

**Human Resource Management and Knowledge
Transfer in Australian Subsidiaries of MNE's
Operating in the International Hospitality
Industry**

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at the University of Newcastle, Australia.

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ANZSIC	Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification
ANZSP	Australia, New Zealand, South Pacific
ATSA	Australian Tourism Satellite Account
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHR	Centre for Hospitality Research (Cornell)
CoPs	Community of Practice(s)
DEST	Department Education, Skills & Training
DEWR	Department of Employment & Workplace Relations
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
EPG	Ethnocentric, Polycentric, Geocentric
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GM	General Manager
GSM	General Site Manager
HQ	Headquarters
HCN	Host Country National
HR	Human Resources
HRD	Human Resource Development
HRM	Human Resource Management
HRS	Human Resource Staff
ICH	Inter-Continental Hotels
ICT	Information Communication Technologies
IHA	International Hotel Association
IHRA	International Hotel & Restaurant Association

IJV	International Joint Venture
ILO	International Labor Organization
JV	Joint Venture
KPO	Key Performance Objective
MNE	Multinational Enterprise
NIH	Not Invented Here (Syndrome)
NSW	New South Wales
PCN	Parent Country National
PM	Performance Management
RSM	Regional Senior Manager
SARS	Sudden Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SCA	Strategic Competitive Advantage
SECI	Socialization, Externalization Combination & Internalization (Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995)
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TCN	Third Country National
TQM	Total Quality Management
U.K	United Kingdom
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
U.S.A	United States of America

CONFERENCE PAPERS PUBLISHED FROM THIS RESEARCH

Larkin, R, and Burgess, J. ‘HR Practices and the Knowledge Transfer Process in MNEs: The role of employee status and positioning within the organisation’. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*. (Under review)

Larkin, R. (2011) ‘HRM Practices and Knowledge Sharing in the Australian subsidiaries of an International Hotel Chain’, Paper presented at the 25th AIRAANZ conference, February 2011, Auckland, New Zealand [E1].

Larkin, R. (2010) ‘Extending the reach of the Jungle Drums: HR influences on Social Networks’ Paper presented at the 10th PERA Conference, November 2010, Surfers Paradise [E1].

Larkin, R. (2009) ‘Human Resource practices and Knowledge Transfer: Distinguishing the features of employment’ *Paper to be presented at the 9th PERA Conference*, 18-20 November 2009, Glenelg, SA. [E1].

Larkin, R. (2009) ‘Knowledge flows in MNCs and HRM practices’ *Paper presented at the 23rd AIRAANZ Conference*, 6th – 8th February, Newcastle, Australia. [E1].

ABSTRACT

The objective of this thesis was to examine the influences of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices on knowledge transfer between Australian subsidiaries of an International hotel chain. Generally, the research enabled understanding of the organisations commitment to knowledge transfer within and between its subsidiaries, the organisations use of knowledge transfer mechanisms including Information Technology Communication systems and socially constructed mechanisms, and the effects of HRM practices on each within the context of the organisations strategic and operating environments. The research used Gupta and Govindarajan's (2000) knowledge transfer dimensions to establish a framework for analysis thereby incorporating both motivational and ability aspects of knowledge transfer behaviours.

The research used a qualitative, single complex case study approach which was chosen due to its ability to capture both human and situational influences impacting on the social phenomena. This approach was called for by commentators, for example Litteljohn (1997) in order to capture the complexity of the increasing internationalisation and geocentric nature of the hotel sector. Refer to Appendix 1 for the 'mix' of research constructs investigated in this study. Data collection involved interviews with 32 respondents from 3 primary groups. These were regional or executive management, site or hotel general managers and site, regional or state regional HR staff and managers.

Primarily, the findings demonstrated that a number of HR practices clearly influenced knowledge transfer across the organisations subsidiaries. Further, most practices were identified as influential to knowledge transfer across a number of dimensions. In many cases however, the key factor separating the influences was the actual transfer mechanism, that is, either Information Technology Communications or social systems. In all cases, the usefulness of the HR practice was either further facilitated or moderated by the organisations contextual factors and decision making processes, many of which were as a result of the decentralised HR system.

Aside from the findings that were established through the application of the framework, this study offers additional insight across a number of areas as a

consequence of the research. These findings included the need to consider the effect of HR practices on knowledge transfer as an interrelated system of practices, the potential negative effects of the organisations competitive or market strategy on knowledge transfer outcomes, and the requirement for purposeful integration of both knowledge transfer mechanisms when seeking to understand organisational knowledge transfers.