

Human Resource Management Failure and Redesign in a Family-Owned Enterprise: A Case Study of Organizational Decline at PT. Mena Moria

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Abstract

This study examines human resource management (HRM) practices in a family-owned enterprise, PT. Mena Moria, and evaluates the firm's strategic response to high employee turnover. The company, operating in building material distribution, experienced financial decline between 2020 and 2023. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Data validity was ensured through triangulation techniques. The study involved 12 informants consisting of owners, managers, and operational employees selected through purposive sampling. The findings reveal systemic weaknesses in HRM practices, including the absence of standardized recruitment procedures, ineffective retention strategies, lack of structured training programs, inconsistent performance evaluation, inequitable compensation systems, and weak managerial communication. These deficiencies contributed significantly to both financial losses and organizational instability. This study proposes a comprehensive HRM design tailored for family businesses, emphasizing formalization, professionalization, and the establishment of a dedicated HR department. The proposed HRM design was constructed through thematic synthesis of identified HR problems and aligned with established HRM frameworks, including recruitment formalization, structured training systems, performance-based evaluation, and transparent compensation policies. The research contributes to the literature by linking informal governance in family firms with HR inefficiencies and organizational decline, offering a practical framework for sustainable HR transformation.

Keywords

Human resource management; family business; employee turnover; organizational performance; SMEs

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1. INTRODUCTION

Human resource management (HRM) has increasingly been recognized as a central determinant of organizational sustainability and competitiveness in both large corporations and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Harney & Nolan, 2022). In contemporary business environments characterized by rapid change, uncertainty, and intensified competition, organizations are required to



manage their human capital strategically to maintain operational efficiency and long-term growth (Khaw, et al., 2022). Effective HRM encompasses structured processes such as recruitment, training and development, performance evaluation, compensation management, and employee retention strategies. When these elements are well-designed and consistently implemented, they contribute to improved employee performance, reduced turnover, and stronger organizational resilience (Alsakarneh, et al., 2024). Conversely, Zheng et al. (2025) and Khatoon et al., (2025) explained that weak or informal HRM systems often result in inefficiencies, diminished employee engagement, and organizational instability, particularly in firms that rely heavily on personal relationships rather than formalized procedures.

While HRM principles apply broadly across organizations, their implementation becomes more complex within family-owned enterprises due to unique governance structures. This issue is especially pronounced in family-owned enterprises, which constitute a significant portion of business entities in developing economies. According to Chaudhary et al. (2021) and Antoniou et al. (2026), Family businesses often operate with unique socio-cultural dynamics, where decision-making processes are influenced by kinship ties, trust-based relationships, and informal governance structures. While these characteristics can foster loyalty and flexibility, they frequently hinder the development of professional management systems, including HRM practices. As a result, many family-owned firms struggle to balance the preservation of family values with the need for organizational professionalism. Litvaj et al. (2022) and Artinger, et al. (2025) explained the absence of formal HR policies, unclear role definitions, and subjective decision-making processes can create internal inefficiencies and limit organizational growth. These challenges become more critical when firms expand their operations or face external pressures such as market competition and economic fluctuations.

PT. Mena Moria, a family-owned enterprise engaged in the distribution of construction materials, provides a compelling case to examine these issues in practice. Despite experiencing initial growth, the company encountered significant financial decline between 2020 and 2023. Preliminary observations suggest that this decline is closely associated with internal organizational challenges, particularly in the management of human resources. The company exhibits several indicators of weak HRM practices, including the absence of standardized recruitment procedures, high employee turnover, limited training opportunities, and inconsistent performance evaluation systems. Additionally, compensation structures are perceived as inequitable, and communication between management and employees is often ineffective. These conditions not only affect employee satisfaction and productivity but also contribute to broader organizational instability and financial losses.

Despite the importance of HRM in sustaining organizational performance, PT. Mena Moria demonstrates persistent inefficiencies in managing its human resources. The absence of formal HR systems has resulted in high employee turnover, low productivity, and financial decline. However,

these problems have not been systematically analyzed within an integrated HRM framework, creating a gap in understanding how multiple HR deficiencies interact to affect organizational outcomes.

Previous studies have extensively explored HRM practices in SMEs and family businesses, highlighting recurring patterns of informality and their implications for organizational performance. Research by Mikušová et al. (2020) demonstrates that many family-owned enterprises rely on informal HR practices, which often lead to inefficiencies and biased decision-making. Similarly, Rosecká and Machek (2022) and Ruiz-Palomo et al. (2019) emphasize that the lack of professional management structures in family firms can hinder performance and limit strategic development. Employee turnover, another critical issue, has been linked to poor leadership, lack of career development opportunities, and inadequate retention strategies, as discussed by Saleh et al. (2025). Furthermore, compensation inequity has been identified as a key factor influencing employee motivation and organizational commitment (Jo & Shin, 2025). In addition, weak organizational communication, as highlighted by Gavrić and Braje (2024) and Gavrić & Braje (2024), can exacerbate internal conflicts and reduce overall cohesion within family businesses.

Although prior studies have examined HRM challenges in SMEs and family businesses, most research treats HR functions as isolated variables rather than interconnected systems. Moreover, limited studies explicitly link HRM dysfunctions to measurable organizational outcomes such as financial decline, particularly in developing country contexts. This study addresses this gap by providing an integrated analysis of HRM practices and their cumulative impact on organizational performance.

In response to this gap, this study aims to analyze HRM practices at PT. Mena Moria and develop an integrated HRM design tailored for family-owned enterprises. Rather than focusing on a single aspect of HRM, this research adopts a comprehensive approach that considers recruitment, retention, training, performance evaluation, compensation, and communication as interconnected components of a broader system. By doing so, the study aims to identify the root causes of high employee turnover and declining performance, while also uncovering the underlying structural and managerial factors that shape these outcomes. This approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of HRM challenges in family-owned enterprises and provides a foundation for developing integrated and sustainable solutions.

Accordingly, the primary objective of this study is to analyze the existing HRM practices at PT. Mena Moria and to design a structured HRM framework tailored to the specific needs of family-owned businesses. The study also aims to contribute to the existing literature by bridging the gap between theoretical insights and practical applications, particularly in the context of developing economies. By offering a comprehensive and context-sensitive HRM design, this research seeks to support family-owned enterprises in transitioning from informal management practices to more professional and

sustainable organizational systems. Ultimately, the findings are expected to provide both theoretical contributions and practical implications for improving HRM effectiveness and enhancing organizational performance in similar business contexts.

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore human resource management (HRM) practices within PT. Mena Moria, a family-owned enterprise operating in the construction materials distribution sector. PT. Mena Moria was selected as a case study due to its observable financial decline and evident HRM challenges, making it a representative case for examining HR dysfunction in family-owned SMEs. A qualitative approach was selected to enable an in-depth understanding of organizational dynamics, particularly the informal practices and socio-cultural factors that shape HRM processes in family businesses. The case study method allowed the researcher to investigate complex interactions among recruitment, retention, training, performance evaluation, compensation, and communication within their real-life context.

In total, 12 informants were involved in this study, including 2 owners, 3 managerial staff, and 7 operational employees. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their roles and direct involvement in HRM processes. Data were collected through multiple techniques to ensure richness and depth of information. First, participant observation was conducted by engaging directly in the company's daily operations, enabling the researcher to capture actual practices, employee interactions, and managerial behaviors. Second, in-depth semi-structured interviews were carried out with key informants, including company owners, managers, and employees. These interviews focused on exploring perceptions, experiences, and challenges related to HRM practices. Third, document analysis was utilized to examine organizational records such as financial reports, employee data, and internal policies, which provided supporting evidence and contextual understanding of the company's condition.

To ensure the credibility and validity of the findings, this study employed data triangulation by systematically comparing information obtained from multiple sources and methods, including interviews, observations, and company documents. This cross-validation process helped minimize potential bias and strengthened the reliability of the interpretations by ensuring consistency across different forms of evidence. In addition, member checking was conducted by sharing key findings with selected participants to confirm their accuracy and alignment with actual experiences, thereby enhancing the overall trustworthiness of the study.

Data analysis in this study followed a thematic analysis approach carried out in a systematic and iterative manner. The process began with data reduction, in which relevant information from

interviews, observations, and documents was carefully selected and organized. Next, open coding was conducted to identify initial concepts emerging from the data. These codes were then refined through axial coding by grouping related categories, followed by selective coding to develop core themes that captured the main patterns of HRM practices within the organization. NVivo software was utilized to support the organization, coding, and retrieval of data throughout this process.

After coding, the data were presented through a data display stage, allowing patterns and relationships among themes to be clearly identified and interpreted. Finally, conclusions were drawn by linking these findings to the research objectives and theoretical framework. Through this structured analytical process, the study produced a comprehensive understanding of HRM issues and their implications for organizational performance.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

The findings reveal that PT. Mena Moria experienced significant human resource management (HRM) challenges that directly affected organizational performance and financial sustainability. Based on interviews, observations, and document analysis, six major HRM issues were identified: recruitment inefficiency, high employee turnover, lack of training and development, weak performance evaluation systems, inequitable compensation practices, and ineffective organizational communication. These interconnected issues contributed to declining employee productivity, low organizational commitment, and operational instability between 2020 and 2023.

One of the most critical findings concerns the company's recruitment process. PT. Mena Moria did not implement standardized recruitment procedures. Hiring decisions were often based on personal recommendations from family members, relatives, or close acquaintances rather than objective qualifications and competency assessments. Several employees reported that they were recruited without formal interviews or job competency tests. This informal process frequently resulted in mismatches between employee capabilities and job responsibilities. Employees who lacked relevant skills often struggled to meet work expectations, leading to inefficiencies in operational processes. Managers also acknowledged that the absence of clear recruitment criteria made it difficult to identify suitable candidates for specialized roles.

Table 1. Recruitment Challenges at PT. Mena Moria

Recruitment Aspect	Existing Practice	Identified Problem	Organizational Impact
Candidate selection	Based on personal networks	Lack of objectivity	Unqualified employees hired
Interview process	Informal or absent	No competency assessment	Skill mismatch
Job description	Unclear	Role ambiguity	Reduced efficiency
Recruitment documentation	Limited records	Lack of transparency	Difficult workforce planning

These findings suggest that recruitment inefficiency is deeply rooted in the relational governance commonly found in family-owned firms, where trust and personal connections often take precedence over competence and formal qualifications. As a result, this practice creates structural mismatches between employees' skills and job requirements, ultimately weakening overall operational performance.

In addition to recruitment issues, employee turnover emerged as another major concern. Company records indicate a significant increase in turnover during the study period, with many employees leaving within one to two years of employment. Interview data further reveal that this trend was largely driven by dissatisfaction with compensation, limited career advancement opportunities, and strained relationships with supervisors. Employees frequently expressed frustration over the absence of clear promotion pathways and recognition systems. Consequently, the high turnover rate not only disrupted workflow continuity but also imposed additional costs on the company due to repeated recruitment and onboarding processes.

Table 2. Employee Turnover Trends (2020–2023)

Year	Total Employees	Employees Resigned	Turnover Rate
2020	45	6	13.3%
2021	47	9	19.1%
2022	43	11	25.6%
2023	40	13	32.5%

The company also lacked structured training and development programs, relying instead on informal learning processes. Newly recruited employees were expected to learn by observing senior staff, without formal orientation sessions or technical training. This approach resulted in uneven skill development across departments, as employees received varying levels of guidance. Those working in sales and logistics, in particular, reported difficulties in understanding company procedures due to the

absence of clear instruction. From a managerial perspective, training was often viewed as an additional cost rather than a strategic investment. As a consequence, employee competencies developed slowly, limiting both innovation and overall productivity.

Over time, these conditions contributed to a growing sense of dissatisfaction among employees. The increasing turnover trend can therefore be understood as a cumulative outcome of weak HR systems that fail to provide both extrinsic incentives, such as fair compensation and career opportunities, and intrinsic motivation, such as recognition and professional growth. Ultimately, this lack of support and development pushed employees to seek better opportunities elsewhere.

Table 3. Training and Development Issues

Training Component	Existing Condition	Consequences
Employee orientation	Not available	Slow adaptation
Technical training	Rarely conducted	Low technical competence
Leadership training	Not available	Weak managerial capability
Career development programs	Absent	Low employee motivation

Performance evaluation was another problematic area. The company did not use formal performance appraisal instruments. Employee evaluations were largely based on subjective judgments from family members involved in management. Several employees perceived the evaluation process as unfair because performance criteria were unclear and inconsistent. In some cases, employees with strong personal relationships with owners received preferential treatment. This created feelings of injustice and reduced trust in management systems.

Compensation practices further intensified this dissatisfaction. Salary structures lacked transparency and consistency across departments, with employees performing similar roles often receiving different levels of pay without clear justification. In addition, incentive systems were poorly designed, and overtime compensation was applied inconsistently. Interview findings indicate that many employees perceived these practices as inequitable, which significantly reduced their motivation and weakened their commitment to the organization.

Moreover, the absence of structured training and development programs compounded these issues by limiting employees' ability to improve their skills and performance. Without adequate support for competency development, employee productivity remained suboptimal, and the organization struggled to adapt effectively to operational challenges.

Table 4. Compensation Problems Identified

Compensation Aspect	Existing Practice	Employee Perception
Base salary	Inconsistent	Unfair
Incentives	Limited	Demotivating
Overtime pay	Irregular	Dissatisfaction
Benefits	Minimal	Low retention

Communication problems emerged as another critical factor influencing organizational instability. Communication between owners, managers, and employees was often informal and unclear. Important decisions were sometimes communicated only to selected employees, creating confusion among staff members. Employees reported that they rarely had opportunities to provide feedback or express concerns regarding workplace challenges. This communication gap contributed to misunderstandings, workplace conflict, and reduced organizational cohesion.

Table 5. Summary of HRM Problems at PT. Mena Moria

HRM Dimension	Main Problem	Organizational Consequence
Recruitment	Informal hiring	Skill mismatch
Retention	High turnover	Operational disruption
Training	Lack of development programs	Low competence
Performance Evaluation	Subjective assessment	Perceived unfairness
Compensation	Inequitable salary system	Low motivation
Communication	Weak coordination	Internal conflict

Financial documents analyzed in this study further highlight the broader consequences of ineffective HRM practices. The data show a consistent decline in revenue from 2020 to 2023, accompanied by rising operational costs. These increasing expenses were largely driven by repeated recruitment processes, employee replacement, and productivity losses caused by high turnover and skill mismatches.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that HRM weaknesses are not merely internal administrative issues but strategic organizational problems with direct financial implications. In particular, the parallel trend of declining revenue and increasing costs—especially those related to recruitment and workforce replacement—suggests a clear link between HR inefficiencies and deteriorating financial performance.

These results underscore the urgent need for more formalized and professional HR systems. Strengthening HR practices is essential not only to improve employee retention and operational efficiency but also to support the long-term sustainability of family-owned enterprises.

3.2. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that ineffective human resource management (HRM) practices played a significant role in driving organizational instability and financial decline at PT. Mena Moria. Rather than occurring in isolation, HR-related challenges in this family-owned business were systemic in nature. Weaknesses in recruitment, employee retention, training, performance evaluation, compensation, and communication interacted with one another, creating a cycle of inefficiencies that undermined overall organizational performance. While family firms often benefit from strong interpersonal trust and operational flexibility, these same characteristics can hinder the professionalization of managerial systems, particularly in the governance of human resources.

Building on previous research that tends to examine HR issues separately, this study shows that HR failures in family businesses function as an interconnected system. The findings suggest a cyclical pattern of HR dysfunction, where problems in one area reinforce and amplify weaknesses in others—for example, poor recruitment leading to low competency, which affects performance, increases dissatisfaction, and ultimately drives turnover. This integrated perspective extends existing literature by highlighting the dynamic and reinforcing nature of HRM challenges, offering a more comprehensive explanation of how such issues contribute to organizational decline.

The first major issue identified in this study was the informal recruitment process. PT. Mena Moria relied heavily on family networks, personal referrals, and trust-based hiring rather than structured competency assessments. This practice resulted in the recruitment of employees whose qualifications did not align with organizational needs. This finding strongly supports the study conducted by Ehmann et al. (2025), which found that family-owned firms tend to adopt informal HR practices due to their preference for relational trust over formal systems. Kim and Jung (2022) argued that such informality often limits organizational effectiveness because recruitment decisions prioritize familiarity over competence. Similarly, Kindström et al. (2024) found that small businesses frequently avoid formal recruitment mechanisms due to limited financial resources and managerial expertise. However, the current study extends these findings by showing that informal recruitment not only reduces workforce quality but also triggers downstream problems such as low performance and higher turnover.

High employee turnover emerged as another major challenge. The study found that employees frequently resigned because of unclear career pathways, dissatisfaction with compensation, and poor supervisory relationships. These findings align with Wynendaele et al. (2025), who argued that turnover

is often driven by organizational dissatisfaction and weak retention mechanisms. Their research emphasized that organizations with unstable HR systems often face repeated workforce disruptions that undermine productivity. Similarly, Salama et al. (2022) identified compensation dissatisfaction and leadership problems as major predictors of voluntary turnover. In PT. Mena Moria, turnover rates increased annually, demonstrating how unresolved HR issues accumulate over time. Unlike previous studies that often examine turnover as an independent phenomenon, this study reveals that turnover in family businesses may be deeply interconnected with broader structural HR deficiencies.

The absence of formal training and development programs also contributed significantly to low employee competency. Employees were expected to learn through informal observation rather than structured orientation or technical training. This finding is consistent with the work of Mohamed Al Ali et al. (2018), who found that organizations that neglect employee training often experience lower productivity and weaker innovation capacity. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2025) noted that family businesses frequently underinvest in employee development because owners prioritize short-term operational costs over long-term strategic benefits. The current study confirms this trend and demonstrates how insufficient training creates operational inefficiencies, particularly in companies operating in competitive sectors such as construction material distribution.

Another important finding relates to performance evaluation systems. PT. Mena Moria lacked formal appraisal mechanisms, and employee performance was often assessed subjectively by family members involved in management. Employees perceived this system as unfair and biased, especially when personal relationships influenced managerial decisions. This finding aligns with Fernandez (2025), who argued that family firms often face governance challenges because ownership and managerial roles overlap. Similarly, Taşdemir et al. (2017) emphasized that nepotism and favoritism can undermine professional decision-making in family businesses. However, this study contributes additional insight by demonstrating how subjective performance evaluation directly affects employee trust and motivation, leading to broader organizational dissatisfaction.

Compensation inequity was another major source of employee dissatisfaction. Employees reported inconsistencies in salary structures, limited incentives, and irregular overtime payments. These findings strongly support Ardian et al. (2023) and Ardian et al. (2023), who found that compensation fairness significantly influences employee commitment and retention. Similarly, Buttner and Lowe (2017) emphasized that perceived pay inequity increases turnover intentions and decreases organizational loyalty. In PT. Mena Moria, compensation dissatisfaction was particularly severe because employees compared their salaries with peers performing similar tasks. This study expands prior literature by showing how compensation issues become more sensitive in family firms where financial decisions are often centralized within family leadership structures.

Communication problems also emerged as a significant organizational challenge. Employees reported unclear instructions, limited feedback opportunities, and inconsistent communication of organizational decisions. This finding supports Somboonvechakarn et al. (2022), who found that communication failures in family firms often stem from centralized authority structures. Likewise, Hadziahmetovic and Salihovic (2022) and Nadkarni et al. (2021) highlighted that transparent communication strengthens organizational trust and improves employee engagement. The present study confirms these findings while demonstrating that communication breakdowns can intensify other HR problems such as turnover, dissatisfaction, and workplace conflict.

A key contribution of this study lies in demonstrating how multiple HR problems interact simultaneously rather than occurring independently. Previous studies often isolate individual HR variables such as recruitment, turnover, or compensation. In contrast, this study reveals a cyclical relationship in which poor recruitment leads to competency gaps, competency gaps reduce performance, weak performance contributes to dissatisfaction, dissatisfaction increases turnover, and high turnover further disrupts organizational performance. This interconnected model provides a more holistic understanding of HR challenges in family-owned businesses.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings support the professionalization perspective in family business studies, which emphasizes that long-term sustainability depends on a firm's ability to shift from informal governance toward more structured and formal managerial systems. In addition, the results align with the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, which conceptualizes human capital as a critical strategic resource. In the case of PT. Mena Moria, the inability to manage this resource effectively not only reduced operational efficiency but also weakened the company's competitive position, ultimately contributing to its financial decline.

This study contributes to the literature by offering a more integrated perspective on HRM within family business contexts. Rather than examining HR functions in isolation, it conceptualizes them as part of a systemic framework in which different HR dimensions are interdependent. From a practical standpoint, the study proposes a structured HR redesign model that can serve as a guide for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), particularly family-owned businesses, in transitioning from informal practices toward more professional and sustainable HR systems.

Practically, the study suggests that family-owned enterprises should establish formal HR departments, implement transparent recruitment systems, develop structured training programs, standardize performance evaluations, improve compensation fairness, and strengthen internal communication channels. These changes are essential not only for improving employee satisfaction but also for ensuring long-term business sustainability. In conclusion, this study extends previous HRM

and family business literature by offering an integrated perspective on how informal HR systems can generate organizational decline when left unaddressed.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that ineffective human resource management practices were a major contributing factor to organizational instability and financial decline at PT. Mena Moria as a family-owned enterprise. The findings demonstrate that the company's reliance on informal management systems created significant weaknesses in recruitment, employee retention, training and development, performance evaluation, compensation management, and organizational communication. These deficiencies collectively reduced employee productivity, increased turnover rates, weakened organizational commitment, and generated operational inefficiencies that ultimately affected business performance between 2020 and 2023.

The study further reveals that HRM challenges in family businesses are interconnected rather than isolated. Informal recruitment led to competency mismatches, inadequate training limited employee development, subjective performance evaluations reduced trust, and compensation inequity intensified employee dissatisfaction. Poor communication further amplified these issues and contributed to workplace conflict.

Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on family business management by highlighting the importance of HR professionalization for organizational sustainability. Practically, the findings suggest that family-owned enterprises should transition from informal governance structures toward more formalized HR systems. Establishing transparent recruitment procedures, structured training programs, fair compensation policies, and effective communication mechanisms is essential to improving employee retention and ensuring long-term organizational competitiveness.

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