

Exploring and Analyzing Human Resource Management Strategies of McDonald's and Google

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Executive Summary

This article offers a comparative analysis of the human resource management (HRM) strategies of McDonald's Corporation and Google, taking into account internal and external influences, as well as the companies' size, reach, and sector. It examines key HRM concerns including recruitment, training, diversity, performance management, and compensation, alongside the impact of AI on HRM practices. Recommendations for improvement encompass enhancing communication and conflict resolution mechanisms for McDonald's and strengthening employee benefits and involvement in decision-making for Google. By implementing these measures, both companies can optimize HRM practices, elevate employee satisfaction, and sustain competitiveness in their respective sectors.

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1. Introduction

In the realm of human resource management, McDonald's Corporation and Google, stand out as industry giants. Despite operating in different sectors, both share a commitment to excellence in people management. This article delves into their HRM strategies, exploring how they navigate internal and external environments to optimize workforce effectiveness.

The article examines internal and external factors impacting HRM strategies at McDonald's and Google, comparing their approaches in recruitment, training, performance management, diversity, and compensation. Additionally, it discusses AI integration into HRM and its implications. Based on the overall analysis of HRM practices at McDonald's and Google, some useful recommendations are provided for both companies.

Throughout, references to relevant literature offer insights into HRM strategies, highlighting strengths, challenges, and improvement opportunities. By analyzing these giants' HRM approaches, the article provides valuable insights for optimizing workforce effectiveness in today's dynamic business landscape.

2. Organisational Overview

McDonald's Corporation is a global fast-food chain headquartered in the United States (McDonald's Corporation). With thousands of locations worldwide, it operates in diverse geographical locations, catering to a wide range of demographics. The workforce demographic includes individuals from various age groups, backgrounds, and cultures, reflecting the diversity of its customer base. McDonald's has a dedicated HR team responsible for managing human resources functions. This team plays a crucial role within the organization, ensuring compliance with labor laws, implementing HR policies, and handling employee relations matters. The HR function at McDonald's typically sits within the corporate structure, with representation at the executive level, ensuring alignment with strategic goals and initiatives.

Google, is a multinational technology conglomerate headquartered in the United States. It's a part of Alphabet Inc., operates globally with offices in more than 40 nations, totaling 70 offices worldwide (Google, 2019). The company's workforce demographic comprises individuals with diverse backgrounds, skills, and expertise, reflecting its commitment to diversity and inclusion. Google's HR function operates with a dedicated HR team responsible for managing human resources functions. This team is integral to the organization, overseeing recruitment, employee development, performance management, and employee engagement initiatives. Within Google, the HR function is strategically positioned, with representation at the executive level, ensuring alignment with the company's overarching goals and values.

3. Main discussion

3.1 Impact of Internal and External Environmental Changes on HRM Strategies

Internal environmental changes have different impacts on the human resources management strategies of McDonald's and Google. McDonald's, influenced by the traditional fast-food business model, hierarchical management, and standardized processes, tends to focus more on operational efficiency. Consequently, the company prioritizes employee training to ensure compliance with company standards and procedures. In contrast, Google, influenced by its open company culture, innovative spirit, and flat organizational structure, places greater emphasis on employee involvement, innovation, and flexibility. Therefore, Google encourages employee participation in decision-making and provides more development opportunities and autonomy.

External environmental changes also affect McDonald's and Google differently. Globalization is necessary for success and survival in the worldwide markets, but global competition is not easy (Bateman & Scott, 2004). McDonald's is affected by market competition, regulatory changes, and consumer demands, necessitating adjustments to its HRM strategies to adapt to the evolving external environment. Thus, the company intensifies efforts to recruit and retain talent and places greater emphasis on employee satisfaction and loyalty. Conversely, Google is influenced by competition in the technology industry, technological advancements, and global market trends, requiring continuous innovation in HRM strategies to maintain competitiveness. Consequently, Google enhances technical training, improves employees' ability to adapt to new technologies, and focuses on enhancing employee welfare and work environment.

These internal and external environmental changes have profound effects on the HRM strategies of McDonald's and Google. McDonald's pays more attention to employee training and incentive mechanisms to improve service quality and meet evolving consumer demands. Conversely, Google continually optimizes its

recruitment strategies to attract and retain top talent and innovate its employee welfare and work environment to enhance employee satisfaction and creativity. Therefore, both companies flexibly adjust their HRM strategies according to the varying internal and external environmental changes in the market and industry.

3.2 Diverse Approaches to People Management: Size, Reach, and Sector Influence

Both McDonald's and Google approach People Management differently based on their respective size, reach, and sector.

Regarding size, McDonald's has roughly 35,000 outlets all around the world which serves around 70 million consumers everyday.(Mulyo, 2023) It is recorded that, around almost 2 million people employed and it is operates in over hundred countries (Njihia, 2019). It implements standardized procedures and centralized HR processes to manage its extensive workforce efficiently. In contrast, Google, as a tech giant, leverages its resources to foster a culture of autonomy and creativity among its large and diverse employee base.

In terms of reach, both companies tailor their People Management strategies to accommodate local nuances while upholding global brand standards. McDonald's focuses on hiring locals in management roles to align with its "think global, act local" ethos(Mujtaba & Patel, 2007, p. 58), while Google adapts its approach to accommodate cultural diversity and regulatory requirements across its global operations.

In the sector aspect, McDonald's, operating in the fast-food industry, emphasizes recruitment and retention efforts to combat high turnover rates and maintain a motivated workforce. And it ensures the best candidates needed would get the job (Tracy, 2013). On the other hand, Google, operating in the tech sector, prioritizes

continuous learning and skill development to keep pace with technological advancements and market trends. Overall, both companies prioritize innovation and adaptability in their People Management practices to thrive in their respective sectors while addressing the unique challenges they face.

3.3 Key People Management Concerns

By analyzing McDonald's and Google's practices in recruitment, diversity, training, employee engagement, performance management, and compensation, we can gain insight into their strategies and methods in human resource management.

To begin with, both organizations prioritize effective recruitment and selection procedures. McDonald's implements diverse recruitment strategies and inclusive selection practices to ensure workforce diversity. Similarly, Google utilizes various recruitment channels and criteria to foster diversity, emphasizing qualities such as smartness, creativity, and alignment with organizational values rather than solely focusing on work experience, reflecting its innovation-driven differentiation strategy (Shittu, 2017). However, while McDonald's focuses on recruitment within the fast-food industry, Google's recruitment efforts span across the technology sector.

Google's commitment to diversity is evident in its global recruitment efforts, having hired over 40,000 employees worldwide across more than 70 offices in 40 nations (Google, 2019). Additionally, McDonald's also emphasizes diversity in its workforce, evident in its hiring practices across different regions and cultures.

Organizational goals are always achieved through employee efficiency, making it imperative for organizations to ensure their employees are well-trained (Torrington et al., 2005). In training and development, both McDonald's and Google prioritize providing opportunities for enhancing employees' skills and career development. McDonald's offers comprehensive training covering all aspects of the business,

combining on-the-job and classroom learning, and emphasizes merit-based promotions for career advancement. New recruits are also introduced to the company's core values during the training program. ("McDonald's: Burgers, Fries & More. Quality Ingredients," 2017). Similarly, Google focuses on enhancing employees' knowledge and skills through staff training and development.

In performance management, both McDonald's and Google prioritize evaluating employees' performance to ensure work quality and efficiency. McDonald's relies on sales data and customer service evaluations for performance assessment, complemented by Incentive Planning (Shwedeh et al., 2021), facilitating fair and proportionate compensation. Conversely, Google adopts a data-driven approach, offering personalized feedback and development opportunities to enhance employee performance.

Employee satisfaction, crucial for organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Aziri, 2011, p. 78), is determined by the fulfillment of desires, needs, and wants (Morse, 1977). It significantly influences workplace behavior (Davis & Nestrom, 1985, p. 109) and correlates with employee loyalty and productivity (Kristna, 1997). Positive and favorable attitudes towards the job indicate job satisfaction. (Armstrong, 2006, p. 264). McDonald's supports retention through comprehensive healthcare benefits, including daycare, immunizations, and disability benefits. Similarly, Google prioritizes retention through innovative HR management techniques under its 'Best Place to Work For' program, emphasizing the acquisition and nurturing of diverse talent (Thu & Uyen, 2023). This reflects effective human resource management strategies aimed at hiring and retaining qualified, motivated staff.

For more than five decades, the McDonald's Corporation touted racial diversity and inclusion, which was embraced as a vital element of its corporate ethos (Gupta & Gupta, 2023). This commitment to diversity and inclusion is evident in both McDonald's and Google, as they prioritize diversity across their HR practices,

implementing inclusive strategies from recruitment to performance management. They offer varied training opportunities, promote employee engagement, and foster an open work culture. Additionally, they personalize performance management and provide competitive compensation and benefits, reflecting their commitment to diversity and inclusivity, ultimately enhancing organizational performance and creating inclusive work environments.

In compensation and benefits, it is important for the company to take special care of their employees as they directly serve customers (Mee, 1983, pp. 162-163). Google and McDonald's prioritize employee-friendly environments and competitive wage packages. Google fosters inclusivity in its workplace culture, McDonald's offers meal discounts, including 50% off for two meals and free meals for full-day part-time employees (Chia et al., 2020). Additionally, all employees receive healthcare benefits, with hourly workers paying approximately \$80 per paycheck. Dental and vision programs are available for an extra \$10 each. However, conflicts of interest between management and workers persist on pay (Qadri et al., 2016, p. 2). Persistent compensation issues at McDonald's lead to conflicts with the union, highlighting the need for improvement in communication and conflict resolution within its HRM practices (Krishnamurthy & Singh, 2005; Wei, 2024; Halme, Lindeman, & Linna, 2012).

3.4 Technological Influence on HRM

Over the past decade, AI-driven applications have surged in the HRM domain, reshaping business practices locally and globally. This technological progress has significantly influenced work design, employee engagement, and workplace processes (Abraham et al., 2019; Agrawal et al., 2017; Duggan et al., 2020; Malik et al., 2020a; 2022; McColl & Michelotti, 2019; Budhwar et al., 2022). AI integration into People Management has improved recruitment, performance management, and diversity initiatives, backed by studies demonstrating AI's positive impact on HRM

functions. However, challenges such as job displacement and algorithmic bias necessitate transparent communication, comprehensive training, and ethical guidelines to optimize performance and enhance employee satisfaction. If these challenges are not adequately addressed, it may lead to some adverse influence, as emphasized by Anandarajan (2002) and Bennis (2013), along with the contributions of Robinson et al. (2020), Darr (2019), Jabagi et al. (2019), Ravenelle (2019), Ghobadi and Mathiassen (2020), and Lloyd and Payne (2019), who have provided specific examples.

Regarding the aspects of AI in the HRM management strategies of Google and McDonald's, Firstly, Google employs advanced AI to streamline recruitment, automatically screening resumes and candidates, saving time and costs. AI analytics tools assess candidates' skills to ensure the recruitment of suitable talent. Similarly, McDonald's leverages AI for recruitment optimization, using intelligent platforms and voice recognition to enhance efficiency and cut costs. AI aids in understanding candidates' skills, aligning with job requirements.

Then, AI enhances performance management. Google analyzes employees' performance data, providing personalized feedback and development opportunities. McDonald's utilizes AI for performance improvement, comprehensively evaluating performance and providing improvement recommendations.

Overall, AI profoundly impacts personnel management strategies. Organizations like McDonald's and Google leverage AI to address HR challenges and boost employee efficiency and satisfaction.

4. conclusion

In conclusion, the comparison between McDonald's and Google highlights their distinct approaches to HR management, influenced by their internal and external environments. Both companies prioritize innovation and adaptability in their HR practices to address the unique challenges they face in their respective sectors.

McDonald's may benefit from paying more attention to employee training and incentive mechanisms to improve service quality and meet evolving consumer demands. Additionally, addressing compensation disparities and improving communication and conflict resolution within its HR practices is crucial for fostering employee satisfaction and productivity.

On the other hand, Google could further optimize its recruitment strategies to attract and retain top talent. Continuous innovation in employee welfare and work environment, along with addressing challenges related to algorithmic bias and job displacement resulting from the integration of AI into HRM, are areas for improvement to enhance employee satisfaction and creativity.

5. Recommendations

Both McDonald's and Google have implemented robust human resources management practices tailored to their respective industries, scales, and global coverage. However, each company has areas for improvement. Here are recommendations:

For McDonald's:

(1) Improving Communication and Conflict Resolution Mechanisms: McDonald's can implement a more open and transparent communication policy, including regular employee feedback meetings and anonymous feedback channels, to allow employees to express their opinions and concerns more freely. Additionally, establishing more effective conflict resolution mechanisms, such as internal mediation procedures and independent mediators, can help resolve disputes arising from issues like compensation in a timely manner, maintaining a positive work atmosphere and employee relations. However, it's essential to acknowledge that enhancing communication might face resistance initially, and establishing conflict resolution mechanisms could require significant resources.

(2) Developing Fair Compensation Policies: Given that compensation issues can lead to dissatisfaction and conflict, McDonald's should review and improve its compensation policies. Collaborating with unions and employee representatives to develop fair compensation policies that balance the interests of management and employees can increase employee trust and satisfaction. Fair compensation policies not only reduce conflicts but also enhance employee motivation and loyalty. However, developing fair compensation policies may lead to disagreements and incur financial costs.

(3) Enhancing HRM Leadership and Employee Training and Development: Leadership is the ability to influence a group of people toward the achievement of a vision or set of goals, and it is crucial in HRM. How well your team is trained can be

the difference between success and failure in the restaurant business. Besides traditional training methods, McDonald's can consider introducing more technology-driven training tools, such as mobile learning applications and virtual reality simulations, to enhance employees' skills and capabilities. Personalized training plans should also consider employees' career development and interests more, thereby enhancing their service awareness and professional level. However, improving HRM leadership and training may demand substantial investments and time.

For Google:

(1) Strengthening Employee Benefits and Work Environment: While Google has already made efforts in employee benefits and work environment, further improvements can be made. Providing more flexible work arrangements, health plans, and opportunities for skill development can increase employee satisfaction and creativity. Additionally, continuously improving benefit plans through collecting employee feedback and piloting programs can ensure employee participation and satisfaction, thereby enhancing team cohesion and work efficiency. However, strengthening employee benefits may require significant financial commitments.

(2) Enhancing Employee Involvement in Decision-Making through Effective Leadership: Google can further strengthen opportunities for employee involvement in decision-making by leveraging effective leadership, which is the ability to influence a group of people toward the achievement of a vision or set of goals. This involves making employees feel that their voices are heard and valued. Setting up employee representative mechanisms, involving employees in project decision-making, and other methods can enhance employees' sense of belonging and responsibility, thereby increasing employee satisfaction and motivation. However, involving employees in decision-making may meet resistance from managers and entail administrative efforts.

These improvement measures can help McDonald's and Google further enhance their human resource management level, increase employee satisfaction, improve work efficiency, and maintain competitiveness. While challenges and resource requirements may arise, prioritizing employee well-being and involvement can lead to a more positive work environment and improved performance. It's essential for both companies to carefully weigh the benefits against potential challenges and consider ethical implications throughout the process.

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Generic Assessment Criteria	Marks available	Marks awarded
1. Engagement with Literature Skills	20	
2. Knowledge and Understanding Skills	20	
3. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills	25	
4. Practical Application Skills	25	
5. Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice	10	