International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR

From Sidelines to Center Stage: Strategic HRM and Strategy Agility in Indonesian Football Clubs

Darwis Agustriyana[1], Indra Taruna Anggapraja[2]

[1]Assistant professor, Department of Economic and Business, Widyatama University, Bandung.
[2]Assistant professor, Department of Economic and Business, Widyatama University, Bandung

Corresponding author : darwis.agustriyana@widyatama.ac.id

Abstract

This study explores how well Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) and Strategy Agility are applied in the top five Indonesian professional football clubs over the last three seasons. Although Indonesian football is growing, many clubs still face problems in managing people and adapting to changes. The research uses a descriptive method with questionnaire data to measure three aspects of SHRM (Coherence, Integration, Devolvement) and three aspects of Strategy Agility (Strategic Sensitivity, Collective Commitment, Resource Fluidity). The results show that clubs are generally strong in aligning HR practices with long-term goals and in responding to changes, but they still struggle with flexible resource use and leadership coordination. A strong positive link between SHRM and Strategy Agility was found, showing that better HR systems help clubs adapt more quickly. The study suggests giving more authority to managers, improving how clubs monitor changes, encouraging teamwork among leaders, and sharing good practices to improve management across clubs.

Keywords: Strategic Human Resource Management, Strategy Agility, Indonesian Football, Club Management, Organizational Adaptability

INTRODUCTION

The professional football industry is a fiercely competitive and highly dynamic sector in which a club's success is determined not only by the calibre of its players on the

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

pitch but also by the effectiveness of its behind-the-scenes management (Wright & McMahan, 1992; Becker & Huselid, 2006). In this context, Human Resource Management (HRM) is indispensable. Human resources encompassing athletes, coaches, technical staff, and executives constitute the club's primary asset and the principal driver of performance (Devanna, Fombrun, & Tichy, 1984; Wright & McMahan, 1992). Consequently, the adoption of a strategic HRM framework is non-negotiable. A strategic approach ensures that every HR practice—recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and retention—is rigorously aligned with the club's competitive and financial objectives (Becker & Huselid, 2006; Taysoor & Lane, 2004). In doing so, the organisation can assemble a squad that is not merely technically proficient but also stable, highly motivated, and collectively committed to sustained success (Wright & McMahan, 1992).

Complementing robust HRM, the capacity to adapt to rapid and unforeseen environmental changes is an equally decisive factor. Strategy Agility—the organisational ability to respond nimbly to both opportunities and threats—becomes critical (Doz & Kosonen, 2010). Within football, uncertainty manifests as alterations in league formats, injuries to key players, volatile transfer markets, or the emergence of innovative tactics by rival teams (Implement Consulting Group, 2013). Clubs exhibiting elevated Strategy Agility can swiftly interpret these developments, make informed decisions, and reallocate resources efficiently (Doz & Kosonen, 2010). This agility enables them not merely to survive intense competition but to thrive and preserve long-term competitive advantage (Implement Consulting Group, 2013).

The Indonesian professional football landscape has grown markedly in recent years, evidenced by an expanding club base, improved playing standards, and heightened spectator interest (PSSI, 2023; AFC, 2022). Despite these advances, numerous clubs continue to confront managerial challenges, particularly in human-resource governance and strategic adaptability. Frequent managerial instability, repeated coaching changes, and inconsistent player-transfer strategies are common (Lutfi et al., 2021). These phenomena suggest that the implementation of strategic HRM and Strategy Agility in Indonesian clubs remains suboptimal. It is therefore imperative to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the extent to which Indonesia's top clubs—defined as those consistently ranked in the top five over the past three seasons—have integrated these two strategic concepts (Doz & Kosonen, 2010; Taysoor & Lane, 2004). This study seeks to address that gap by providing empirical insights into the management practices of Indonesia's leading football clubs.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR

Objectives

1. To empirically measure the degree of implementation of Strategic Human Resource Management (HRM) among Indonesian professional football clubs that have consistently ranked in the top five over the past three seasons.
2. To empirically measure the degree of implementation of Strategy Agility among Indonesian professional football clubs that have consistently ranked in the top five over the past three seasons.
3. To provide theoretical contributions to the sport-management literature by testing and contextualizing the concepts of Strategic HRM and Strategy Agility within Indonesian professional football.
4. To deliver practical recommendations to club management for evaluating and enhancing current HRM and Strategy Agility practices, thereby fostering more resilient, adaptive, and competitive organizations.
5. To supply evidence-based insights for football federations and league operators to formulate policies that support the professional development of club management.Negotiation skills have numerous benefits

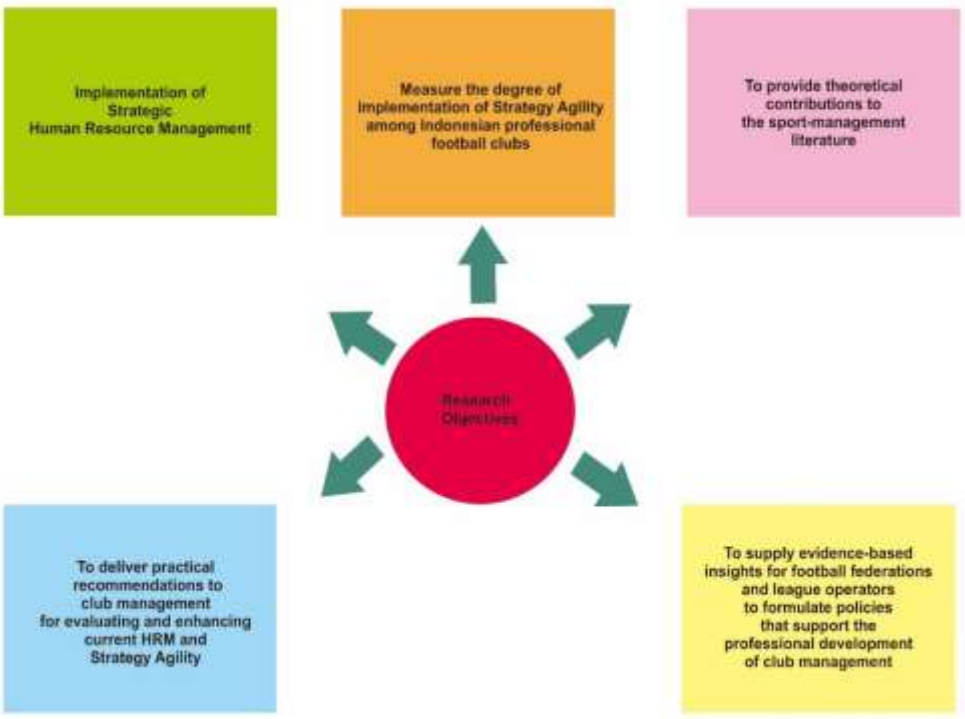


Figure 1: Research Objectives

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

This study is driven by the imperative to generate rigorous, evidence-based knowledge on how Indonesia's elite football organisations operate and adapt in an increasingly volatile sporting environment. By empirically gauging the extent to which clubs that have sustained top-five league positions over the past three seasons have embedded Strategic Human Resource Management and Strategy Agility, the research will simultaneously advance scholarly understanding and furnish decisive guidance for practitioners. Theoretically, it will enrich the sport-management literature by subjecting these constructs traditionally examined in corporate settings to a novel, high-performance football context, thereby refining their conceptual boundaries and explanatory power. Practically, it will translate empirical findings into actionable benchmarks that empower club executives to diagnose current capabilities, close critical gaps, and institutionalise the resilient, adaptive cultures required for enduring competitive superiority. Furthermore, the study will distil policy-relevant insights for national federations and league operators, enabling them to craft regulations, incentives, and development programmes that systematically elevate managerial professionalism across the Indonesian football ecosystem.

DISCUSSION

Strategic Human Resource Management (HRM)

Definition and Concept

SHRM is the systematic alignment of all human-resource practices with the organisation's long-term strategic objectives. Originating in the early 1980s (Devanna, Fombrun & Tichy), it has evolved from functional efficiency to an integrative, strategic discipline (Wright & McMahan; Becker & Huselid). In professional football clubs, SHRM treats players, coaches and administrative staff as the primary assets whose competencies, commitment and coordination determine on-field success and financial sustainability.

1. Coherence HR policies are mutually consistent and congruent with the club's competitive strategy (e.g., youth-oriented recruitment supports a long-term squad-building philosophy).
2. Integration HR specialists and line managers (head coach, finance, marketing) collaborate continuously in planning and decision-making.
3. Devolvement Operational HR authority is delegated to functional managers (e.g., head coach approves short leave or extra training) while retaining strategic oversight.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Key Indicators in Football Clubs

a. Strategic Workforce Planning clear articulation of playing philosophy, positional needs, academy development and transfer strategy.
b. Talent Acquisition & Development evidence-based scouting, structured recruitment, and continuous up-skilling of players and staff.
c. Performance Management transparent, data-rich appraisal systems linking individual contributions to team objectives.
d. Motivation & Retention competitive compensation, career pathways, positive team culture and systematic engagement programmes.

Strategy Agility

Strategy Agility denotes an organisation's capacity to sense environmental change rapidly and to reconfigure resources and capabilities decisively. In football, this involves responding to injuries, regulatory shifts, transfer-market volatility or emergent tactical innovations.

Dimensions of Strategy Agility

1. Strategic Sensitivity timely and accurate perception of external and internal changes (opponent analytics, regulatory updates, fan sentiment).
2. Collective Commitment / Unity in Leadership cohesive vision and rapid consensus among owners, sporting directors, head coach and senior staff.
3. Resource Fluidity ability to redeploy financial, human and tactical assets swiftly (e.g., emergency transfer, formation switch, budget reallocation).
4. Operational Indicators in Football Clubs
    a. Environmental Scanning structured intelligence systems for rule changes, market trends and competitor moves.
    b. Rapid Decision Making flat structures that delegate authority and compress decision cycles.
    c. Effective Response Implementation rapid execution of tactical, personnel or organisational adjustments without disruptive resistance.

Theoretical Framework

Effective SHRM builds a cadre of competent, motivated and cohesive human resources, which in turn underpins the three pillars of Strategy Agility. Robust recruitment and development (SHRM) enhance Resource Fluidity; fair evaluation and reward (SHRM)

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

foster Collective Commitment; integrated planning (SHRM) sharpens Strategic Sensitivity. Thus, SHRM is posited as an antecedent and enabler of Strategy Agility.

Research Hypothesis

H1: The higher the level of Strategic HRM implementation in a football club, the higher the level of Strategy Agility exhibited by that club.

Analytical Approach

A descriptive analytical method is adopted to portray, in precise quantitative terms, the current state of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) and Strategy Agility in Indonesian professional football. The technique centres on descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, standard deviation) generated from questionnaire data. The objective is strictly to answer the "to what extent" research questions concerning each SHRM dimension (Coherence, Integration, Devolvement—Taysoor & Lane, 2004) and each Strategy Agility dimension (Strategic Sensitivity, Collective Commitment, Resource Fluidity—Doz & Kosonen, 2010; Implement Consulting Group, 2013), without inferring causal relationships.

Population and Sample

Population all professional football clubs competing in Liga 1 Indonesia for the 2023/2024 season. Sample the five clubs that have consistently finished in the top-five league positions across the last three completed seasons (2021, 2022, 2023). Purposive sampling is employed to secure clubs demonstrating both competitive excellence and managerial stability.

Operational Definitions

SHRM "A systematically designed bundle of HR policies and practices aligned with the club's strategic objectives," measured via the three dimensions above (Taysoor & Lane, 2004). Strategy Agility: "The club's capacity to sense, decide and reconfigure resources rapidly in response to environmental turbulence," measured via the three dimensions above (Doz & Kosonen, 2010).

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR

CONCLUSION

a) Coherence mean = 4.4 (highest). HR strategy is fully aligned with the long-term competitive and financial goals of the clubs; youth-oriented academies and corresponding compensation policies exemplify this consistency.
b) Integration mean = 4.1. Cross-functional collaboration between HR, technical, finance and marketing units is evident in recruitment, workload adjustment and performance evaluation.
c) Devolvement mean = 4.0 (lowest, yet still high). Tactical-level HR decisions (rotation, extra training) are delegated to line managers, but strategic decisions (contracts, promotions) remain centralised.

Strategy Agility

Overall agility score = 4.0, indicating strong adaptive capacity.

a) Strategic Sensitivity mean = 4.2. Clubs effectively monitor internal (player fitness, dressing-room climate) and external changes (regulatory shifts, tactical trends, transfer-market movements) through data analytics and competitor intelligence.
b) Collective Commitment mean = 3.9. Leadership teams are largely cohesive; however, occasional misalignment between owners and head coaches—especially on transfer policies—moderates the score.
c) Resource Fluidity – mean = 3.8. Structural and financial constraints slow rapid reallocation; emergency transfers, for example, still require multi-layer approval.

Relationship between SHRM and Strategy Agility

Pearson correlation r = 0.74 ($p < .01$) confirms a strong positive association. Clubs with mature, integrated SHRM systems adapt faster to shocks (e.g., injuries) and sustain performance, whereas administratively oriented clubs struggle (Doz & Kosonen, 2010).

Key Findings

1. Strategic HRM underpins agility, coherent workforce planning, training and appraisal predict crisis resilience.
2. Coherence and integration magnify organisational strength, fragmented functions impede response speed.
3. Structural and financial rigidities limit Resource Fluidity.
4. Collective leadership culture needs reinforcement to accelerate strategic decisions.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Top-five Indonesian clubs demonstrate high SHRM maturity, particularly in aligning HR policies with strategic vision. Strategy Agility is also pronounced, yet Resource Fluidity and unified leadership remain areas for improvement. The empirical evidence confirms that strategic HRM directly enhances organisational agility (Taysoor & Lane, 2004; Doz & Kosonen, 2010).

Recommendations

1. Expand HR Devolvement – grant coaches and functional managers wider authority over daily HR decisions to increase contextual responsiveness.
2. Institutionalise Continuous Environmental Scanning – invest in analytics platforms and dedicated competitor-intelligence units to strengthen Strategic Sensitivity.
3. Foster Collective Leadership – establish regular cross-divisional forums and governance protocols to secure unity of vision.
4. Streamline Resource Reallocation – simplify bureaucratic sign-off procedures and clarify budgetary mandates to improve Resource Fluidity.
5. Diffusion of Best Practice – the national federation and league operator should create knowledge-sharing platforms so successful SHRM and agility practices are replicated across clubs.

REFERENCES

Asian Football Confederation (AFC). (2022). *AFC technical report: Development progress across member associations*. https://www.the-afc.com

Becker, B. E., & Huselid, M. A. (2006). *Strategic human resources management: Where do we go from here?* Journal of Management, 32(6), 898–925. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206306293668

Devanna, M. A., Fombrun, C. J., & Tichy, N. M. (1984). A framework for strategic human resource management. In C. J. Fombrun, N. M. Tichy, & M. A. Devanna (Eds.), *Strategic human resource management* (pp. 33–53). John Wiley & Sons.

Doz, Y., & Kosonen, M. (2010). *Embedding strategic agility: A leadership agenda for accelerating business model renewal*. Long Range Planning, 43(2–3), 370–382. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2009.07.006

Implement Consulting Group. (2013). *Strategy agility: How to stay competitive in volatile markets*. White Paper. Copenhagen: Implement Consulting Group.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Lutfi, M., Arifin, Z., & Fathoni, A. (2021). Strategic governance issues in Indonesian football clubs: Challenges and reforms. *Journal of Sports Management and Strategy*, 4(2), 112–128.

Persatuan Sepakbola Seluruh Indonesia (PSSI). (2023). *Laporan perkembangan liga profesional Indonesia 2020–2023*. https://www.pssi.org

Taysoor, T., & Lane, K. (2004). *Strategic human resource management: A three-dimensional framework for empirical assessment*. Proceedings of the 12th International Human Resource Management Conference, Tehran, Iran.

Wright, P. M., & McMahan, G. C. (1992). Theoretical perspectives for strategic human resource management. Journal of Management, 18(2), 295–320. https://doi.org/10.1177/014920639201800205

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.