's actual performance and time spent compared to the pre-agreed goals. In addition, each feedback session should result in *action plans* with specific performance behaviors or *output* targets and subordinates' timelines for completing those *output* targets.

Another cultural obstacle faced in implementing effective human resource management is the culture of *low individualism*. The culture of low individualism emphasizes its attention on groups and group achievements and rejects individual work achievements. Therefore, in order to steer people towards achieving the goal of increasing competitiveness, it must be ensured that the necessary support/assistance systems are in place for achieving the goal. The dialogue between the parties during the feedback session should address how to assist the community in developing its capabilities. The dialogue is a good opportunity to identify factors such as the community's need for different types of training and development, role clarity, technical assistance, lack of resources, and reduction of constraints (e.g. non-functional policies and procedures).

A final question related to the issue of cultural appropriateness is what specific strategies can be used to utilize cultural facilitators and overcome cultural barriers in order to ensure effective implementation of human resource management techniques and practices? To overcome cultural boundaries, it is necessary to adopt and implement a 'duty-nurturing' leadership style and community empowerment strategies. The 'duty' component of this leadership style

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essentially serves to assist the dysfunctional effects of a culture of uncertainty avoidance, high power distance, and associative thinking. This is done through reorienting the community to focus on socio-cultural functions, while the 'nurturing' component essentially depends on community empowerment strategies that can increase self-confidence.

Community empowerment is about positioning people as competent in what they do (Robbins, 2003). Decision-making is pushed down, to the operational level, where people have the freedom to make choices regarding schedules and procedures and problem-solving related to their lives. Several community empowerment strategies can be implemented, including: *First*, the government functions as a facilitator that creates a climate of mutual help and trust in addition to its function as a controller and authority holder. *Second, the* government facilitates the community to actively achieve goals that refer to increasing self-confidence through sustainable human resource development programs. These facilitation actions can be grouped into two categories: eliminating bureaucracy and other organizational constraints to achieve better performance, and gradually increasing the roles and responsibilities of the community through necessary development programs. *The third* empowerment strategy is to set high performance expectations for the community in an effort to guide, train and develop the community, focusing on positive remedial actions so that the community believes it is empowered and directed towards increased capability and confidence.

4. CONCLUSION

Cultural appropriateness and harmony are important to consider in implementing various human resource management techniques and practices in various community groups. In order to achieve the success of human resource management programs, techniques, and processes, the norms, beliefs, and values of the work culture of the community should be considered in accordance with their local wisdom. Programs and practices that are consistent and rooted in cultural values and norms will be successful and sustainable. Therefore, human resource management needs to be adapted in accordance with the cultural values and beliefs of the community, taking into account critical aspects of the community's work culture that may facilitate the effective adoption of human resource management practices and techniques from developed societies.

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