

## ENHANCING ORGANISATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY: THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN MALAYSIAN STATUTORY BODIES

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### ABSTRACT

**Background and Purpose:** Using the Social Contract Theory underpinning, this research examines the relationship between human resource management (HRM) and accountability within Malaysian statutory bodies.

**Methodology:** A quantitative approach was employed to gather data from 195 online surveys distributed to CEOs of Malaysian statutory bodies. 186 usable responses were obtained for further analysis. Statistical techniques were applied to assess the relationship between HRM and accountability.

**Findings:** The study's results reveal a positive and significant relationship between HRM practices and accountability within Malaysian statutory bodies. These findings highlight the critical role of HRM in promoting accountability and ensuring the successful fulfilment of socioeconomic obligations in emerging countries like Malaysia.

**Contributions:** This study contributes to the existing literature by exploring the association between HRM and accountability in Malaysian statutory bodies. Additionally, it incorporates the Social Contract Theory to provide a unique theoretical lens for understanding this relationship.

**Keywords:** Human resource management, accountability, Malaysian statutory bodies, social contract theory.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Business sustainability is essential for a nation's socioeconomic growth and development (Ananzeh et al., 2022). Socially sustainable work systems responsibly use human, social, economic, and ecological resources (Docherty et al., 2009), which supports SDG8. Therefore, government agencies must implement good governance to operate at their peak efficiency, provide value for money, engage the community, and uphold accountability. This is important because in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries, or OECD countries, the government spends USD 53,957 per capita of the GDP (OECD, 2022). Additionally, by budgeting RM259.9 billion for operating expenses and RM54.7 billion for development expenditures in 2019, the Malaysian federal government spent a lot of money to increase government accountability (Aruna, 2018). Service and controlling all assets and resources are fundamental to spending, serving, and accountability. Strong accountability eventually develops commitments for organization sustainability (Adams & McNicholas, 2007; Midin et al., 2016).

Hence, adequate governance mechanisms should be implemented to obtain accountability (Brennan & Solomon, 2008; Bovens et al., 2014; Hyndman & Liguori, 2016). Management of human resources is seen as one of the essential parts of good governance to achieve accountability (IFAC, 2001; Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants, 2004; CIPFA & IFAC, 2013; IFAC & CIPFA, 2014; Mohamad et al., 2014; Arulrajah, 2016; Yahya, 2022). Nevertheless, human resource management is crucial to achieving sustainability (Kang et al., 2022; Mohiuddin et al., 2022; Taha & Taha, 2022). A quality government will deliver professional service to citizens (Bågenholm et al., 2021). Hence, human resource management is vital to provide services to the people.

However, it is noted that Malaysia's public sector suffers from a lack of accountability (Siddiquee, 2005, 2006, 2010, 2014; Khalid et al., 2016). According to the World Bank's assessment of governance indicators, Malaysia's score decreased from 37% in 2013 to 34% in 2017, or -0.56 to -0.34 points (marked as -2.5 being the lowest score and +2.5 being the greatest score), based on the element of 'Voice and Accountability' percentage. Even if it increased to 41% or -0.08 in 2018 and 43% or -0.04 in 2019, further advancement is necessary for improved accountability. However, in 2020, the score again declined to 40.1% or -0.15 and decreased

more in 2021 with a score of 39.13%. This evidence further drops accountability in Malaysia. Statutory bodies also contribute to Malaysia's score as the score represents Malaysia.

On top of that, Malaysia has been decreased and considered the lowest-scored country for labour productivity growth in ASEAN for the range of 2010-2018, as shown in Figure 1 (Asian Productivity Organization, 2021). Thus, the productivity growth of human resources needs to be boosted. In addition, there is also an issue within the context of human resources. The Auditor's General report of Pahang's statutory bodies in 2019 highlighted that Yayasan Pahang governance has been less satisfactory, where there was no training and the organisation's operation procedures needed to be explicitly improved in terms of financial management for employees' compensation. This showed issues of human resource management in statutory bodies might affect accountability.

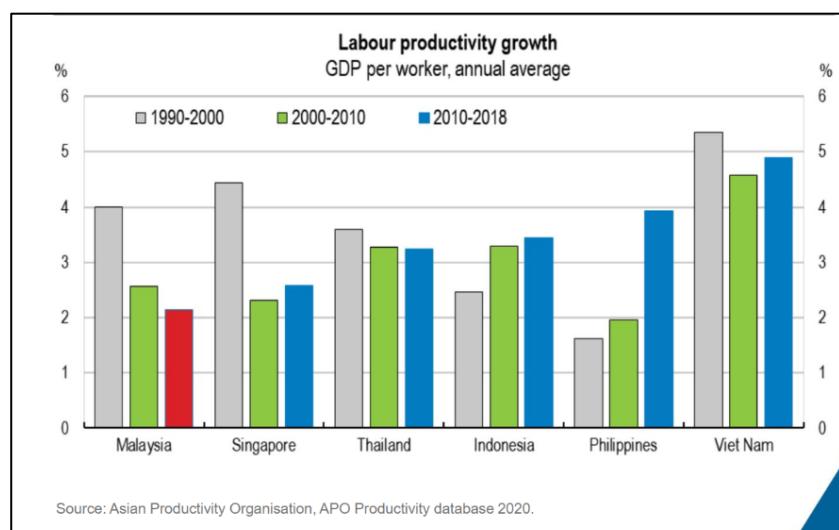


Figure 1: Labour productivity growth for Asian countries

Some human resource management and practices studies in Malaysia focus on the public sector, whereby the respondents are from ministries (Beh, 2012, 2014, 2018; Khalid et al., 2016); or focused on specific criteria such as training only (Abdul Kadir & Ismail, 1997). Furthermore, limited studies used statutory bodies as a study sample, related it to accountability, and adopted the social contract theory. Many studies are mainly based on evidence from developed countries and limited evidence from developing and Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia. Hence, this study aims to examine the relationship between human resource management and the accountability of Malaysian statutory bodies.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Malaysian Statutory Bodies**

In Malaysia, public sectors are divided into ministries, federal departments, statutory bodies, and local authorities, which statutory bodies are the scope of this study. Statutory bodies are public organisations that operate on the same principles as other government functions and are subject to executive and legislative oversight (Seidman, 1954). There are two tiers of Malaysian statutory bodies: federal and state. Parliament sets up federal statutory bodies, and the statutory bodies execute government policies through their activities following the Federal laws. As the incorporation legislation requires, each federal statutory body is assigned to a ministry in charge. On the other hand, state statutory bodies are formed under the enactments and laws of each state government. Their primary functions are to maintain and develop the states.

### **2.2 Accountability**

Scholars in the past described responsibility as a relationship between people and organisations (Ebrahim, 2005; Li et al., 2020), which is also in line with Social Contract Theory (Thompson & Hart, 2006). Some people equate performance with responsibility (Romzek, 2000; Acker & Bouckaert, 2018). Others interpreted it as a viewpoint on common expectations for the organisation's community outreach efforts (Ammeter et al., 2004).

Therefore, accountability is a social relationship that requires reason and a sense of obligation on the part of an actor (Romzek & Dubnick, 1987; Pollitt, 2003; OECD, 2013; Brenya Bonsu et al., 2023). These interactions are between the state and society in the pursuit of better services. The actors oversee the organisation's performance and results (Behn, 2001; Bovens, 2010; Dubnick & Frederickson, 2011). Accountability is vital to government and public organisations as it is a responsibility to the stakeholders (Lindkvist & Llewellyn, 2003; Bovens, 2007).

Moreover, accountability and transparency have been perceived to be interrelated (Givan, 2005; Mabillard & Zumofen, 2016). The focus of accountability is on communication with stakeholders, involving stakeholders' engagement and openness, namely transparency (Lloyd et al., 2007; Lloyd et al., 2008; Hanretty et al., 2012; Hanretty & Koop, 2014). Stakeholders' engagement is vital to unblock organisation change to sustain (Adams & McNicholas, 2007). Information, discussion, and repercussions (Reichersdorfer et al., 2013) are assessments of behaviours and organisational actions, being additional vital components of accountability (Bovens et al., 2014). Public organisations like statutory authorities must give feedback and responses to internal and external stakeholders, especially for complaints and responses. It is

crucial for their satisfaction and trust. Trust positively impacts human resource maintenance and resilience (Al-Ziyadi et al., 2022). Considering these, transparency, stakeholder engagement, evaluation, as well as complaint and response are all included in the concept of accountability (Lloyd et al., 2007; Lloyd et al., 2008; Hanretty et al., 2012).

Nevertheless, the element of finance must also be considered in accountability. The government would currently encourage them to finance and generate their income. This reduces their reliance on government budgets and contributions to carry out their activities. Many statutory bodies engaged in activities that generated revenue for their respective organisations. The accountability standards have been widened to include financial matters (Kolk, 2008; Nurdiono & Gamayuni, 2018). To deliver high-quality services in an efficient, citizen-centred, and sustainable manner (Nyamita et al., 2015), proper expenditure management is required (Wu, 2020). Hence, this study follows Yahya's (2022) elements of accountability, consisting of transparency, complaint and response, stakeholders' engagement, evaluation, and finance.

### **2.3 Human Resource Management**

Human resource management encompasses all practices of the workplace and organisational personnel (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Human resources are a crucial tool for achieving a nation's vision and aspirations (Salleh et al., 2016), the company's goals (Becker et al., 2001; Ulrich et al., 2013), and sustainability (Taha & Taha, 2022).

Building resilience in human resource management is essential for surviving a crisis like COVID-19 (Su et al., 2021). Hence, human resources develop key personnel competencies that enable organisations to respond resiliently when aggregated at the organisational level (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). The Public Service Department in Malaysia manages civil servants. The department's vision is to offer high-performance and citizen-centred public service. Its objective is to build public service human capital. Its goals include managing civil servants, developing human resource management policies through strategic and effective service policies, formulating psychological service policies and guidelines to promote public service human resource development, and emphasising pensioner welfare by strengthening post-service policies.

There were many elements of human resource management being adopted in organisations. Based on Amin et al. (2014); Arbatani et al. (2016); Azmi (2010, 2015); Frink and Klimoski (2004); Gooderham et al. (2015); Lee et al. (2010); Pfeffer (1998); Schneider and Bowen (1993); Tiwari and Saxena (2012), and Vivares-Vergara et al. (2016), it could be concluded

that most scholars adopt and study five key human resource management elements compared to other business practices. These elements are training and development, recruitment and selection, performance appraisal, career planning, and compensation. Specifically, Azmi (2010, 2015) and Salleh et al. (2016) also only studied five dimensions of the human resource model implemented in Malaysian public sector organisations, which are recruitment and selection, training and development, career development, performance appraisal, and compensation; as most researched elements by other scholars. Therefore, in the context of statutory bodies in Malaysia, they are public sector organisations. Hence, the elements are suitable for them.

#### **2.4 Human Resource Management and Accountability**

Studies on the relationship between human resource management practices and accountability outcomes have received considerable attention; hence empirical research yields abundant positive confirmatory evidence. Some examples from developed countries such as the United States (Skaggs & Youndt, 2004; Sikora et al., 2011), Europe (Mayrhofer et al., 2019), Spain (Cabello-Medina et al., 2011; Barrena-Martinez et al., 2018) and developing countries like India (Azmi & Mushtaq, 2015; Chand & Katou, 2007), Vietnam (Do et al., 2018), and Jordan (Al-Qudah et al., 2020). There is also evidence from different sectors like banking (Tabouli et al., 2016), hospitality (Wang, 2019), food industry (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2018), hotel (Chand & Katou, 2007), villages (Tan et al., 2021), small-medium enterprises (Zakaria et al., 2011), and university (Shahzad et al., 2008; Amin et al., 2014).

From the theoretical perspective, this study uses social contract theory. As this study focuses on the governance of statutory bodies, which is the human resource management to achieve desired organisation accountability, social contract theory is considered the most applicable (Donaldson & Dunfee, 1994). According to the social contract theory, the organisation's accountability would be upheld if business activities were conducted with good governance (Donaldson & Dunfee, 1994). Moreover, there are no biases and discrimination if human resource management is managed through social contract theory, as it improves accountability (Donaldson & Dunfee, 1999). Therefore, the statutory bodies' activities, projects, operations, systems, and programmes must be conducted with good governance within established processes and procedures to achieve better accountability.

However, some authors suggested that the relationship between accountability and human resource management is weak (Ahmad & Schroeder, 2003; Bonavia & Marin-Garcia, 2011; Guest et al., 2003; Neumann & Dul, 2010; Tzafir, 2006; Vanhala & Tuomi, 2006; Wright &

Gardner, 2003), or even denied the human resource management and accountability nexus (Guest et al., 2003; Messersmith & Guthrie, 2010; Wall & Wood, 2005; Wright & Gardner, 2003). Poorly defined or vague performance measures in HRM can make it hard to hold people accountable. If KPIs and objectives aren't well-defined, it's hard to hold HRM accountable for what it does for the organisation (Ahmad & Schroeder, 2003).

HRM roles often deal with qualitative and intangible parts of human capital, such as employee satisfaction, engagement, and culture. These factors are not always easy to measure, making it hard to set clear responsibilities and link HRM results to the general performance of an organisation (Vanhala & Tuomi, 2006). Even a solid human resource system is found to have no significant relationship with any accountability outcome (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021; Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Darwish et al., 2015; Guest & Conway, 2011; Menezes & Kelliher, 2011; Vivares-Vergara et al., 2016; Wall & Wood, 2005). Some public service staff are unaware of how accountability can be driven (Givan, 2005).

Nevertheless, based on the elements of human resource management, training can help employees develop new skills, values, talents, and specialisations connected to work and organisational strategies; hence it can be used as one of the incentives to attain and improve accountability (Camelo et al., 2004; Bercu & Grigoruță, 2012; MacKelprang et al., 2012; Millar & Stevens, 2012). Other elements like compensation can affect long-term organisational performance (Ahmad & Schroeder, 2003). It can alleviate the frustration caused by uncertainty in adaptable environments (Kathuria & Partovi, 1999), and help organisations achieve accountability through human resource resilience practices. Since collective reactions are related to strategic goals, an excellent human resource management system will boost accountability (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H: Human Resource Management has a positive relationship with Accountability.

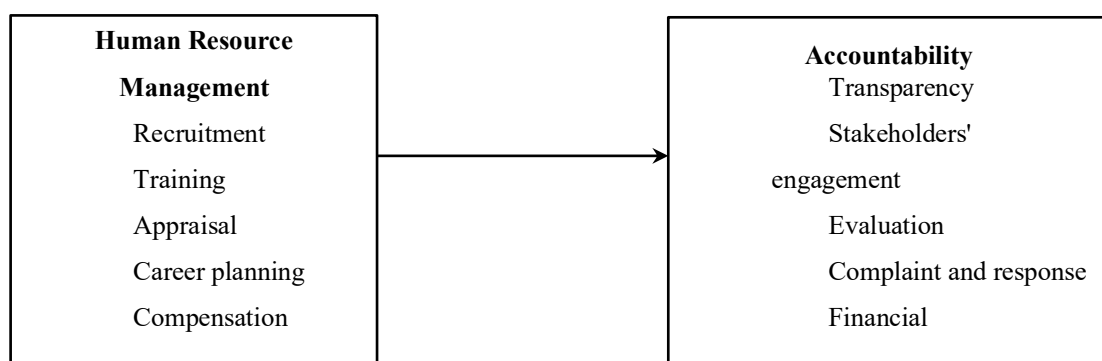


Figure 2: Conceptual framework of the study

### **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research utilises primary data. The measurement of accountability and human resource management is multidimensional. The elements of human resource management are recruitment, training, appraisal, career planning and compensation; while elements for accountability consist of elements transparency, stakeholders' engagement, evaluation, complaint and response and financial.

Data collection for this study was employed using questionnaires distributed to 291 Malaysian statutory bodies via an online survey. According to the Auditor's General Report for 2016, there were 127 federal and 164 state statutory bodies. The respondents were either CEOs or their equivalents. The surveys were sent to the identified respondents via their private organisation e-mail. They were chosen as study respondents because they were familiar with organisational issues and were aware of organisational updates and regulatory requirements.

As this is a multidimensional study, the relationship is further tested through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM using SmartPLS software. The framework is a Higher-Order Construct (HOC) modelled using a Type II (reflective-formative) disjoint two-stage approach. For accountability, the questions were adopted with some modifications from the World Accountability Report by One World Trust and previous related literature (Lloyd et al., 2007; Kolk, 2008; Lloyd et al., 2008; Hanretty et al., 2012; Hanretty & Koop, 2014). The elements comprise transparency (TP1-TP4), evaluation (EV1-EV5), complaint and response (CR1-CR4), stakeholders' engagement (SE1-SE6) and financial (FN1-FN4). In addition, for human resource management, the questions were adopted with some modification (Baker, 1999; Amin et al., 2014; Arbatani et al., 2016; Bratton & Gold, 2017). The elements consist of training (HR1-3), compensation (HR4-6), recruitment (HR7-9), appraisal (HR10-12), and career planning (HR13-15).

However, as both variables are formatively measured, one global item question was added. This is to be used to test for convergent validity of redundancy analysis. Seven-point Likert scale was used to assess respondents' agreement or disagreement level for each question. The scales measured as 1 = "Strongly disagree", 2 = "Somewhat disagree", 3 = "Slightly disagree", 4 = "Neither disagree nor agree", 5 = "Slightly agree", 6 = "Somewhat agree", and 7 = "Strongly agree". According to Allen and Seaman (2007), a seven-point Likert scale offers more response options, allowing for greater differentiation in participants' opinions and attitudes. Moreover, on a seven-point Likert scale, respondents have more options, reducing the likelihood that they will default to a particular response category.



The researchers used the HOC model of Type II to make a model of the framework. The Lower-Order Construct (LOC) is a concept comprising the dimensions. The HOC has complete control over the variables because of the LOC (Chin, 1998). For this study, the measurement of accountability has five dimensions, and the measurement of human resource management has five dimensions. This is the HOC formative measurement. Each dimension of LOC's questions or items is measured by how they make you think or feel. It also uses a separate two-stage method to model the framework. All the dimensions are laid out clearly, and both LOC and HOC can specify and test the multidimensional and hierarchical structure of constructs (Bagozzi & Heatherton, 1994). In addition, the model becomes "parsimonious," which means that the number of path model relationships is drastically reduced (Edwards, 2001; Hair et al., 2017).

#### 4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

194 responses were successfully gathered from 291 surveys distributed at 66.7% response rate. Responses from federal statutory bodies were 116 (59.8%), and state statutory bodies were 78 (40.2%). The demographics of the respondents are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic

| Demographic profiles                            |                    | Total | Percent (%) |
|---|--------------------|-------|-------------|
| Gender  | Male               | 109   | 56.19       |
|   | Female             | 85    | 43.81       |
| Age   | Less 30 years old  | 14    | 7.22        |
|   | 30-40 years old    | 70    | 36.08       |
|   | 41-50 years old    | 54    | 27.84       |
|   | 51-60 years old    | 50    | 25.77       |
|   | More than 60 years | 6     | 3.09        |
| Academic qualification                          | Bachelor's degree  | 110   | 56.69       |
|   | Master's degree    | 64    | 33          |
|   | Professional       | 13    | 6.7         |
|   | Others             | 7     | 3.61        |
| Number of years in the current position (years) | Less than 5        | 91    | 46.91       |
|   | 5-10               | 49    | 25.26       |
|   | 11-15              | 21    | 10.82       |
|   | 16-20              | 11    | 5.67        |
|   | More than 20       | 22    | 11.34       |

Expected maximisation was used to fill in the missing value for less than 25% of the survey questions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Based on Mahanalobis, outliers were removed. This gave 186 usable data. The site <https://webpower.psychstat.org/models/kurtosis/> was used to check the normality. The value gain for Mardia's multivariate skewness ( $\beta= 35.48273$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and kurtosis ( $\beta=194.81218$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Since the data was not normal, it was best to use SmartPLS, a non-parametric analysis software (Ringle et al., 2015).

The research hypothesis is tested using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and the Partial Least Square (PLS-SEM) method with SmartPLS. PLS can handle a complicated model and get high-level statistics from small sample sizes (Hair et al., 2017). As the study is HOC, it has two stages - the measurement model (to find out about consistency, reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, collinearity, and weight) and the structural model (testing the hypotheses and their significance level).

Since the independent and dependent variables were answered by the same person, common method bias may have occurred (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Podsakoff et al., 2012). To test for common method bias, we added a marker variable, a variable that had no relationship with any of the variables (Lindell & Whitney, 2001; Rönkkö & Ylitalo, 2011). A home-work conflict is used as a marker variable in this study. There is a slight change in  $R^2$  (from 0.555 to 0.559). However, because the differences were less than 10%, there was no evidence of common method bias.



Figure 3:  $R^2$  without marker variable

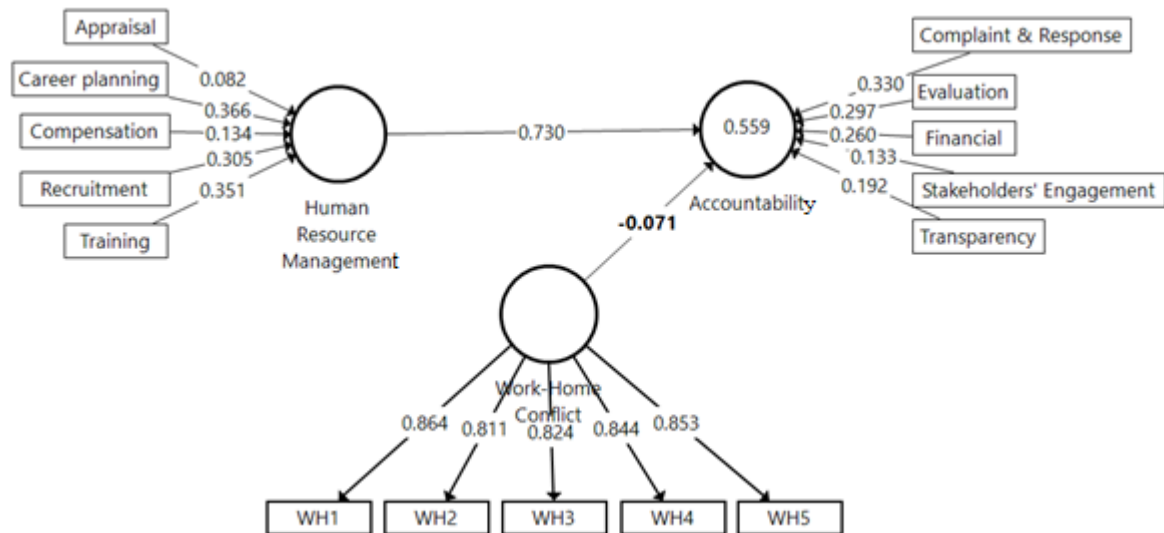


Figure 4: R<sup>2</sup> with marker variable

For the measurement model, in Table 2, the loading, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) are reported for LOC of both variables. The loadings and AVE tested the convergent validity CR for internal consistency. The rule of thumb for AVE for each construct is greater than 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Bagozzi et al., 1991; Hair et al., 2017), while CR and loadings are more than 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017). All items had high loadings on their latent variable and met all measurement requirements.

Table 2: The measurement model for LOC (reflective)

|                                  | Loadings | CR    | AVE   |
|----------------------------------|----------|-------|-------|
| <b>Human resource management</b> |          |       |       |
| HR1                              | 0.856    |       |       |
| HR2                              | 0.83     |       |       |
| HR3                              | 0.762    | 0.857 | 0.667 |
| HR4                              | 0.87     |       |       |
| HR5                              | 0.867    |       |       |
| HR6                              | 0.845    | 0.896 | 0.741 |
| HR7                              | 0.799    |       |       |
| HR8                              | 0.852    |       |       |
| HR9                              | 0.747    | 0.842 | 0.641 |
| HR10                             | 0.859    |       |       |
| HR11                             | 0.872    |       |       |
| HR12                             | 0.865    | 0.899 | 0.749 |
| HR13                             | 0.856    |       |       |
| HR14                             | 0.852    |       |       |
| HR15                             | 0.792    | 0.872 | 0.695 |
| <b>Accountability</b>            |          |       |       |
| CR1                              | 0.775    |       |       |
| CR2                              | 0.877    |       |       |
| CR3                              | 0.879    |       |       |
| CR4                              | 0.846    | 0.909 | 0.714 |
| EV1                              | 0.803    |       |       |
| EV2                              | 0.826    |       |       |
| EV3                              | 0.766    |       |       |
| EV4                              | 0.768    |       |       |
| EV5                              | 0.673    | 0.878 | 0.591 |
| FN1                              | 0.814    |       |       |
| FN2                              | 0.847    |       |       |
| FN3                              | 0.711    |       |       |
| FN4                              | 0.799    | 0.872 | 0.631 |
| SE1                              | 0.79     |       |       |
| SE2                              | 0.818    |       |       |
| SE3                              | 0.891    |       |       |
| SE4                              | 0.702    |       |       |
| SE5                              | 0.725    |       |       |
| SE6                              | 0.689    | 0.898 | 0.597 |

|     |       |       |       |
|-----|-------|-------|-------|
| TP1 | 0.774 |       |       |
| TP2 | 0.78  |       |       |
| TP3 | 0.791 |       |       |
| TP4 | 0.795 | 0.865 | 0.616 |

Further, the discriminant validity of HTMT was also fulfilled as the value for HTMT is below 0.90, HTMT<sub>.90</sub> (Gold et al., 2001), as shown in Table 3. Hence, there is no issue of discriminant validity.

Table 3: HTMT

|                                      | AP    | CP    | CM    | CR    | EV    | FN    | RC    | SE    | TR    | TP |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----|
| <b>Appraisal (AP)</b>                |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |    |
| <b>Career Planning (CP)</b>          | 0.729 |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |    |
| <b>Compensation (CM)</b>             | 0.655 | 0.635 |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |    |
| <b>Complaint Response (CR)</b>       | 0.561 | 0.612 | 0.451 |       |       |       |       |       |       |    |
| <b>Evaluation (EV)</b>               | 0.602 | 0.688 | 0.544 | 0.725 |       |       |       |       |       |    |
| <b>Financial (FN)</b>                | 0.567 | 0.494 | 0.466 | 0.622 | 0.705 |       |       |       |       |    |
| <b>Recruitment (RC)</b>              | 0.722 | 0.602 | 0.528 | 0.643 | 0.598 | 0.666 |       |       |       |    |
| <b>Stakeholders' Engagement (SE)</b> | 0.452 | 0.641 | 0.483 | 0.744 | 0.688 | 0.628 | 0.553 |       |       |    |
| <b>Training (TR)</b>                 | 0.716 | 0.755 | 0.647 | 0.699 | 0.658 | 0.639 | 0.781 | 0.634 |       |    |
| <b>Transparency (TP)</b>             | 0.46  | 0.685 | 0.557 | 0.691 | 0.703 | 0.661 | 0.522 | 0.853 | 0.619 |    |

For the HOC, convergent validity was checked, where the redundancy analysis was done for each variable against their global item. The redundancy analysis value for accountability is 0.942 (Figure 5), and human resource management is 0.940 (Figure 6), which is more than the threshold value of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017). The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for all dimensions is shown in Table 4. The VIF is below 3.3 (Diamantopoulos & Siguaaw, 2006), indicating no multicollinearity issue. All the t-values are also more than 1.645 (one-tailed), which shows all are significant.

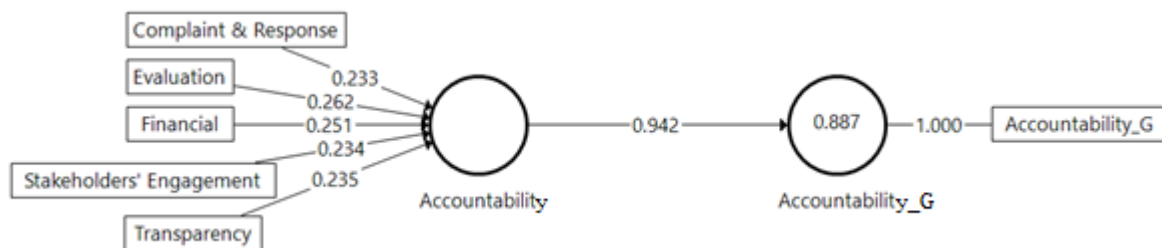


Figure 5: Redundancy analysis for Accountability

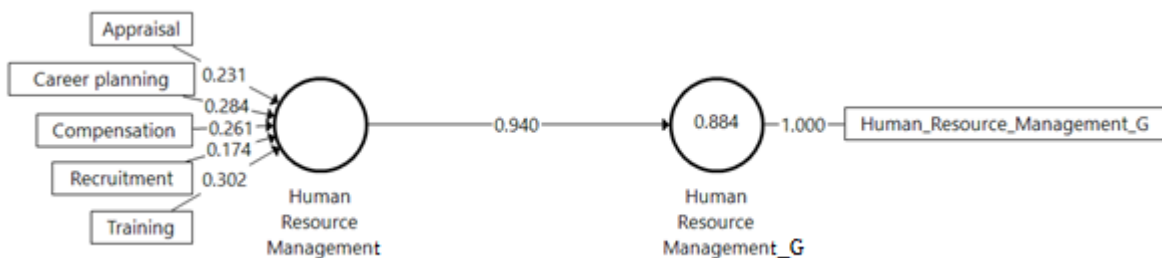


Figure 6: Redundancy analysis for human resource management

Table 4: Measurement model for HOC (formative)

|                          | Weight | VIF   | t value | p values |
|--------------------------|--------|-------|---------|----------|
| Appraisal                | 0.077  | 2.057 | 11.292  | 0        |
| Career planning          | 0.374  | 1.866 | 11.527  | 0        |
| Compensation             | 0.133  | 1.638 | 6.571   | 0        |
| Recruitment              | 0.302  | 1.761 | 17.024  | 0        |
| Training                 | 0.351  | 2.044 | 13.025  | 0        |
| Complaint & Response     | 0.331  | 2.118 | 11.55   | 0        |
| Evaluation               | 0.301  | 2.068 | 9.396   | 0        |
| Financial                | 0.235  | 1.807 | 15.306  | 0        |
| Stakeholders' Engagement | 0.166  | 2.58  | 15.513  | 0        |
| Transparency             | 0.178  | 2.301 | 11.373  | 0        |

As for the structural model, it was found that human resource management had a strong and significant relationship with accountability ( $\beta= 0.745$ ,  $p<0.05$ ),  $t$ -value= 16.826 (one-tailed) and  $p$ -value= 0.00, as shown in Table 5. The portions of variance explained are  $R^2=0.555$ . This result is consistent with other empirical human resource management findings in the literature (Al-Qudah et al., 2020; Amin et al., 2014; Azmi & Mushtaq, 2015; Chand & Katou, 2007; Shahzad et al., 2008; Sikora et al., 2011; Skaggs & Youndt, 2004). Hence, the hypothesis that

human resource management has a significant positive relationship with accountability is supported.

Table 5: Structural model

|  | <b>Original<br/>Sample</b> | <b>Sample<br/>Mean</b> | <b>Standard<br/>Deviation</b> | <b>T value</b> | <b>P<br/>Values</b> |
|--|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Human Resource Management -><br>Accountability | 0.745                      | 0.761                  | 0.044                         | 16.826         | 0                   |

Human resource management, formed from elements of recruitment, training, performance appraisal, compensation, and career planning, has demonstrated a significant positive result that contributed to achieving accountability in statutory bodies ( $\beta=0.745$ ,  $t = 16.826$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Human resources are organisational assets that must be protected, invested in for further skill development, and motivated to serve the organisation better and, ultimately, the nation. Improper human resource management would degrade performance and motivation to perform well at work, potentially resulting in the inability to meet organisational accountability (Guest, 2011).

The outcome is also consistent with social contract theory, which argues that internal governance, such as human resource management, would make accountability achievements more convincing where appropriate human resource management is practised (Donaldson & Dunfee, 1999). Nonetheless, we must never forget and be grateful for civil servants' contributions to the nation as front-liners in assisting the government in overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic, given the various background of the employees. Leaders can coordinate and harmonise individuals, fostering new ideas that navigate space and time for inclusive and sustainable progress (Liu, 2023).

As a practical implication, all five essential components of human resource management should be implemented in statutory bodies. The human resource management department is responsible for implementing, executing, securing, monitoring, assessing, and supplementing human assets and detailing the specifications for each component that suits the organisation's business activities. Despite their smaller size, state statutory bodies would make it easier for organisations to manage and govern their human resources. The findings support the widespread belief that human resources are the backbones of organisations, enabling them to

realise the nation's vision and aspiration (Salleh et al., 2016) and organisational objectives (Becker et al., 2001; Ulrich et al., 2013).

This study employed the SEM technique to test the variable relationship, which allows for the simultaneous analysis of a complex model and relationship. A multidimensional model can also be analysed using hierarchical construct modelling, or HOC, to which this study contributes by providing results using the Type II model. Furthermore, a marker variable was used in the study to reduce common method bias. As a result, it provides contributions to PLS-SEM usage in the field.

Nevertheless, attaining accountability through human resource management means building organisational resilience (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). Human resource management is critical to achieving organisational sustainability (Mohiuddin et al., 2022; Taha & Taha, 2022). A good government will provide citizens with professional services. Strong accountability eventually leads to commitments to organisation sustainability (Adams & McNicholas, 2007). Thus, through human resource management, accountability is achieved; hence, social sustainability is eventually obtained.

Meanwhile, this is a cross-sectional study. Furthermore, the questionnaire is only given to one respondent as an organisation representative. In addition, the same respondent completed the questionnaire for the independent and dependent variables that can cause CMV. This limitation is overcome by including marker variables in the questionnaire. Nevertheless, future studies are recommended to distribute the survey to different respondents to answer the independent and dependent variables.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

It is said that human resource is the organisation's asset that must be taken care of, well-managed and utilised for organisation accountability. As accountability is organisation performance for government organisations like statutory bodies, it will lead to social sustainability. All elements of human resource management, namely training, appraisal, career planning, compensation and recruitment, must be instilled and embedded effectively and adequately to have a competent and professional human resource that gives the best services back to the public.

A lack of all elements of human resource management can result in an incorrect calculation of a holistic aspect of human resource management. If no corrective and ongoing actions are taken to enhance human resource management, the number of issues raised by the Auditor General will continue to rise. For instance, if employees do not receive training, they are not



provided with guidance and appropriate education on their job duties. Therefore, the workers will struggle to perform and may become dissatisfied with their jobs. It will impact their ability to serve the public. Therefore, organisations and the Public Service Department should collaborate to cultivate competent, qualified, and contented civil servants.

Furthermore, following the current trend in government organisations, green human resources and strategic human resources can be examined to be embedded in the governance system to achieve the required accountability and, eventually, sustainability. Human resource management and accountability could also emphasise and examine a specific sustainable aspect. As government organisations, good governance must be proactively and appropriately regulated to serve the people best, achieve accountability, and strive for excellence and social sustainability.

The implication of this study is twofold. HRM of any organisation can facilitate effective stakeholder engagement and increase organisational accountability. HRM can foster relationships with stakeholders, such as employees and staff unions, to ensure their welfare and interests are addressed. Another concern is the implication for regulators and governments, such as the Inland Revenue Board, on profit announcements. Organisations that uphold accountability are more likely to comply with regulations and legal requirements. HRM practices that promote diversity and inclusion, fair labour practices, and safe working conditions contribute to regulatory compliance and can lead to positive relationships with government bodies.

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