MODULE: IUBA6005 - LEADING AND DEVELOPING PEOPLE

TITLE: IKEA vs MR D.I.Y. : A COMPARISON OF HR POLICIES AND PEOPLE MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

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1.0 Design of People Management Strategies (Aressa)

1.1 Introduction

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) recognizes employees not just as a management resource but as a valuable part of the strategic plan of any organization (Caylan, 2024). A people strategy should, therefore, be based on the skills, actions and structures of human resources that are necessary to attain an organisation's goals. This becomes especially significant as long as different businesses are competing in different ways, as the amount of employees demanded by one business model can be different from another (Boatman, 2021).

This section contrasts the people strategies used by IKEA and MR D.I.Y. in their different organisational contexts. IKEA is a global brand, with more than 63 markets and over 200,000 co-workers, requiring them to ensure they have a unique organizational culture while managing a geographically dispersed workforce (IKEA, 2025; IKEA, 2023). MR D.I.Y. is a bigger value retailer, with a considerable amount of frontline and operational capacity needed across Malaysia. By the end of 2025, MR D.I.Y. claimed 19,300 employees and its retail chain had grown to 1,556 outlets (MR D.I.Y., 2025).

The focus of the comparison is therefore on the logic of the design of each person's strategy, and not on the implementation or effectiveness. Business needs translated to people-strategy priorities are assessed using the strategic Fit/SHRM, the Resource-Based View (RBV) and the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) framework.

1.2 Organisational Context and Strategic People Requirements

The design of people strategy starts with knowing what an organisation needs from its people. The two organisations make an interesting comparison as they are both big retailers, but have different strategic people challenges.

Image 1. *IKEA Logo*

Image 2. *MR D.I.Y Logo*

Table 1: Organisational context shaping people-strategy design

Dimension	IKEA	MR D.I.Y.
Business model	Global home-furnishing retailer	Large-scale value retailer
Geographical scale	63 markets	Primarily Malaysia, with operations also in Brunei
Workforce scale	200,000+ co-workers	19,300 employees in FY2025
Main people-strategy challenge	Maintaining a distinctive culture across an international workforce	Developing consistent capability across a large retail workforce
Key human-capital requirement	IKEA-specific values, behaviours and organisational knowledge	Operational, technical and leadership capability
Strategic emphasis	Culture, values, development and sustainability	Skills development, compensation, wellbeing and scalable HR processes

Source: *compiled from MR D.I.Y (2025); MR D.I.Y. (2024); IKEA (2025); IKEA Malaysia (2024a); IKEA (2024a); IKEA Malaysia (2024b)*

Organisational culture is a special and significant aspect of IKEA's scale. As the company grew, it was more and more crucial for new employees to join in the IKEA culture, IKEA says. The IKEA Way Programme was launched in 1985 to support IKEA members in understanding the IKEA concept of “being and doing”, and is still a part of the IKEA cultural development programme (IKEA, 2025).

MR D.I.Y. meets another challenge. It has a strong focus on the human assets of its retail network and front-line employees. At the end of 2025, the group had 1,556 stores, which grew by 8.4% from the previous year (MR D.I.Y., 2026). This scale requires people processes which can build operational capabilities fairly and on many sites.

This means that both organisations need different kinds of human resources. IKEA must have staff who are able to work in a different culture and adjust to various markets (IKEA, 2024), while MR D.I.Y. needs staff that can provide consistent retail operations on a large scale (MIDF Malaysia, 2025). The difference is the basis for their different approach to the design of their people strategies.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The design of the two people strategies can be evaluated from three different perspectives: Strategic fit and Strategic Human Resouce Management (SHRM), Resource-based View, and Ability-Motivation-Opportunity Framework.

1.3.1 Strategic Fit and SHRM

According to the Strategic Fit theory, the HR practices should be aligned to the business strategy and should not be designed in isolation of the organisational goals (Arora et al., 2024). The business needs to have its recruitment and development, rewards and employee-management practices designed around the abilities the business needs (Kiarie et al., 2025; Waheed et al., 2021).

This is especially valuable, given that the two companies are both in the larger retail space with varying strategic needs. As such, it is not always assumed that the strategic intent of similar HR practices is the same.

1.3.2 Resource-Based View

RBV is the theory developed by Barney (1991) that resources can give sustained competitive advantage if they create value and are difficult for competitors to duplicate or substitute (Mailani et al., 2024).

In HRM, the RBV implies that human resources can be strategically valuable if they have knowledge, behaviours and capabilities that are closely related to the organisation (Pragmatic HRM | Solving Problems Simply, 2025). This is especially important for IKEA where the culture and values embody knowledge which is not just the common knowledge of retail. Those who grasp the workings of IKEA and the values that it represents in action acquire a kind of "human capital" specific to the company.

1.3.3 Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) Framework

The AMO framework is another analysis tool that can be used when looking at how people strategies are developed around employee performance. It separates out practices that foster Ability, practices that foster Motivation and practices that foster Opportunity to contribute for the employee (M. Muzamil Naqshbandi et al., 2023; Doshi & Nigam, 2022). AMO has found use in a systematic review of 104 HRM research articles to understand the linkage between HR practices and employee outcomes (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023), but the application of AMO must take into account the complex interplay among the three factors, and not view them as independent ones.

The framework thus serves to identify IKEA and MR D.I.Y. have developed people strategies that build employee capability and provide suitable motivational and participative conditions.

1.4 Design of IKEA's People Strategy

1.4.1 Culture and Values as the Strategic Foundation

One of the key aspects of IKEA's People strategy design is the emphasis on organisational culture (IKEA, 2025). IKEA's vision is explicitly connected with its culture, with the importance of "how we work and what we value" being acknowledged as equal to what the organisation does (IKEA, 2024a).

This is a strategic issue as IKEA expands into the global market, bringing the potential conflict of consistency vs adaptation (Uyên Bảo, 2025). However, employees in various countries work in different social and cultural environments and the organisation must have a common IKEA identity (Alzghool , 2021). IKEA has, therefore, not just made it usual to operate in a certain way, but also integrated cultural understanding into its people strategy.

The IKEA Way Programme is an example of this Design logic. According to Inter IKEA Group, the programme was developed as part of the organisation's growth to ensure that each employee understands the IKEA way of being and doing, which also supports the culture that differentiates Inter IKEA Group (IKEA, 2025).

This can be viewed as an attempt to develop the firm-specific human capital from an RBV perspective (Gerhart & Feng, 2021). While the retail competences may be provided by other competitors, the knowledge of IKEA's specific values, behaviours and working methods is more deeply rooted within the organization (Twardowski, n.d.). As such, culture is not just an employee engagement program, but a part of a strategic resource that IKEA tries to build and maintain.

1.4.2 Alignment with IKEA's Wider Business Strategy

The IKEA people strategy is also formulated with regard to IKEA's broader sustainability goals. IKEA's sustainability strategy is used by the franchise system as a common direction to guide planning, decision making and target setting. It emphasizes healthy and sustainable living, climate, nature & circularity and fair and equal outcomes (IKEA, 2024c).

This makes for an important human resources strategy. When sustainability becomes a part of business decision making, more than regular retail skills are needed. They need to be aware of the relationship between sustainability and product, operations, customers and organisational behaviour (Thakur & Budhiraja, 2025).

The relationship can be represented as:

Image 3: *Four Stage People Strategy Flow Chart*

This demonstrates Strategic Fit, as the development of people capabilities is relating and connecting to broader organisational goals and issues than they are being developed on their own (Prifti et al., 2025).

1.4.3 Developing IKEA-Specific Human Capital

Another way of looking at it is IKEA's recruitment and development process with its cultural requirements. IKEA's employment information states that values are taken into consideration during the recruitment process and that the new co-workers are introduced to the IKEA Concept, culture and values when onboarding. Staff are also supported to plan for their longer term career and in accessing learning opportunities (Alzghool , 2021).

What is important about this design is that the development of employees starts when they enter the organisation. IKEA sees human capital as something it can create, rather than just bringing in from the outside (IKEA, 2023). Human capital is not just a product of external recruitment, but something that can be developed within the organisation, noting that employees progressively gain organisation-specific knowledge (Karmilah et al., 2026).

This is consistent with RBV, as the value of this human capital grows as a result of the synergy between the individual and their understanding of IKEA's systems, culture and way of working (Chen, 2023). The design therefore allows for a workforce that can do a retail job, and knows how IKEA expects this job to be done.

The main contributions to Ability from an AMO perspective are through learning and development, and values shared can contribute to Motivation by developing a shared organisational identity (Pangaribuan, 2026). Another aspect of the opportunity is IKEA's focus on employees contributing ideas and taking responsibility in the organization (Tahmasbi, 2024).

1.5 Design of MR D.I.Y.'s People Strategy

1.5.1 Designing Around a Large-Scale Retail Workforce

MR D.I.Y.'s people-strategy design is based on the needs of a large-scale retail business. It has been noted in its 2024 Integrated Report that it has three main people-strategy-based pillars are fair compensation, skills development and whole employee wellbeing (MR D.I.Y., 2024).

The planning and strategy is different from that of IKEA. If IKEA is particularly focused on safeguarding its unique organisational culture on an international scale, MR D.I.Y. 's design is more focused on ensuring the ability and supporting staff across a large retail network to operate as a single entity (Ng & Gow, 2026).

The underlying design can be represented as:

Image 4: *Retail Growth Workforce Flow*

This is Strategic Fit as the people strategy is in response to the operational requirements that have been generated by the business model of MR D.I.Y.

1.5.2 Skills Development as Capability Design

The MR D.I.Y. 2025 Sustainability Report offers especially compelling evidence of MR D.I.Y.'s capability-centric approach. The operational and technical development, and leadership development were trained, with 742,384 training hours in FY2025. The average training hours per employee rose from 27.4 hrs. in FY2024 to 34.5 hrs. in FY2025, and the expenditure on training rose slightly from RM4.31 million to RM4.35 million (MR D.I.Y, 2025).

Figure 1: MR D.I.Y. Total Training Hours, FY2023–FY2025

Financial Year	**Total Training Hours**
FY2023	359,801
FY2024	562,102
FY2025	742,384

Figure 2: MR D.I.Y. Training Hours per Employee, FY2023–FY2025

Financial Year	**Average Training Hours per employee**
FY2023	19.4 hours
FY2024	27.4 hours
FY2025	34.5 hours

The key importance for the Design section, however, is not that the hours of training have gone up. That would be more applicable to the effectiveness part. Rather, the data shows how extensive and which way the capability investment being developed in the people strategy goes.

It's also interesting to note the distribution of training. The non-executive employees had around 666,700 training hours while the executives had 57,900 hours of training and the management had 17,800 hours of training in FY2025 (MR D.I.Y, 2025). The emphasis is clearly on the frontline workers, and it makes good sense that this is the case as it is the frontline workers who are the lifeblood of a retail operation.

This is an Ability-oriented part of the people strategy within the framework of the AMO. The intent of the design is to make sure that staff members have the required operational and technical skills for their tasks. The strategy is not only about ability, however, the concept of compensation and wellbeing highlights the need to also motivate people to use their abilities (M. Muzamil Naqshbandi et al., 2023).

1.5.3 Compensation and Wellbeing as Strategic Design Elements

Fair compensation and employee wellbeing are included in MR D.I.Y. 's people-strategy pillars for the simple reason of the fact that a people-strategy is not just about the capability of the workforce. An adequate level of motivation and organisational support for employees also needs to be available to enable them to utilise their skills (MR D.I.Y., n.d.).

The company's reporting for 2025 highlights various initiatives, including improving employee benefits like dental benefits, commuting rebates, and introducing meal allowances (MR D.I.Y, 2025). These measures can be interpreted mainly from an AMO perspective in the light of Motivation. The design acknowledges that capability of employees is complementary and not a separate issue from employee motivation.

This also enhances the Strategic Fit argument. Having enough employees at several stores can be important for a large retail business, as the replacement costs and complexity can add up (Jaman et al., 2022). By designing compensation and wellbeing as part of the people strategy, the human needs of sustaining a large workforce are being met instead of considering employee benefits as a single administrative function (Igbadumhe et al., 2022).

1.5.4 Designing for Workforce Scalability

The growing implementation of digital HR processes is another unique feature of MR D.I.Y's people-strategy design. According to the Sustainability Report of MR D.I.Y (2025), the use of digital tools has been introduced to enhance the efficiency and consistency of the appraisal and promotion processes, with more specific digital tools to be implemented in talent acquisition under MR D.I.Y. Group (M) Berhad's plans.

That's strategically important because the issue with a large retail organisation is not just training and developing individual employees, it's also training and developing people-management systems that can be scaled as the size of the workforce grows (INTOO Staff Writer, 2026).

Therefore:

Image 5: *5-Step HR Strategy Flow*

This sets MR D.I.Y apart from IKEA. IKEA's people strategy is much more focused on cultural transmission, and based on a global system, while MR D.I.Y.'s design is more focused on making human capital management scalable across a large retail system.

1.6 Comparative Critical Analysis

The comparison illustrates that there is no one size fits all solution for developing a people strategy. Both organisations relate HR to business needs, with different priorities for human-capital arising from each organisation's business context.

Table 2: Comparative analysis of people-strategy design

Strategic dimension	IKEA	MR D.I.Y.	Critical interpretation
Primary design challenge	Preserve distinctive culture across international operations	Coordinate and develop a large retail workforce	Different business models create different people requirements
Human-capital emphasis	Firm-specific cultural and organisational knowledge	Operational, technical and leadership capability	Both develop firm-relevant human capital, but of different types
Strategic-fit emphasis	Culture, sustainability and values	Retail scale, capability and workforce support	Each strategy reflects its competitive context
AMO emphasis	Ability through development; Motivation/Opportunity through values and participation	Ability through skills development; Motivation through compensation/wellbeing	Both use multiple HR mechanisms rather than relying on training alone
Key strategic tension	Global consistency versus local adaptation	Operational standardisation versus employee flexibility	Both must balance consistency with responsiveness

Source: *Adapted from MR D.I.Y (2025); MR D.I.Y. (2024); IKEA (2025); IKEA Malaysia (2024a); IKEA (2024a); IKEA Malaysia (2024b)*

The major difference lies in the form of human capital that each organization wants to cultivate. One of the key parts of IKEA's people strategy is a commitment to retaining knowledge that's entrenched in the culture. As the business grows, cultural knowledge is being seen as strategically important, with the introduction of the IKEA Way Programme as well as ongoing focus on shared values (Alzghool , 2021).

MR D.I.Y. builds a people strategy instead, based on the skills needed to run a big retail store. Role specific competencies and operational development and frontline training suggest the

organisation needs employees who can execute retail duties in a variety of areas (Ng & Gow, 2026).

Both methods are not necessarily better than the other. In an RBV, the worth of human capital will rely on its potential to help the organisation meet the specific competitive demands (Malhotra et al., 2024). IKEA's culture-based approach is suitable in the context where identity and values of the organisation must be consistent within international markets (IKEA, 2024d). MR D.I.Y.'s capability-based approach is suitable for situations where consistency of operation and ease of staffing are a critical part of the business (MR D.I.Y., 2024).

Another important challenge is that of standardisation vs flexibility. It is important for IKEA to have enough standardization to maintain its identity but also enough to ensure responsiveness at the local level is not limited (Sandhu, 2026). Likewise, MR D.I.Y. should have standardised processes to ensure uniform retail services, but too much standardisation may deprive employees of discretion and opportunities to be involved. Thus, to design an effective people strategy, it is necessary to have a balance between being consistent with the organization and flexible with employees (Eng et al., 2025).

Again, this comparison illustrates the importance of considering AMO as a system and not a checklist. Bos-Nehles et al. (2023) warn that the relationships between the AMO variables and HR practices are not one-to-one, so ability, motivation and opportunity should not be viewed as independent processes. IKEA's cultural development, learning and participation work goes hand in hand. The capability development, compensation and employee support system are also interrelated for MR D.I.Y.

1.7 Overall Evaluation

IKEA and MR D.I.Y. have grown up with different organisational contexts that have led to a diverse set of people strategies. The IKEA strategy is built on the foundations of continuing to foster a unique culture and nurturing employees' knowledge, behaviours and abilities to align with IKEA's overall business and sustainability goals (IKEA, 2024b). Hence, its focus on values and the IKEA Way can be seen as an effort to create human capital that is specific to the organisation and that adds to organisational distinctiveness.

MR D.I.Y.'s approach to people is focused more robustly on the needs of a mass retail business. The emphasis on skills development and fair compensation and employee well-being emphasises the need to build, nurture and have a large frontline team, and digital HR processes play their part in the scalability of people management (MR D.I.Y, 2025).

In sum, Strategic Fit, RBV and AMO suggest that the number of HR practices that an organisation implements should not be used to assess people-strategy design. Rather, it is important to ask if such practices have been structured around the capabilities of the human beings that the business model has required the organisation to have. IKEA and MR D.I.Y. therefore represent two distinct, but complementary, strategies to build human capital – one which focuses on culture-based human capital that is firm-specific and another which focuses on a scalable operational capability.

2.0 Implementation of People Management Strategies (Rishaila)

Implementation is the stage where an organisation turns its people strategy into actual HR practices and employees' everyday work experiences. Section 1.0 showed that IKEA and MR D.I.Y. have different people priorities, so their implementation approaches also reflect their organisational contexts. Recent research on high-performance work systems highlights that HR practices need to work as a system and be aligned with organisational needs (Jain & Sharma, 2026). The Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) framework is useful because employee performance depends on ability, motivation and opportunity to use those abilities (Kellner et al., 2021). These elements can be interdependent. For this reason, this section compares IKEA and MR D.I.Y. in their implementation of people strategy in recruitment, development, training, employee opportunities and management.

Image 4: AMO Model Framework

2.1 Implementation of IKEA's People Strategy

IKEA begins implementing its people strategy from the recruitment stage. Recruitment is not presented simply as a way of filling vacancies, as IKEA Malaysia states that it recruits based on values and looks beyond an applicant's CV. Its recruitment process includes reviewing applications, an initial introduction, interviews and a final hiring decision. Once selected, new employees go through onboarding where they meet their team, are paired with a buddy and are introduced to the IKEA Concept, culture and values (IKEA, 2023).

This strategy falls into a pattern similar to the culture strategy mentioned above in Section 1.0. IKEA tries to align with culture from the start of the employee lifecycle by taking values into account when recruiting and reinforcing this theme in the induction process. From an AMO perspective, this can contribute to Ability as employees are exposed to organisation specific knowledge and expected behaviours. It may also contribute to Motivation as employees are able to see how their values contribute to the organisation. But values-based recruitment should be done with caution. Organisations must not become obsessed about similarity or other viewpoints may be minimized. IKEA, however, must preserve its culture, while at the same time allowing for the inclusion of employees from diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

This is continued during the onboarding process. New employees to IKEA are introduced to the organisation, to their team, and to the IKEA Concept, Culture and Values (Al-Zghool, 2021). Togetherness, caring for people, caring for the planet, simplicity, responsibility and being a good role model are among its stated values (IKEA, 2024). Onboarding is more than an administrative process since it also provides a way for employees to learn how to behave on the job. The research on HR implementation also reveals that the HR practices may be experienced differently by the employees depending on the interpretation of the HR processes (Suhail et al., 2025). Therefore, in IKEA's example, recruitment and onboarding are used as a means to reinforce the cultural priorities identified in Section 1.0.

This IKEA implementation also demonstrates the importance of embodying culture in daily practice, not just in policy. For instance, one of IKEA's values is to “lead by example”, and IKEA defines leadership as something employees can do, not something that is the responsibility of the formal manager or leaders (Sebhatu & Enquist, 2022). Therefore it is essential that managers and employees act on these values in everyday work.

Another significant aspect of IKEA's implementation is the aspect of learning and development. IKEA Malaysia adopts a learning model of 70:20:10 which means 70% of learning is through practical experiences, 20% is through interaction with others and 10% is through formal learning (IKEA, 2022). IKEA also offers MyLearning, which offers both online and in-person courses, tests and learning modules. The employees are encouraged to acquire new skills, to shift between roles and to explore new job opportunities in other countries (IKEA, 2026).

This strategy is in line with IKEA's focus on continuous development and internal mobility. Learning does not happen only in a formal educational setting as employees are also expected to learn from work and interaction. It also clarifies that IKEA does not view leadership roles as being confined to managers; employees are offered chances to learn leadership behaviours at different levels (IKEA, 2024b). A recent study demonstrates that HR systems can impact employee performance through a combination of ability, motivation and opportunity (Ujma & Ingram, 2021).

But offering learning opportunities doesn't guarantee that all employees will be impacted at the same level. The results of the recent training transfer research indicate that factors that affect whether the learning is transferred to the workplace include training needs, training design, evaluation and employee participation (Zulkifly, 2022). Thus, IKEA's learning resources must be understood as opportunities for development, but not as a certainty of development outcomes. Employees also require motivation, applicable opportunities and help from their managers to implement what they have learned in their work.

Managers' roles are more significant. Research on HRM implementation demonstrates that line managers' conditions and perceptions can influence how HR practices are carried out (Ahrens & Fischer, 2020). Managers are thus required to promote engagement in IKEA's learning and development and values-based practices rather than just offer them programmes.

2.2 Implementation of MR D.I.Y.'s People Strategy

MR D.I.Y. 's people strategy is unique given the size and scale of its retail operation, and the need for consistent operational and technical capability. Its 2025 Sustainability Report identifies employee development through operational, technical and leadership training (MR. D.I.Y., 2025). MR D.I.Y. experienced a growth in FY2025, with 742,384 training hours (34.5 hours per employee), whereas FY2024 saw 562,102 hours (27.4 hours per employee). In addition, training expenditure also rose from RM4.31 million to RM4.35 million (MR D.I.Y., 2025).

The size of this is indicative of how many employees are being developed. The training programmes are relevant to the various levels of the work force and comprise operational, technical and leadership programmes. Employees can be trained on the job or technically to

perform their jobs in a consistent manner, and employees can be developed to take on more responsibility through leadership development. The training, from AMO's point of view, mainly supports the development of an employee's knowledge and skills in the context of his/her job duties (Naqshbandi et al., 2023). Research related to the development and implementation of high performance work systems also indicates that HR practices can yield better results when they are implemented as part of a system, as opposed to separate practices (Garg et al., 2021).

The rise in training activity is especially pertinent to the problem of keeping up with a large workforce. Staff can have varying levels of experience and structured training can offer a levelled ground of knowledge and expectations. But a standard training structure does not equate to all employees having the same development needs. There still is a need for managers and HR staff to determine where further support is needed. This is the AMO view, as Ability is not independent from Motivation and Opportunity, as employees can be knowledgeable but require assistance and opportunities to apply their knowledge (Hassan et al., 2026).

Concurrently, the costs of training and the number of hours spent on training cannot simply be assumed to be good indicators of effectiveness. They demonstrate the extent of implementation and investment, but not whether the employees made use of the learning or that organisational outcomes were influenced. In the past few years, there has been evidence-based HRM research that indicates training transfer is affected by training needs identification, participation, training information and evaluation (Fatima & Siddiqui, 2020). Hence, the focus on training figures is more on the fact that MR D.I.Y. is investing in and implementing employee development than as evidence of the intended outcomes of the strategy.

MR D.I.Y. also applies people strategy in the areas of employee development, employee leadership development and succession management activities. These practices are applicable to a widely spread retail chain where future expansion will demand workers who are able to accept increased responsibilities. Development opportunities can complement Opportunity, helping employees to use their existing skills and support their development and progression; and employee support and wellbeing can support Motivation. This is in line with the recent

HRM research that found that HRM practices associated with AMO can positively impact employee-level and organisational outcomes (Almutawa et al., 2021).

Digitalisation is another implementation relevant mechanism. Digital HR can assist in coordinating recruitment, development, performance and communication across multiple locations. But there is no way that digital systems can be a substitute for human management, as HR practices are finally being felt by employees through managers and peers. Consistency and flexibility are, therefore, the two major challenges faced by MR D.I.Y. with various employee and operation requirements.

When looking at MR D.I.Y.'s figures for training, the difference between implementation and effectiveness becomes even more significant. It is not enough to demonstrate that more employees are training, as evidenced by the 27.4 to 34.5 training hours per employee increase, it also needs to demonstrate whether employee performance, engagement or retention has improved. Section 3.0 may then address issues related to outcomes like capability, retention and progression.

2.3 Critical Comparison of Implementation

The implementation methods of two case studies, IKEA and MR D.I.Y., demonstrate the impact of organisation on people strategies. IKEA focuses more on values-based recruitment, cultural integration, experiential learning, and internal mobility and employee participation. MR D.I.Y. on the other hand, has a stronger focus on structured training, operational and technical competency, leadership development and scalable HR processes. These differences are in accordance with the strategic priorities identified in Section 1.0. The implementation of IKEA is in line with a culture and development approach, whereas the implementation of MR D.I.Y. is more directly linked with the capability needs of a large retail workforce.

These differences can be understood with the help of the AMO framework. At IKEA, Learning and development primarily benefit Ability, organisational values and development benefit Motivation and internal mobility benefit Opportunity to apply capabilities. The operational and technical training primarily contribute to Ability, employee support and wellbeing can contribute to Motivation, and development and succession activities can provide opportunities for progression at MR D.I.Y.

However, Gooderham et al. (2022) emphasise that AMO elements should not be treated as completely separate because their interaction and the organisational context influence outcomes. Studies also suggest that context can influence the most salient dimension of AMO that is correlated with performance.

Line managers are another important issue for both organisations. HR policies can be developed at an organisational level, and then implemented at a manager level to shape employees' working lives. Studies on the implementation of HRM show that the conditions and perceptions of the line managers can affect the implementation of HRM (Poškienė et al., 2025). IKEA managers must ensure that learning, organisational values and employee responsibility are reinforced in the day-to-day work. Managers for MR D.I.Y. should have uniform training, development, and performance practices at various retail outlets.

There are also implementation challenges faced by the two organisations. The challenge at IKEA is to keep the cultural expectations the same in different roles and in different places, and to keep both the individual and the collective perspectives. The challenge at MR D.I.Y. is more related to scale. While standardised training and HR processes might be needed to ensure consistency, there may be various kinds of support required for employees. Recent studies on high-performance work systems also highlight that HR systems may have a positive or negative impact on employees if practices are inconsistent with the context.

This sets up a conflict of consistency and individual responsiveness. There are systems that can be implemented that are standardised, which can help to ensure fairness and consistency, especially in larger workforces. But more standardization than necessary might hinder managers' ability to tailor to individual needs, and more discretion than necessary might lead to the same policy being experienced differently by employees. Therefore, it is crucial that there is a consistency of implementation within the organisation and an appropriate managerial flexibility. This aligns with recent studies that have argued that HR practices need to be viewed as interdependent systems and in the context of their implementation (Boon et al., 2021).

Implementation approaches may also be examined from the point of view of the Taylorism and Human Relations perspectives covered in the module. In MR D.I.Y. The scale of a retail

operation demands operational uniformity, training and standardisation, and there are some parallels with Taylorist principles of efficiency and standardisation. Recent studies point out that Taylorist approaches can include the division and codification of tasks, which can lead to deskilling if the workers lack control over the way in which work is performed (Miao & Situ, 2026). But MR D.I.Y.'s commitment to employee development and leadership development shows that it's not just about control and efficiency. The use of standardisation processes is also found in IKEA, but the focus on learning through work, internal mobility and employee responsibility is more in line with the Human Relations concepts of employee involvement and job enrichment.

The evidence available does not indicate that either organisation has a predominantly deskilled workforce. MR D.I.Y.'s focus on operational procedures and standardised training may result in some characteristics of routine or repetitive work, however, the focus on technical and leadership development also suggests opportunities to develop more general capabilities. Likewise, IKEA's normalised retail procedures might consist of recurring tasks, but its focus on experiential learning, internal mobility and specialised skills offers chances for staff to go beyond a single task.

The overall implementation of IKEA is integrated in IKEA's culture, learning and employee development, whereas MR D.I.Y. 's approach is based on workforce capability, employee support and scalable processes. Both approaches cannot be evaluated without taking into account the organisation. The main implementation challenge for both organisations is how HR practices are translated into employees' work life through managers and organisational practices. This provides the basis for evaluating effectiveness in Section 3.0.

3.0 Effectiveness of People Management Strategies (Alisha)

An organisation's HR management can be judged by the following factors like whether HR functions assist them in enhancing employee capability, engagement, retention and business performance. Strategic human resource management is important because human resource management should not just be administrative but also be a means to achieve the business goals. Koon (2015) established that HR procedures like recruitment, training and development, compensation and performance management can impact employee results and tie the connection of business strategy with performance. Likewise, Huselid (1995) reported a negative correlation between employee attrition and effective HR practices, and a positive correlation between HR practices and productivity and organisational performance.

Thus, both IKEA and MR D.I.Y. have their own people management strategies, reflecting the different approaches required for both companies due to their different scales of operation and their different organisational needs. IKEA has a strong emphasis on its employees' development, inclusion and career growth potential whereas MR D.I.Y. has a strong focus on training, employees' ability and readiness to work in its large retail network. Hence, the success rate of their strategies can be measured by the level of their support on the business practices they have enabled.

3.1 Effectiveness of IKEA's People Management Strategy

IKEA's approach to managing their workforce seems to be working for them as they strongly invest in employee learning and employee career development. The business employs the 70:20:10 learning model which is where an employee learns primarily from other people, experience and formal training in the job. IKEA's Mylearning platform also offers learning opportunities and internal career mobility. The practices ensure employees can continually hone their craft and have some opportunities for advancement in the company (IKEA Malaysia, 2024a).

Another driving force is IKEA's commitment to inclusion and employees' health and well-being. The company is committed to fostering an environment that values and embraces team members and to providing equal opportunities. IKEA also offers employee discounts and parental leaves and financial incentives based on common company goals. The practices

can contribute to better employee satisfaction and commitment as employees might feel that the organisation cares for them (IKEA Malaysia, 2024b).

IKEA's workforce is also a good indicator of the need to have a consistent people strategy. In FY2025, there were approximately 222,000 co-workers working and the company has 504 stores in 63 markets (IKEA, 2025a, 2025b). As such, its focus on common values, learning and inner development can contribute to developing a culture of the organisation in a transnational manner.

These practices, however, do not necessarily indicate that IKEA's strategy has led to higher productivity or retention rates. It would be better to have more specific employee outcome data to measure its effectiveness. However, evidence has shown that development, inclusion and effective HR can positively impact employee commitment in organisations and their performance (Huselid, 1995; Li et al., 2019). Overall, IKEA's approach is effective in enabling them to have a long-term and people-centred people management strategy for their global workforce.

3.2 Effectiveness of MR D.I.Y.'s People Management Strategy

MR D.I.Y. places a major emphasis on developing employees' skills to assist with its sizeable retail operation as part of its people management strategy. The company is investing heavily in the training of employees in FY2025 with an expenditure of around RM4.35mil and training hours of 742,384 hours was achieved based on 186 training programmes. This means that this resulted in an increase of the number of training hours compared to the previous year (MR D.I.Y. Group [M] Berhad, 2025).

The company offers operational, technical and leadership development training. MR D.I.Y. also offers individual Employee Development Plans and Programmes for high potential employees, as well as succession planning. The practices are significant as the company aims to insert staff that can handle overall retail work during the day and also to train and cultivate new leaders for the company's future growth (MR D.I.Y. Group [M] Berhad, 2025).

MR D.I.Y. 's are present at 1,584 outlets in Malaysia and Brunei, thus human resource consistency is a significant issue. Training will enable staff to become familiar with company

procedures, increase their job skills and to keep service standards high at various sites. Continuous training is therefore relevant for MR D.I.Y. business model since there is a high dependence on people performing their activities consistently in the case of a large network of retailers.

It is also designed to aid employees' growth and retention by offering chances for employee skill enhancement and advancement within the company. This aligns with the finding of Koon (2015) that training and development and other strategic HR practices play a positive role in the employees' outcomes.

Investment in money or training hours, however, is not sufficient to demonstrate that the strategy is effective for business or employee performance. MR D.I.Y. will have to conduct an analysis of the results of the training including productivity, work turnover, promotion and employee performance after training. In summary, its workforce management approach seems successful, in that it helps build the capacity of its workers, enhances workforce leadership and allows it to meet the operational demands of a vast retail chain.

3.3 Comparison of IKEA and MR D.I.Y.

Both IKEA and MR D. I. Y. place emphasis on their staff, but due to the different environments, the strategies employed in the work of both organisations bring about different benefits for the employees.

IKEA has a very strong policy on the development of its employees, internal mobility, inclusion and organisational culture. This is a reflection of its international makeup and size of its global workforce. It is important that its staff are ready to work in various markets and cultures, but are still able to uphold the IKEA values. Therefore, it's crucial to have continuous learning and career development, not only to improve technical skills, but also in the social skills of the employees.

MR D.I.Y., on the other hand, emphasises more on the training, operational capability, leadership development and succession planning at large scale. This is related to its wide retail network in Malaysia and Brunei. Its challenge is to ensure that thousands of employees

around multiple locations are matching their performance consistently as the organisation continues to grow.

This means that both organisations illustrate different aspects of HR effectiveness. What makes IKEA effective is its ability to build a flexible and motivated workforce, and what makes MR D.I.Y. effective, is its capacity to build workforce capability on scale.

Therefore, it would be incorrect to just make the claim that one company has a better HR strategy than the other. Rather, measuring effectiveness should be based on the strategy's ability to meet the specific business needs of the organisation. This aligns with Koon's (2015) view that HR practices are intertwined with the business strategy and affect employee results.

There are some similarities between the two companies too. It is acknowledged by both organisations that employees need ongoing development not one-off training. Both provide opportunities for employee growth, and both place importance on creating an inclusive working environment. These similarities are a general strategic similarity in HRM, whereby if the work of HR be aligned with the needs of the organisation, they can be a source of organisational capability.

Huselid (1995) corroborates this comparison in that high-performance HR practices were linked to employee-related outcomes including employee turnover and productivity and to corporate financial outcomes. This implies that the HR practices should be treated as a system of practices as opposed to separate activities in the organisation.

The recruitment, learning, inclusion and rewards are intermeshed and support IKEA's global workforce. Recruitment, training, leadership development and succession planning are all interconnected and vital to support a large retail team for MR D.I.Y. The effectiveness of both strategies thus relies on the complementarities of the HR practices employed.

3.4 Overall Evaluation

In conclusion, IKEA and MR D.I.Y. apply strategies which can be regarded as effective in the management of people in the context of their organisational requirements. Established values and continuous development of the employees in IKEA build a solid base for managing its

international workforce under inclusion and internal mobility. It fits perfectly the need for the employee to develop continually and be flexible in various markets.

MR D.I.Y.'s approach is effective in a different way. It has made a significant investment in training, extended training time and is implementing succession and leadership development which are appropriate for an organisation with a very large retail footprint. Investment in workforce development is clearly increasing with training growing from 562,102 hours in FY2024 to 742,384 hours in FY2025.

However, both companies must realise that the existing HR methods will not necessarily be effective on their own. It is necessary to measure the outcomes of employees and organisations so as to assess the effectiveness of HR strategies continuously. For IKEA, this can encompass employee retention, internal promotion, employee engagement and employee development outcomes. Useful indicators for MR D.I.Y. might be training effectiveness, employee turnover, promotion percentages, productivity, employee engagement.

In summary, the overall findings are that each company, IKEA and MR D.I.Y. have people management strategies that show some positive signs of effectiveness; however, the strengths they possess are different. The notion of a flexible, global workforce is more crucial at IKEA, while the ability to nurture and develop the skills and leadership required to run a vast retail chain is more important at MR D.I.Y.

However, they both require ongoing alignment with organisations strategy to be effective. Based on Koon's (2015) study in Malaysia, HR practices and business strategy are interrelated, and they can have an impact on employee outcomes. In conclusion, it’s important for both IKEA and MR D.I.Y. to continue measuring and assessing their people's strategies based on the outcomes of employee actions as well as their impacts on the business.

Finally, IKEA' people strategy could be considered effective as a support for employee development, for internal career growth, for inclusion and also to make the workforce capable across the world and finally for leadership development and succession planning, and MR D.I.Y.'s strategy could be considered effective as a support for large-scale training, for making workforce capable, for leadership development and succession planning. While both strategies are suitable to the specific organisational environments, both firms still need to

monitor and fine-tune their HR practices to ensure continued viability and relevance in a business landscape that is constantly evolving.

4.0 Current and Future People Needs (Shasha)

Human resource strategies need to change according to the current and future needs of an organisation. As a business grows, technological advances, customer expectations, competing demands and the need for employees' skills, can all create new demands on workers. So, the complete implementation of the same people management practices over an extended time is not possible for organisations. The significance of Strategic Human Resource Management is that SHRM processes should be related to business strategy and envisioned results. In his study of companies in Malaysia, Koon (2015) discovered that HR practices including recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation, performance control, employment security and work-life balance are correlated to employee outcomes. This demonstrates that HR strategies should focus on the direction of the business and not just be administrative tasks.

Their current and future people's needs are greatly affected by the size of their operations, with IKEA having a larger scale than MR D.I.Y. IKEA is present in 63 markets with 504 stores and some 222,000 co-workers worldwide. MR D.I.Y. on the other hand has a very large retail network of 1,584 stores, mostly in Malaysia and Brunei as at 31 December 2025. So, the future HR priorities remain different for both the organisations, even though they are both big retailers. IKEA must educate its staff for the global and multicultural company while MR D.I.Y. must create a large and scalable workforce to enable further expansion on a retail basis.

4.1 IKEA's Current People Needs

Being able to manage a diverse and international workforce is one of IKEA's key current people needs. IKEA has 222,000 co-workers and 504 stores in 63 markets. This international aspect requires employees to be able to interact with people coming from various cultural and professional backgrounds.

Thus, the ability to adapt and communicate are necessary skills in an IKEA job. Staff must be aware of the company's values as well as respond and react to the local market and customers. IKEA's commitment to inclusion and equality can be a strength in this respect in ensuring a workplace where other employees can make contributions.

The need for continuous learning is another important issue that needs to be addressed. The influence of digital technology, e-commerce and customer expectations is growing in the retail sector. IKEA's current focus on Learning and Career Development offers a framework for staff to continuously seek and update their knowledge and skills.

Internal mobility is also crucial as it enables IKEA to build up staff for other positions. The organisation doesn't have to rely exclusively on external candidates, but can rely on people who are already familiar with the company's culture and business practices. This can help build retention and ensure that there is a workforce who is ready to step up.

4.2 IKEA's Future People Needs

IKEA will continue to create employees who are digital and specialised in the future. IKEA's FY25 results have indicated the significance of the online channel in IKEA's retail business, accounting for 28% of its total sales. Employees will have to be familiar with the traditional retail and digital customer experience as digital retail evolves.

Leadership development will also be a key factor that will be essential in the future. Leaders for a global operation need to be able to be intercultural, cross-collaborative and adaptable to market changes around the world. Therefore, IKEA must continue to foster talent from within and offer their employees career opportunities to better prepare for leadership.

One of the future needs is to sustain the organisational culture as with a worldwide function. As IKEA continues to grow, it must make sure its values are upheld yet not stifling. This demands that its HR strategy is consistent throughout the world, but flexible to meet country requirements.

In conclusion, IKEA's current people strategy sounds like it will continue to have value moving forwards as continuous learning, internal mobility and inclusion can aid a workforce that is adaptable. However, the organisation needs to continuously update these practices according to technological and market changes.

4.3 MR D.I.Y.'s Current People Needs

MR D.I.Y. 's wide retail footprint has a significant impact on their current people's needs. The company had a total of 1,584 outlets in Malaysia and Brunei as at 31 December 2025. The type of scale that was required needed a massive number of workers to keep stores open and serviced over numerous locations.

The importance of training and upskilling is thus a current need. MR D.I.Y. saw 742,384 hours of training, an average of 34.5 hours per employee, in FY2025. The company also allocated RM4.35 million on training and development. This indicates that employee development is already a significant part of its people strategy.

A key factor is the ability of frontline staff, as their actions can greatly affect the customer experience. Training must, therefore, include operational knowledge, customer relationships, safety and other requirements of the job. MR D.I.Y's sustainability information is confirmed, as training is provided on health and safety, code of conduct, customer relationships and other development programmes.

Other crucial requirements include employee retention. Organising a large number of stores entails employing enough staff at various stores. Career development and opportunities for progression to keep employees on the organisation for longer term careers.

4.4 MR D.I.Y.'s Future People Needs

Continued business expansion is closely linked with the future people needs of MR D.I.Y. The company will need more store personnel, supervisors and managers if it expands its store locations. Implementing recruitment and training systems, therefore, should be scalable, which means that the size of the organisation should not diminish if the number of recruits increases or changes.

Leadership development will be playing an increasingly vital role in the future. The greater the number of stores that are opening up, the more skilled managers they will require to manage employees, maintain store performance and implement company policies. Succession planning is a method used to help MR D.I.Y. empower future employees to take on these roles.

The use of digital capability will also be increasingly important. Technology can have an impact on recruitment, training, employee management, inventory control and customer services. Thus, MR D.I.Y. requires those who are comfortable with digital systems and technology that are adaptable.

The company should also keep tracking its employee engagement and turnover rates. Employee performance and promotion, retention and engagement are other indicators of the long-term effects of training investments, as are training expenditures and the number of training hours spent on investments.

4.5 Overall Evaluation

In summary, the two IKEA and MR D.I.Y. 's people strategies can both serve to continue supporting their organisations, first, however they both need to move in other directions.

The key skills that IKEA should focus on in the future are to build a flexible, technically skilled, culturally sensitive international workforce. There is a strong base of learning and internal mobility and inclusion that are well established but these practices are still to be continued in the ever changing retail environment.

MR D.I.Y's next priority will be to create a scalable, skilled workforce that will support ongoing retail expansion. The company is doing more and more to invest in training, and training as a key component of leadership development and succession planning is a strong base for further development but the company should not stop stepping up their efforts to invest in its employees' digital skills and retention.

That leaves both organisations to be able to continue to enjoy the benefits of the existing people strategies provided they are flexible and fit the business case. This aligns with the strategic HRM perspective that HR practices need to be related to organisational strategy and employee outcomes (Koon, 2015).

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