



INSTITUTO
UNIVERSITÁRIO
DE LISBOA

Leadership and Human Resource Management in a Transformation-and-Upgrading
Organizational Change: The Case Study of Yulong Gold Co.

LIANG Haitao

Doctor of Management

Supervisors:

PhD Nelson Campos Ramalho, Associate Professor,
ISCTE University Institute of Lisbon

PhD WANG Binjie, Associate Professor,
University of Electronic Science and Technology of China

January, 2025



BUSINESS
SCHOOL

Marketing, Operations and General Management Department

Leadership and Human Resource Management in a Transformation-and-Upgrading
Organizational Change: The Case Study of Yulong Gold Co.

LIANG Haitao

Doctor of Management

Supervisors:

PhD Nelson Campos Ramalho, Associate Professor,
ISCTE University Institute of Lisbon

PhD WANG Binjie, Associate Professor,
University of Electronic Science and Technology of China

January, 2025



BUSINESS
SCHOOL

Marketing, Operations and General Management Department

Leadership and Human Resource Management in a Transformation-and-Upgrading
Organizational Change: The Case Study of Yulong Gold Co.

LIANG Haitao

Doctor of Management

Jury:

PhD Tânia Marques, Assistant Professor,
Instituto Politécnico de Leiria

PhD ZENG Yong, Full Professor,
UESTC - University of Electronic Science and Technology of China

PhD Virginia Trigo, Professor Emerita,
ISCTE University Institute of Lisbon

PhD Nelson Ramalho, Associate Professor,
ISCTE University Institute of Lisbon

PhD Henrique Duarte, Associate Professor with Habilitation,
ISCTE University Institute of Lisbon

January, 2025

Declaration

I declare that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university and that to the best of my knowledge it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed: 梁海涛 Liang Haitao

Date: 2025.1.30

Name: LIANG Haitao

作者申明

本人郑重声明：除了论文致谢中明确说明并致以谢意的部分外，所呈交的论文不包含任何他人或作者本人已用于获得任何教育机构的学位和证书而使用过的材料。同时尽我所知，除了文中特别加以标注引用的内容外，本论文不包含任何其他个人或集体已经发表或撰写的成果作品。

作者签名： 梁海涛 Liang Haitao

日期：2025.1.30

姓名(拼音)：LIANG Haitao

[This page is deliberately left blank.]

Abstract

Organisational change has been extensively studied but in the context of radical change, Chinese concept of transformation-upgrading comprehends changes can entail shifting from one industry to another in a swift way. The nature of such changes gives strategic human resource management decisions a plausible critical status in determining its success but there is yet scarce research on this specific Chinese context.

This research reveals the dynamic mechanism of organizational change in the Chinese context through a longitudinal single case study of Yulong Gold, which has successfully navigated through a transformation-upgrading process and changed industries within that organisational change. Departing from W. W. Burke and Litwin's (1992) model on organisational change, findings based on content analysis of 70 interviews with top managers, human resource decision makers, first line supervisors, and employees enable the depiction of the status of the company in three periods, before, the transition, and currently. A chronological analysis on the composing factors shows the importance of transformational leadership style together with human resource management practices that closely relate to high performance work systems. It also shows the importance of vertical alignment closely linked to external market changes and official policies that legitimize the change.

Findings underline the relevance of W. W. Burke and Litwin's (1992) model in the context of transformation-upgrading in China as well as the importance of previous best practices in strategic human resource management, to which one should add transformational leadership together with two dimensions of the traditional Chinese leadership of benevolence and moral character in line with the Confucian values.

Keywords: Organisational change, transformation-upgrading, high performance work systems, mining industry, case study, China

JEL: M12, M14

[This page is deliberately left blank.]

Resumo

A mudança organizacional tem sido amplamente estudada, mas, no contexto de uma mudança radical, o conceito chinês de transformação-atualização compreende mudanças que podem implicar a transição rápida de um sector para outro. A natureza de tais mudanças confere às decisões estratégicas de gestão de recursos humanos um estatuto crítico plausível na determinação do seu sucesso, mas há ainda pouca investigação no contexto chinês específico.

Esta pesquisa revela o mecanismo dinâmico da mudança organizacional no contexto chinês através de um estudo de caso único longitudinal da Yulong Gold, que passou com sucesso por um processo de transformação-atualização e mudou de sector no âmbito dessa mudança organizacional. Partindo do modelo de Burke e Litwin (1992) sobre a mudança organizacional, os resultados baseados na análise de conteúdo de 70 entrevistas com gestores de topo, decisores de recursos humano, supervisores de primeira linha e trabalhadores permitem descrever o estado da empresa em três períodos: antes, durante a transição e atualmente. Uma análise cronológica dos factores que compõem a empresa evidenciou a importância do estilo de liderança transformacional juntamente com as práticas de gestão de recursos humanos que estão intimamente relacionadas com a sistemas de trabalho de alto desempenho. Mostrou também a importância do alinhamento vertical, intimamente ligado às mudanças do mercado externo e às políticas oficiais que legitimam a mudança.

Os resultados sublinham a pertinência do modelo de Burke e Litwin (1992) no contexto da transformação-atualização na China, bem como a importância das melhores práticas de Gestão Estratégica de gestão de recurso humanos, às quais se deve acrescentar a liderança transformacional, juntamente com duas dimensões da liderança tradicional chinesa: a benevolência e o carácter moral, em conformidade com os valores confucionistas.

Palavras-chave: Mudança organizacional, transformação-actualização, sistemas de trabalho de elevado desempenho, indústria de mineração, estudo de caso, China

JEL: M12, M14

[This page is deliberately left blank.]

摘要

组织变革已被广泛研究，但在激进变革的背景下，中国的转型升级概念所理解的变革可能意味着从一个行业迅速转向另一个行业。这种变化的性质赋予了战略性人力资源管理决策决定成败的关键地位，但针对中国这种特殊情况的研究却很少。

本研究通过玉龙公司跨产业转型升级的纵向单案例研究，揭示中国情境下激进式组织变革的动态机制。根据 Burke 和 Litwin(1992)关于组织变革的模型，通过对 70 个访谈的内容分析，包括高层管理者、人力资源决策者、一线主管和员工的访谈，描绘了该公司在转型前、转型中和转型后三个时期的现状。按时间顺序对构成因素进行的分析表明，变革型领导风格以及和高绩效工作系统密切相关的人力资源管理实践非常重要。它还显示了与外部市场变化和使变革合法化的官方政策密切相关的纵向调整的重要性。

研究结果凸显了 Burke 和 Litwin(1992)模型在中国转型升级背景下的相关性，以及以往战略人力资源管理最佳实践的重要性。

关键词：组织变革，转型升级，高效工作系统，矿业，案例研究，中国

JEL: M12, M14

[This page is deliberately left blank.]

Acknowledgements

There is an old Chinese poem that says, “The calls of monkeys on both banks never cease, yet the boat has passed through thousands of mountains”. This line describes my feelings at the moment of completing this thesis: joyful and grateful.

I would like to express my gratitude to my advisor, Professor Nelson Campos Ramalho, one of the most dedicated people I have ever met. His rigorous approach to academia and tireless teaching spirit have deeply inspired me, showing me not only the essence of research but also the essence of life itself: a love for life and for others. Professor Nelson guided me meticulously through every detail of my research, from theoretical frameworks and methodologies to precise wording in my writing. I believe he will remain a lifelong mentor and friend. I also owe a great debt of gratitude to his wife, whose understanding and support allowed him to dedicate long hours on weekends and holidays to offer me in-depth, face-to-face guidance.

I am also deeply thankful to my Chinese advisor, Professor Wang Bingjie, for her invaluable contributions to my research. Every time I sought academic advice, she responded promptly and efficiently, providing insightful, targeted feedback. Her academic excellence and personal integrity have set an example for me to follow throughout my life.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to my alumni, Dr. Feng Yan, Dr. Lu Yibin, and Dr. Li Xia, who provided me with tremendous support during my research.

There is a well-known Portuguese verse: ‘Here the land ends, and the sea begins.’ This line has taught me that completing this thesis is merely the end of one phase in my life and the beginning of another. I will carry the guidance and support of my mentors and friends in my heart, strive to work hard, and aim to become an outstanding alumnus of both UESTC and ISCTE.

[This page is deliberately left blank.]

致谢

中国有句古诗，“两岸猿声啼不尽，轻舟已过万重山”，这句诗可以描述我在完成论文此刻的心情：快乐而感恩着。

我感谢我的导师 Nelson Campos Ramalho 教授，他是我见过最敬业的人之一，他严谨的治学态度和诲人不倦的精神深深让我感佩，让我在研究之外看到了生活的真谛，就是热爱生活和热爱他人。Nelson Campos Ramalho 教授几乎指导了我在研究过程中的每一个细节，不仅指导了研究理论和方法，还悉心发现了我的一些文字错误。我想他将是我不变的良师益友。同时我要深深地感谢 Nelson Campos Ramalho 教授的夫人，正是她的理解和支持，Nelson Campos Ramalho 教授才能经常在周末和假日为我专门进行长时间的面对面指导。

我感谢我的中方导师王冰洁教授，她为我的研究指导做出了无可替代的贡献，每次的学术问题咨询，总是在第一时间高效并且有针对性的回复，她的学术素养和人格魅力，是我终生学习的榜样。

我感谢我的校友丰燕博士、陆懿斌博士、李霞博士，他们为我在研究过程中提供了很多帮助。

葡萄牙有句著名的诗句：“陆止于此，海始于斯”，这句诗让我明白一个道理，论文的完成，只是我人生一个阶段性工作的完成，即将迎来的是新的一个起点。我将各位良师益友的指导和帮助，铭记在心，今后将努力工作，争取成为 UESTC 和 ISCTE 的杰出校友。

[This page is deliberately left blank.]

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 General context	1
1.2 Research problem.....	10
1.3 Research questions.....	11
1.4 Thesis structure	12
Chapter 2 : Literature Review	13
2.1 Organisational change and transformation	13
2.1.1 Mainstream models and common theories of organisational change.....	13
2.2 Basic implications and research trends in organisational transformation	16
2.2.1 Basic meaning of organisational transformation.....	16
2.2.2 Research trends in organisational transformation	17
2.3 Human resource management and employee behaviour in the context of change	19
2.3.1 Important role of HRM in the context of change	19
2.3.2 Human resources management in mergers and acquisitions	22
2.3.3 Human resource management in specific change contexts	24
2.4 Organisational performance	31
2.4.1 Relevant overview of factors influencing organisational performance	32
2.4.2 Transformational leadership.....	37
2.5 Research related to human resources practices	43
2.5.1 The meaning of human resources practices	43
2.5.2 Measurement of human resources practices	46
2.5.3 Impact of HR practices on individuals	47
Chapter 3 : The Focal Organisation.....	53
3.1 Phase one: Jiangsu Yulong Steel Pipe Co., Ltd. (1999-2020)	53
3.2 Phase two: shareholder changes and business transformation (2020)	56
3.3 Phase three: nationalization and expansion into the mining sector (2021-present)....	58
Chapter 4 : Method.....	65
4.1 Research design	65
4.2 Data collection	65
4.3 Sample	67

4.4 Interview script	69
4.5 Data analysis	75
Chapter 5 : Results	77
5.1 The first period: Traditional industry	77
5.1.1 How was the external environment of YG in period 1?	77
5.1.2 What sort of leadership style was predominant? How much was transformational leadership felt in the company?	80
5.1.3 How were mission, strategy and organisational culture characterized?	81
5.1.4 What management practices, namely HRM, were predominant? / How much were HPWS used in the organisation? (AMO).....	86
5.1.5 What behavioural outcomes were experienced? (unit climate, motivation, abilities)	89
5.1.6 How is the performance of people and the company?	92
5.2 The second period: Transition	95
5.2.1 How was the external environment of YG in period 2?	95
5.2.2 What sort of leadership style was predominant? How much was transformational leadership felt in the company?	95
5.2.3 How were mission, strategy and organisational culture characterized?	97
5.2.4 What management practices, namely HRM, were predominant? / How much were HPWS used in the organisation? (AMO).....	98
5.2.5 What behavioural outcomes were experienced? (unit climate, motivation, abilities)	99
5.2.6 How is the performance of people and the company?	100
5.3 The third period: Gold industry	101
5.3.1 How was the external environment of YG in period 3?	101
5.3.2 What sort of leadership style was predominant? How much was transformational leadership felt in the company?	101
5.3.3 How were mission, strategy and organisational culture characterized?	103
5.3.4 What management practices, namely HRM, were predominant? / How much were HPWS used in the organisation? (AMO).....	104
5.3.5 What behavioural outcomes were experienced? (unit climate, motivation, abilities)	105
5.3.6 How is the performance of people and the company?	106
5.4 Integration of results (the three periods together).....	106
Chapter 6 : General Discussion and Conclusion.....	115

Bibliography.....	121
Annex A: Other Tables	133

[This page is deliberately left blank.]

List of Tables

Table 2.1 Statistics on the type and content of papers on enterprise transformation and upgrading at home and abroad from 2002 to 2013	19
Table 2.2 Classification framework for flexibly oriented human resources systems	27
Table 2.3 Summary of research on transformational leadership	39
Table 2.4 Definitions of human resources practices	44
Table 2.5 Dimensional division of HR practices	45
Table 2.6 Specific practice elements of HR practices	45
Table 2.7 Human resources practice measurement scale	46
Table 3.1 The company's main accounting data and financial indicators for 2009—2011 (unit: million; market type: RMB)	54
Table 3.2 The company's main accounting data and financial indicators for 2019—2021 (unit: million; market type: RMB)	58
Table 4.1 Demographics of the sample	68
Table 4.2 Distribution of interviewees per category, period and dimension inquired	74
Table 5.1 Frequencies for external environment period 1	79
Table 5.2 Frequencies for leadership period 1	84
Table 5.3 Frequencies for mission, strategy and culture period 1	85
Table 5.4 Frequency descriptives for management & HRM (period 1)	87
Table 5.5 Frequency descriptives for behavioural outcomes (period 1)	90
Table 5.6 Frequency descriptives for performance (period 1)	93
Table 5.7 Comparative frequencies for categories per period	113

[This page is deliberately left blank.]

List of Figures

Figure 3.1 Timeline	53
Figure 3.2 Stock value changes in time	56
Figure 3.3 Schematic diagram of three main mining sites	60
Figure 5.1 Ratio evolution for external market	107
Figure 5.2 Ratio evolution for leadship	107
Figure 5.3 Ratio evolution for culture, strategy and mission.....	108
Figure 5.4 Evolution of organisational culture	109
Figure 5.5 Ratio evolution for management practices.....	110
Figure 5.6 Ratio evolution for AMO	110
Figure 5.7 Individual HRM practices	111
Figure 5.8 Ratio evolution for performance	111

[This page is deliberately left blank.]

List of Abbreviations

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
HPWS	High Performance Work System
HR	Human Resource
HRM	Human Resource Management

[This page is deliberately left blank.]

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 General context

Since the reform and opening up in 1978, China has undergone a significant transformation from a planned economy to a socialist market economy. This transformation was not only an inevitable choice for China's economic development but also a proactive response to the changing global economic landscape. During this process, the Chinese government has adjusted its policies to gradually liberalize market access, encourage the development of the private economy, while maintaining the dominant position of the state-owned economy in key sectors (Xie, 2019). This unique economic model has achieved remarkable success in promoting economic growth and improving people's living standards.

This economic model is somewhat related to the transformation and development of Chinese enterprises. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct in-depth research on the historical evolution of China's market economy. Since the reform and opening up in 1978, China has gone through several important stages of development, each with its unique policy background and economic characteristics (X. Liu, 2020; I. Weber, 2020). To more clearly present the evolution of China's market economy policies, the following is a brief timeline covering the important policies and developmental stages since 1978:

1978-1992: Early Stage of Reform and Opening Up

1978: The Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China was held, establishing the policy of reform and opening up.

1980: The establishment of four special economic zones in Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou, and Xiamen to attract foreign investment and technology.

1984: The Chinese government has decided to open up 14 coastal cities and further promote industrialization and urbanization through policy support, infrastructure construction, and industrial upgrading and transformation, in order to better attract foreign investment, introduce technology, expand foreign trade, and promote the integration of the Chinese economy with the world economy.

1988: The introduction of the theory of "primary stage of socialism" has clarified the goals of economic system reform, such as deepening enterprise reform and expanding coastal

economic open zones. There are important measures and progress in promoting economic system reform.

1992: The 14th National Congress of the CPC set the goal of establishing a socialist market economy. While emphasizing the role of the market, it also clarifies the importance of macroeconomic regulation in socialist countries. At the same time, it was proposed to accelerate the pace of economic system reform around the establishment of a socialist market economy system, including transforming the operating mechanism of state-owned enterprises and establishing a modern enterprise system; Cultivate and develop market systems, etc.

1992-2000: Establishment of the Socialist Market Economy System

1992: The 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of China established the goal of building a socialist market economy system.

1993: The Decision on Several Issues Concerning the Establishment of a Socialist Market Economy System was passed, which enabled the market to play a fundamental role in resource allocation under the macroeconomic regulation of the state. It was necessary to adhere to the principle of public ownership as the mainstay and the common development of multiple economic sectors, establish a modern enterprise system, a nationally unified and open market system, and other "five pillars".

1994: The implementation of the tax-sharing system reform to strengthen the central government's fiscal regulatory capacity.

1997: The outbreak of the Asian financial crisis, to which the Chinese government responded with proactive fiscal policies. For example, by adjusting tax policies such as increasing export tax rebate rates, encouraging enterprises to export, enhancing the competitiveness of exported products, and alleviating the impact of export obstacles on the economy. At the same time, tax incentives will be implemented for some industries and enterprises to reduce their burden and promote their development.

2000: Against the backdrop of the widening gap in economic development, infrastructure construction, and social undertakings between the eastern and western regions, the implementation of the "Western Development" strategy aims to promote regional coordinated development through industrial restructuring, infrastructure construction, ecological environment protection and construction.

2000-2010: Economic Globalization and Joining the WTO

2001: China's official accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), promoting economic globalization. This is an important milestone in China's economic development and opening-up process.

2002: In order to further improve people's living standards, promote sustainable economic and social development, realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and put forward the goal of a higher level, more comprehensive and more balanced development, the 16th National Congress of the CPC put forward the goal of building a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way.

2003: Introducing the Scientific Outlook on Development means putting people first, promoting comprehensive development, coordinated development, and sustainable development. By transforming the economic development mode, advancing ecological civilization construction, promoting regional coordinated development, strengthening social construction and deepening reform and opening up, it promotes coordinated development of the economy, society, and environment.

2005: Implement the Outline of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China (referred to as the "Eleventh Five-Year Plan"), and promote economic structural adjustment and industrial upgrading through accelerating information construction, promoting independent innovation, deepening institutional reform, and opening up to the outside world.

2008: In order to cope with the impact of the financial crisis and maintain stable and rapid economic development, the Chinese government has responded with a 4 trillion yuan economic stimulus plan.

2010-2020: The New Normal of the Economy and High-Quality Development

2010: China's economic aggregate exceeded that of Japan, becoming the world's second-largest economy. This is an important milestone in the development of China's economy, marking a significant change in the country's position in the global economic landscape.

2012: In order to achieve sustainable economic and social development and build a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way, the 18th National Congress of the CPC, on the basis of summing up previous development experience, proposed the overall layout of "Five in One", emphasizing the construction of economic, political, cultural, social and ecological civilization.

2013: Based on the principle of "mutual consultation, joint construction and sharing", the "the Belt and Road" initiative is proposed to promote international economic cooperation through policy communication, facility connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, exchanges and cooperation in education, culture, tourism, medical care, science and technology and other fields.

2015: Implement the Outline of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China (referred to as the "Eleventh Five-Year Plan"), and promote economic structural adjustment and industrial upgrading through accelerating information construction, promoting independent innovation, deepening institutional reform, and opening up to the outside world.

2017: The 19th National Congress of the CPC put forward the strategic goal of high-quality development to further promote the quality, efficiency and power changes of economic development and achieve sustainable and healthy economic development.

2020 to Present: High-Quality Development and the New Development Pattern

2020: According to the changes in China's development stage, environment, and conditions, especially based on the changes in China's comparative advantages, a new development pattern of "dual circulation" is introduced, emphasizing the mutual promotion of domestic and international dual circulation.

2021: Guided by the principles of adhering to the new development concept and deepening reform and opening up, the implementation of the Outline of the 14th Five Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China (the "14th Five-Year Plan") to promote scientific and technological innovation and green development.

2022: The 20th National Congress of the CPC emphasizes high-quality development and the promotion of economic transformation and upgrading, pointing out that high-quality development is the primary task of building a socialist modern country in an all-round way. To build a high-level socialist market economy system, construct a modern industrial system, comprehensively promote rural revitalization, promote regional coordinated development, and advance high-level opening up to the outside world.

2023: The introduction of the "Digital China" strategy to promote the deep integration of the digital economy and the real economy. Especially the "Overall Layout Plan for Digital China Construction" issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council has made important arrangements for promoting the deep integration of the digital economy and the real economy.

Overall, the evolution of China's socialist market economy has gone through three stages (Hu & Wang, 2020; Qian, 2001):

Phase One: Early Stage of Reform and Opening Up (1978-1992)

In the early years of reform and opening up (1978-1992), the Chinese government adopted measures such as establishing special economic zones and opening up coastal cities

to attract foreign investment and promote industrialization. These policies created a favorable external environment for the development of the private economy. As the economy grew rapidly, private enterprises gradually emerged as an important force in driving economic growth. However, the development of the private economy also brought some problems, such as market failures and increased social inequality. To address these issues, the Chinese government strengthened macroeconomic regulation while maintaining market mechanisms to ensure stable economic development.

Second Stage: Socialist Market Economy Stage (1992-2000)

In 1992, Deng Xiaoping's southern tour speech further clarified the direction of market-oriented reforms, marking the beginning of the socialist market economy stage (1992-2000). During this period, the private economy grew rapidly, and state-owned enterprises (SOEs) began market-oriented reforms through shareholding restructuring and asset reorganization to improve efficiency. At the same time, the government strengthened macroeconomic regulation through fiscal and monetary policies to stabilize the economy. The policy focus during this stage was to establish a socialist market economy system, improve market mechanisms, and promote rapid economic growth.

Phase Three: New Development Stage (2000 present)

Entering the 21st century, China's economy entered a new stage of development (2000 to present). During this period, China's economic scale continued to expand, and its international influence significantly increased. However, with rapid economic growth, several issues emerged, such as resource shortages, environmental pollution, and increased social inequality. To address these problems, the Chinese government proposed the concept of "scientific development," emphasizing coordinated development of the economy, society, and environment. In recent years, the Chinese government has further put forward the strategic goal of "high-quality development," emphasizing innovation-driven growth, green development, and open cooperation.

In China's socialist market economy, the balance between private and public ownership is a key issue. Since the reform and opening up, the Chinese government has been committed to finding the optimal balance between the two. On the one hand, the development of the private economy has injected vitality into economic growth and created a large number of job opportunities. On the other hand, the dominant position of the state-owned economy in key areas such as energy, transportation, and finance has ensured the security and stability of the national economy. The reform and opening up policies in 1979 successfully integrated state-owned enterprises with private enterprises, maintaining the socialist system with

Chinese characteristics and driving unprecedented economic and social development in China. When faced with significant market changes that could endanger economic and social interests, the state intervenes to regulate and prevent market imbalances or restore such balance, thereby protecting society. This balance is reflected not only in the overall economic volume but also in the coordination of policy orientation and market mechanisms.

After the 2008 global financial crisis, the Chinese government took a series of measures to address economic downturn pressures. These measures included fiscal stimulus policies, monetary policy adjustments, and support for key industries. However, during this process, there was a phenomenon of "state advance and private retreat," which attracted widespread social attention. This phenomenon, to some extent, reflected the advantages of the state-owned economy in responding to market crises but also raised concerns about the development of the private economy.

Over the past decades, the Chinese government has formulated a series of policies to promote economic transformation and upgrading. These policies include not only fiscal and monetary policies but also industrial and science and technology policies. For example, the Five-Year Plan is a medium- and long-term development plan formulated by the Chinese government to guide economic structural adjustment and industrial upgrading. Over the past decades, the Five-Year Plan has continuously emphasized the role of market mechanisms while focusing on the coordinated development of the state-owned and private economies. In recent years, the Chinese government has proposed the strategic goal of "high-quality development," emphasizing innovation-driven growth, green development, and open cooperation. The introduction of this strategic goal marks the shift of China's economy from high-speed growth to high-quality development. Against this backdrop, transformation and upgrading have become important means for enterprises to cope with market changes and enhance competitiveness. Transformation and upgrading not only include technological innovation and management improvement but also involve adjustments in business models and organizational changes.

In China's socialist market economy, the coordinated development of private and public ownership is an important guarantee for sustainable economic growth. Since the reform and opening up in 1978, the Chinese government has adjusted its policies to gradually liberalize market access, encourage the development of the private economy, while maintaining the dominant position of the state-owned economy in key sectors. This unique economic model has achieved remarkable success in promoting economic growth and improving people's living standards.

China's practice tells us that enterprise transformation and upgrading are important means to respond to market changes and enhance competitiveness. It is also a complex process involving changes in technology, management, and business models. At the same time, we also see that many enterprises in China are facing many challenges in the process of transformation and upgrading. First, the lack of technological innovation capabilities is an important factor restricting enterprise transformation and upgrading. Many enterprises lack core technologies and independent innovation capabilities, relying on external technology imports and imitation. Second, the lag in management concepts and practices also affects enterprise transformation and upgrading. Traditional management concepts and models are difficult to adapt to market changes and the requirements of technological innovation. Finally, the difficulty of organizational change also poses a significant challenge to enterprises. Organizational change not only requires adjustments in organizational structure but also changes in employee behavior and culture. In practice, some enterprises have successfully achieved transformation and upgrading by introducing transformational leadership and optimizing human resource management practices. Transformational leadership emphasizes the motivational role of leaders and the empowerment of employees, which can stimulate employees' innovation capabilities and enthusiasm. The optimization of human resource management practices helps improve employee quality and capabilities and enhances the core competitiveness of enterprises. However, the application of these practices in Chinese enterprises still has certain limitations and requires further research and exploration.

To better understand the background of enterprise transformation and upgrading in China, it is also necessary to further analyze the implementation effects of current policies and their guiding significance for future development. In recent years, the Chinese government has taken a series of measures to promote high-quality economic development, which includes not only macro-level policy adjustments but also micro-level enterprise practices. From a macro-level perspective, the Chinese government has provided a favorable external environment for enterprise transformation and upgrading through adjustments in fiscal and monetary policies. For example, the government has reduced taxes and fees to lighten the burden on enterprises, increased their cash flow, and thus provided financial support for technological innovation and management improvement. At the same time, the government has also guided enterprises to transform towards high-end manufacturing, the digital economy, and other fields through industrial policies, promoting the optimization and upgrading of the industrial structure (Gu et al., 2021; L. Shen et al., 2020). From a micro-level perspective, enterprises need to actively explore technological innovation, management improvement, and

organizational change. First, enterprises increase research and development investment, enhance independent innovation capabilities, master core technologies, and thus gain a competitive advantage in the market. Second, enterprises introduce advanced management concepts and tools, optimize human resource management practices, and improve employee quality and capabilities. Finally, enterprises undertake organizational change, adjust organizational structures, optimize business processes, and improve organizational efficiency. In the future, with the changing global economic landscape and the needs of domestic economic development, Chinese enterprises will face more opportunities and challenges in transformation and upgrading. On the one hand, the accelerated global technological revolution and industrial transformation provide a broad space for technological and business model innovation in enterprises. On the other hand, domestic economic structural adjustment and market demand changes require enterprises to continuously enhance their competitiveness to adapt to market changes. Therefore, enterprises need to actively respond to market changes, promote transformation and upgrading, and achieve high-quality development under the guidance of policies.

Overall, the balance between private and public ownership in enterprises is a key topic, and the relative effectiveness of market and state-owned economies has always been a hot topic of research. The reform and opening up policies in 1979 successfully integrated state-owned enterprises with private enterprises, maintaining the socialist system with Chinese characteristics and driving unprecedented economic and social development in China. When faced with significant market changes that could endanger economic and social interests, the state intervenes to regulate and prevent market imbalances or restore such balance, thereby protecting society. Facing significant market changes and challenges, the Chinese government has formulated many strategies in recent years, including fiscal and monetary policies, to increase GDP. Especially after the 2008 global financial crisis, the phenomenon of "state advance and private retreat" reemerged in some key industries and fields. In fact, this term has been frequently mentioned in the economic growth cycle since 2002. Narrowly speaking, "state advance and private retreat" refers to the increase in the market share of state-owned economic units in certain or some industries, while the market share of private economic units correspondingly decreases. This situation has occurred frequently and is quite evident. For example, COFCO Group acquired a 20% stake in Mengniu Dairy. More than 600 private core coal mines owned by Wenzhou businessmen in Shanxi were all included in the merger list of state-owned coal enterprises.

Such changes in ownership can have many impacts on management policies and practices

to ensure alignment with broader strategies and avoid inefficiencies that could hinder economic growth. State-owned companies may shift their production to entirely new products, services, or markets, meaning they will undergo radical organizational change. (Newman et al., 2017). In contrast to incremental change, which involves minor adjustments based on the status quo, radical change involves shifting an organization to different products, skills, norms, or practices, changing paradigms, and ultimately transforming core business operations (Orlikowski, 1993). In the same way that incremental changes imply less risk than radical changes, so does literature on organisational development abound as compared to literature on organisational transformation that related to radical change (French et al., 2000). In China, this strategic radical change is named as transformation-upgrading. This process can be defined as a guided comprehensive process of change, in which an industry or company undertakes technological upgrades, management improvements, and business model adjustments to respond to strong market changes and enhance its competitiveness through a process that can imply disruptive transformation (Cao et al., 2023). Successful transformational change is clearly more critical and difficult to implement, as there are many factors that create uncertainty and pose challenges to the adaptability of employees, managers, and organizations (Girod & Whittington, 2015). This is why sometimes planned radical changes bring unexpected consequences that foster counterproductive reactions that compromise its success such as role conflicts, and adverse effects on culture or on middle management effectiveness (Toms et al., 2011). In reviewing the micro-foundations of M&A behaviour, Seo and Hill (2005) highlight precisely anxiety, role conflict, cultural values change, or a sense of equity as important issues that challenge M&A success.

Larger scope proposals such as W. W. Burke and Litwin (1992) model of organisational change, suggest that the success or failure of such corporate endeavours, depends on multiple factors that operate simultaneously at the macro level (e.g. environment), intermediate (e.g. leadership and strategy), meso (group dynamics, climate), and micro (e.g. role, individual performance) levels. Although much emphasis is put on external and macro level factors leaving out the role of organisational level of microlevel factors (Oreg et al., 2011), most of the challenges found in literature are more intimately related to the human factors, namely leadership and HRM. This has been also researched and it is well known that certain leadership styles and HRM practices are associated with more favorable outcomes although most of such findings are embedded in the western context. Western leadership theories, such as transactional and transformational leadership, have been developed based on Western cultural values of individualism, competition, and a preference for clear structures. In contrast,

Chinese culture is deeply rooted in collectivism, respect for hierarchy, and the importance of relationships (guanxi). These cultural differences can lead to different interpretations and applications of leadership and HRM practices. Because culture is a key cornerstone in radical organisational transformation, much of this research may not translate to the specific context of Chinese transformation-upgrading efforts. Also, studying such factors through the lenses of quantitative research may blur the exact meaning and role Leadership and HRM plays in these processes in China, inviting to a qualitative approach.

In summary, research is unclear about the role leadership plays and how it evolves in interaction with HRM. Therefore, there is room for further research about the relative importance of Leadership and HRM practices in transformation-upgrading events in the Chinese context.

1.2 Research problem

The logical relationship between organisational change and HRM is of crucial importance in management theory and practice.

First of all, although there is plenty of literature focused on organisational change, there is little exploration of enterprise transformation and upgrading which is used as a single compound word, as English literature typically is often linked to mainstream concepts such as organisational change and innovation. More importantly, the environment for western enterprises to develop is relatively stable, and the mode of enterprise development is relatively mature, so the momentum and potential for transformation and upgrading are undoubtedly more available to Chinese enterprises.

The international financial crisis of 2008-2010 created a situation that is transversal to the whole world but is especially experienced in economies that were traditionally built upon comparative advantage (i.e. low-cost mass production) such as China. Referring to a situation of low growth, high unemployment rate and low return on investment, the “new normal” has been felt across the world and in China (D. Yu & Zhang, 2018) which was linked to multiple factors operating simultaneously such as consumer demand, trade balance, industrial organisation, environmental constraints and the accumulation of economic risks. After the international financial crisis, especially in the context of China's economy entering the new normal, Chinese enterprises faced enormous competitive pressure, and the original crude and simple development model was already unsustainable. For this reason, the transformation-upgrading gained prominence as an adaptive strategy to the international

financial crisis (Y. Q. Liu & Wang, 2013). In the aftermath of the international financial crisis, the coronavirus crisis brought disruption into everyone's life pushing forward a digital transformational agenda that further changed much of the international and national market dynamics and daily life of work and organisations to establish a new state that became normalized through the adaptive societal processes (Carroll & Conboy, 2020). This has further pushed the transformation-upgrading strategy as a priority. Therefore, transformation and upgrading has gradually changed from a fresh word in government documents and media reports to a practical action by most enterprises. Transformation and upgrading is regarded as the most important corporate behaviour in emerging economies (Y. Q. Mao & Liu, 2015) and an established institution in China (You, 2020). Therefore, the issue of transformation and upgrading of enterprises has theoretical value and practical significance in the Chinese context.

Adding to this, a second aspect concerns the academic research on the logical relationship between organisational change and HRM mainly focusing on static perspectives for positive or negative. Based on this, this study explores the dynamic evolution mechanism of organisational change and human resource management from a dynamic perspective.

1.3 Research questions

Considering the Chinese context and focus on transformation-upgrading, this research is designed to answer the following research question:

How important are transformational leadership and HRM practices in the transition from private-owned to state-owned radical organisational change?

How do transformational leadership and HRM evolve during the transition from private ownership to state-owned ownership?

Combining W. W. Burke and Litwin's (1992) main organizational theory, it also involves: How was the external environment in the period? What was the predominant leadership style? What was the mission, strategy and organisational culture? What were the predominant management practices, including HRM? What were the expected behavioural outcomes as regards climate, motivation and abilities? What is the organisational and individual performance?

This research question entails some smaller focuses that help gain comprehensive understanding concerning the external environment, leadership style, mission, strategy and organisational culture, management practices including HRM, climate, motivation and

abilities, and organisational and individual performance. A depiction of how such factors evolved offers insights on the relative importance and interplay between them to explain a transformation-upgrading case.

1.4 Thesis structure

This thesis divides the five chapters of the research into three parts, following the research route of posing questions, analyzing problems, and solving problems. The first part is the first to second chapters, which belong to the problem posing section. It mainly includes research background, research objectives, research questions, research structure, and literature review. The second part, from Chapter 3 to Chapter 5, belongs to the problem analysis section and is the main body of this study. Chapter 2 provides literature review, which focuses on the theme of organisational change and transformation, Human resource management and employee behaviour in the context of change, organisational performance, and human resources practices. Chapter 3 presents the focal organisation. The main content involves the three-stage evolution of the focal organisation and the transformational development during its transformation process. Chapter 4 contains research design, data collection, sample, interview script and coding. Chapter 5 proceeds with results discussion. The third part is Chapter 6, which belongs to the problem-solving section. It mainly involves conclusions and contributions, limitations and future research conclude and present limitations, along with suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Organisational change and transformation

2.1.1 Mainstream models and common theories of organisational change

In today's economic phenomenon, achieving stable long-term growth in organisational performance through practicing measures of organisational change has equally become a goal of organisational survival and development as much as organisations seek to maximise profits over a period of time (W. W. Burke & Litwin, 1992). In the modern workplace environment, organisations of all types are facing major challenges in a variety of areas such as business expansion, the need for innovation, global competition, market changes and the rapid evolution of consumer preferences. In order to adapt to these changes, organisations are experiencing an unprecedented frequency and speed of change (H. Kim et al., 2010). Organisational change is not only a coping strategy, but also a key tool for companies to achieve sustained growth in a changing market.

Pettigrew et al. (2001) highlight that the study of organisational change and development has become a central topic in the social sciences. Despite the fact that a large body of literature on organisational change has been accumulated in both academic and practice areas, it remains challenging to develop a widely accepted definition. Indeed, many articles in related fields do not provide a clear definition of organisational change (Martins & Coetzee, 2009). Organisational change is a broad concept that refers to the positive transformation of an organisation from one state to another. This shift may involve the organisation's existing work processes and strategies, which in turn affect the whole organisation. Organisational change can take various forms including but not limited to mergers and acquisitions, strategic realignment, business model innovation, organisational learning and knowledge management, corporate entrepreneurship and internationalisation, etc. W. W. Burke (2023) suggests that organisational change can be understood as a change in an organisation's existing work processes and strategies that affects the whole organisation. Herold et al. (2008) also stated that the concept of organisational change covers a wide range of activities that refer to the active transformation of an organisation from one form to another. Organisational change is complex and diverse. Organisational change is not only a coping strategy, it is a key tool for

companies to achieve sustained growth in a changing market.

A variety of theoretical models of the key drivers of organisational change, the content of change and its key outcomes have been proposed by academics and have been widely researched and cited. The following is a brief overview of these models. Porras and Robertson (1991) proposed a planning-centred model of change. The model emphasises the systematic and planned nature of organisational change and sees organisational change as an inside-out process. Firstly, organisations need to clarify their vision and goals and then guide employees' behaviours and attitudes by changing the work environment and culture, in addition, the model emphasises the importance of organisational change for employees' personal development. By participating in the change process, employees can enhance their skills and competencies to better adapt to the needs of organisational change. This cross-fertilisation of personal development and organisational change helps to achieve mutual growth for both the organisation and the individual.

W. W. Burke and Litwin (1992) analysed diverse cases of organisational change and constructed a comprehensive model covering a wide range of factors. The model ranges from the external environment and high-level strategic decisions at the macro level to motivation at the micro level. The model contains 12 key elements. The causes of organisational change can be traced back to changes in the external environment, which in turn affect the internal environment of the organisation, including changes in leadership, management practices and other elements. These changes further permeate the team climate and ultimately affect individual motivation. The core assumption of the model is that change stems from the interaction of internal and external factors. They also define organisational change, distinguishing between two types: fundamental and transactional. The former encompasses long-term and strategic elements such as organisational vision mission, strategic direction, leadership and culture; the latter covers short-term and operational elements such as organisational work climate, individual motivation, task requirements, values, and individual needs. In summary, the model treats organisational change as a system of basic and transactional elements, with the external environment being the main source of motivation affecting its development, and the internal environment, i.e. the internal elements of the organisation, influencing its implementation.

The model places particular emphasis on the importance of macro-level factors, especially organisational culture. Organisational culture is critical because it forms the basis of all organisational activities (Schein, 2016) and because of its inertia - i.e., underlying assumptions and values are difficult to change - it becomes the primary target of

organisational change interventions. The competing values framework (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1981) has received a great deal of attention in organisational change research. The theory proposes that culture be viewed as a set of values centred around two dimensions. One dimension reflects the opposing poles of 'flexibility versus control', where organisations must determine the extent to which individuals and units should be controlled (e.g. through rules, supervision and centralised decision-making) and the extent to which they should be given the freedom to adjust and make decisions on their own (e.g. through flexible working practices or decentralised decision-making). The other dimension reflects the opposing poles of 'internal versus external', i.e. the extent to which the organisation focuses on internal processes and dynamics as opposed to external market processes and dynamics. These two dimensions are perpendicular to each other and form four quadrants corresponding to the four culture types. And these four quadrants are innovation culture (corresponding to flexibility and the external environment), clan or community culture (corresponding to flexibility and the internal environment), rule or hierarchy culture (corresponding to control and the internal environment), and market or target culture (corresponding to control and the external environment). These four cultures can co-exist to varying degrees in the same organisation. Some organisations may have a dominant market culture and a relatively weak innovation, clan and rules culture; others may have a dominant market culture and a relatively weak clan and rules culture. There are myriad possibilities for configurations between these four quadrants, but most importantly, the model known as 'competing values' is particularly informative because it is the norm to experience tensions arising from opposing values, and Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1981) argue that organisations will be at a loss when it becomes clear which quadrant is dominant. which quadrant is dominant will face stress. However, according to their theory, effective organisations and those that balance competing values capture the best of all types of culture. This paradox is not readily grasped by all managers, but it is consistent with Chinese thinking given the background of classical Chinese philosophy.

In conjunction with neo-institutionalism, Greenwood and Hinings (1996) constructed a dynamic model of organisational change. The model states that organisational development and change will be influenced simultaneously by the institutional environment and the market environment. The market and institutional environments are the main drivers of organisational change. The market and institutional environments drive organisational change by means of two internal dynamics: induced dynamics, which are associated with internal dissatisfaction with the existing distribution of benefits and a commitment to change; and facilitative dynamics, which encompass the organisation's entitlement dependence and capacity to act.

Dissatisfaction within an organisation usually stems from the group's perception that its interests are not being adequately met, which drives the organisation to seek to redistribute benefits through change. However, this dissatisfaction does not directly trigger change, but rather leads the organisation to develop specific value commitments.

In addition, organisations need to have the appropriate resources and capabilities in place to implement change. The implementation of organisational change in turn also affects the market and institutional environment within the system and thus creates the impetus for a new cycle of change. In the established theoretical research on the topic of organisational change, both macro (Judge et al., 1999) and micro (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999) dimensions have been addressed. Particularly in the micro perspective, existing research focuses on exploring the unique role of employees in the change process. For example, Seo and Hill (2005) based on Anxiety Theory (Cartwright & Cooper, 2024), Social Identity Theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), Cultural Adaptation Theory, Role Conflict Theory, Job Characteristics Theory (Hackman, 1980) and Organisational Equity Theory to provide a detailed theoretical analysis of the logical relationship between organisational mergers and acquisitions and employee psychology and behaviour. Although these theories focus on M&A as a specific form of organisational change, they are also useful for other types of organisational change.

2.2 Basic implications and research trends in organisational transformation

2.2.1 Basic meaning of organisational transformation

Over the past decade, transformation and upgrading has become a key strategy for driving China's economic growth and sustainable enterprise development. Transformation implies a fundamental change in the way firms perceive, think and behave (Blumenthal & Haspeslagh, 1994). This process involves organisational restructuring, goal adjustment and structural optimisation aimed at adapting to the changing business environment and constructing a more forward-looking and adaptive business model (Klein, 1996). Upgrading, on the other hand, suggests that business entities move in the direction of capital resource- and technology-intensive direction in order to achieve higher profits (Gereffi, 1999).

Organisational transformation can be seen as a large-scale radical change project within an organisation (French et al., 2000). It represents a higher level of organisational development aimed at achieving profound changes in organisational structure, processes, culture and environmental positioning. Organisational transformation is often accompanied by

a shift in management philosophy, work organisation and delivery model or a complete renewal. In today's fast-changing environment, organisations have a growing need to continuously improve themselves in order to keep up to date with developments and therefore need to respond to changes in the external environment in a timely manner. Organisational transformation is a response to this need (French et al., 2000). In terms of organisational subject focus, organisational transformation variables (e.g. elements such as the organisation's goals and vision) have a greater impact on organisations than organisational development variables (e.g. workplace environment variables). A review of the literature shows that despite the numerous studies on organisational development, little research has been done on the subject of organisational transformation (French et al., 2000). Deng (2010) suggests that transformation and upgrading means that the enterprise entity implements continuous changes and innovations in key organisational elements (such as strategic direction, organisational structure, operational processes, corporate culture, etc.) that are related to long-term goals, with the aim of adapting to the constant changes in the external environment and ensuring the sustainable development of the enterprise.

According to J. X. Wu and Li (2009), the realisation of enterprise transformation and upgrading can be broken down into two dimensions: transformation and upgrading. Whereas upgrading refers to the enterprise subject's capital resources and technology-intensive direction continuously upgrading itself to achieve a leap in the position in the industrial chain and value chain. Y. S. Mao et al. (2015) point out that enterprise transformation and upgrading is a continuous process aimed at enhancing the long-term competitiveness of the enterprise, improving the added value of products and services, and exploring new business directions. If defined at the level of business rather than organisational structure, enterprise transformation and upgrading are closely linked and mutually reinforcing. A complete separation of the two is neither necessary nor feasible.

2.2.2 Research trends in organisational transformation

Y. S. Mao et al. (2015) based on eleven years of Chinese and English core literature data, conducted a comprehensive and systematic review and organisation of research on the theme of enterprise transformation and upgrading. In terms of specific literature data, international papers are selected from SSCI journals, while Chinese journal papers are selected from CSSCI journals to ensure the quality of the research. During the past 12 years, from the international perspective, the scientific research in the field of enterprise transformation and

upgrading results have maintained a relatively stable and limited number of results. However, after a period of silence, Chinese papers have seen significant growth since the international financial crisis in 2009. In the past three years, the number of Chinese papers published has remained at a high level of about 35 per year, which is seven times more than ten years ago. From a quantitative point of view, this dynamic difference has some rationality. First of all, there is a lack of compound words corresponding to “transformation” and “upgrading” in the English literature, and although there is literature on enterprise transformation (information, ZhuanXing) and enterprise upgrading (ShengJi), there is a lack of literature that combines the two. Although there is literature on enterprise transformation (formation, ZhuanXing) and enterprise upgrading (upgrade, ShengJi), there is a lack of discussion on combining the two. Secondly, the development environment of western enterprises is more stable and the development mode is more mature. If we look at the development potential of enterprise transformation and upgrading, China is more significant than the development situation in the West. In particular China is in a period of deep adjustment of the unprecedented changes in a century, and its economy is developing at a high speed. is developing at a high speed, and Enterprises are under unprecedented competitive pressure, the original development model can not be sustained, transformation and upgrading has become the actual initiative of enterprises. Therefore, transformation and upgrading has become the core of enterprise development (Y. S. Mao et al., 2015). This shows that for our scholars, the issue of enterprise transformation and upgrading has not only theoretical value but also practical significance.

Y. S. Mao et al. (2015) conducted a study of globally relevant papers were statistically analysed. Specifically, in terms of research areas, Chinese papers pay similar attention to transformation and upgrading, and much of the literature tends to view transformation and upgrading as an inseparable whole in-depth research. In contrast, international papers focus on transformation issues and fewer on upgrading issues. In terms of the types of research most of the existing studies focus on theoretical discussions and case analyses, the quantitative research, and less on quantitative research. In terms of research content, as far as research content is concerned, the current Chinese and foreign papers mainly focus on the motivation and realisation path of transformation and upgrading, and the various changes in the context of transformation and upgrading are less frequently For example, the management renewal of HR in the new situation, which to a certain extent highlights the importance and urgency of the topic of this study. In addition, although transformation and upgrading have theoretical value and practical significance, the number of relevant papers published in high-level journals is still limited. In view of this, the existing theoretical research has a great potential

for growth in both quantity and quality.

As Chinese management scholars, we need to probe deeply into the inner mechanism of transformation and upgrading, try our best to narrow the gap between theory and practice, and devote ourselves to revealing management theories with local characteristics. management theories with Chinese local characteristics (Child, 2009; Van de Ven & Jing, 2012).

See Table 2.1 for detail.

Table 2.1 Statistics on the type and content of papers on enterprise transformation and upgrading at home and abroad from 2002 to 2013

		internal (a country)	external (affairs)
Thesis areas	Transformational	39	72
	Escalate (in intensity)	32	15
	Restructuring and upgrading	107	0
Type of paper	Doctrinal	71	15
	Poll	9	7
	Case (law)	40	45
	A roundup	4	2
	The rest	54	18
	Conceptual	2	4
Contents of the paper	Underlying force	35	28
	Way (of life)	113	27
	Performance/measurement	3	6
	The rest	25	22

In the face of increasingly complex and changing competitive environments, companies are more and more frequently adopting a variety of organisational change strategies to cope with various challenges. Accumulated over a long period of time, organisational change theme research, there has been an outpouring of fruitful theoretical research results, which provide a key theoretical basis for an in-depth understanding of organisational change.

2.3 Human resource management and employee behaviour in the context of change

2.3.1 Important role of HRM in the context of change

Past research has explored employee responses to organisational change, including various aspects of employee attitudes and behaviours, but HR research appears to be less powerful in the context of change scenarios, although many of the HR practices that are seen as key drivers of reform change such as retraining of old employees, recruitment of new employees, changes in performance appraisal evaluation criteria, and optimisation of incentives have all been viewed as important factors in facilitating organisational change (Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010), however, the empirical research on this topic is rather scarce (Fugate, 2012)

Currently, most of the research in this area is limited to qualitative analyses and is still in the exploratory stage, lacking in-depth quantitative studies to support it. Only a few theoretical literatures focuses on the role of HR practices in organisational change, such as integrating appraisal and motivation systems with change objectives (Cameron & Green, 2009) and selecting employees who fit the change objectives (R. Burke, 2013).

From a resource base perspective, human resources within an organisation can either facilitate or constrain the organisation's ability to change and have an impact on the ultimate effectiveness of the change. By building smooth communication pathways, motivating employee participation and establishing empowerment mechanisms, human resource practices can foster the competencies and employee buy-in that are essential for implementing change (Doorewaard & Benschop, 2003). Specifically, initiatives such as training, employee engagement and empowerment can create a stronger sense of belonging to the change. Practices aimed at fostering affective commitment, such as professional development and training, promote normative buy-in to change, while practices such as compensation incentives inspire sustained commitment to change. Overall, communication and rewards are the two HR practices that are most significant in demonstrating employee buy-in to change (Conway & Monks, 2008). However, there is a lack of empirical research to support whether HR practices can reduce employee resistance to change (Fugate et al., 2008).

Using the longitudinal action research methodology, Molineux (2013) conducted an in-depth tracking of the change journey of the Chinese public sector over a period of 15 years, he found that adopting a series of strategic human resource management measures, such as partnering with employees, implementing differentiated human resource strategies for specific subgroups of employees, and developing open communication within ministries, strengthening goal assessment and feedback mechanisms, etc., can significantly contribute to profound cultural change in organisations and ensure that the results are lasting.

C. M. Wang and Li (2011), with the help of case studies, pointed out that, in the environment of organisational change, effective HR strategy mainly includes recruitment hiring deployment, training growth, performance evaluation and salary management. In fact, in order to guide employees to produce organisational behaviours that are in line with the expectations of the organisation, in addition to the leadership factors that are often mentioned in previous studies, the organisation's Human Resource Management (HRM) is also crucial, as it can positively shape the positive attitudes and behaviours of the employees, which is an area that should be paid attention to in future studies.

After the analysis of theory, Tan and Zhao (2009) pointed out that organisational change

presents flatness, flexibility and virtualisation as three significant features, which require human resource management to make corresponding adjustments and adaptations. Specifically, in view of the development trend of flattening, human resource management should weaken the concept of job hierarchy, build a matrix-type flat organisational structure, and at the same time re-planning the workflow. Under the trend of flexibilisation, HRM needs to strengthen employee empowerment, increase employee participation and create self-driven work teams. In a virtualised environment, HRM needs to build a cross-border management system and implement an e-HR strategy.

G. Liu (2012) revealed through case studies of entrepreneurial firms that the two main functions of human resource management, namely training and development, appraisal and motivation, have become increasingly decisive in the wave of organisational change. This is because change is often accompanied by profound adjustments in organisational structure and task arrangements as many employees need to adapt to new role positions, so timely training becomes essential. At the same time, the work content and work objectives of the new positions will also change significantly, which requires that adjustments to appraisal programmes need to be made in a timely manner, while adjustments to motivation programmes need to be fair and efficient at all times in order to provide solid guarantees for the organisation's change to provide a solid guarantee. In addition, the HR department's comprehensive coordination ability also needs to be greatly enhanced in the wave of change, and its role needs to be changed from the traditional service supporter to the core promoter of change, because enterprises often regard the HR department as the initiator and implementer of change. Leadership, managerial practices and HRM practices are intertwined in the change process and work together to make change effective (Fugate, 2012). While previous research has focussed on the impact of a single factor on the effectiveness of change, Fugate (2012) advocates that future research should be more focussed on the interaction of these factors on the effect of change. That is, successful change leaders are more likely to be successful in driving change if they are able to utilise management approaches appropriately and in concert with HR management approaches. Effective change managers are more likely to drive change if they provide appropriate leadership and take appropriate HR management initiatives. Similarly, if the organisation adopts the 'ideal' HR change models, then leaders and managers need to effectively implement and reinforce these models in order to achieve the desired results.

Boudreau and Jesuthasan (2011) co-authored the practice book "Transformational HR: How Great Companies Use Evidence-Based Change to Achieve Sustainable Advantage". By

analysing the organisational change cases of many multinational companies, the book suggests that HR departments need to transform their functions and adopt evidence-based change management (EBM) strategies in order to create transformational HR systems. The book sets out five core principles of evidence-based change that aim to create a workplace where talent is fully utilised and employees are generally satisfied, which in turn drives organisations to achieve greater success. The five principles include 1) Logic-Driven Analysis; 2) Talent Segmentation; 3) Leveraging Risk; 4) Integration and Synergy; and 5) Optimising Human Resource Management and Investment.

2.3.2 Human resources management in mergers and acquisitions

Although scholars often consider HRM as a potentially critical factor when exploring the causes of M&A failures (anagement (HRM) can play a very critical role in the post-merger integration process (Schuler & Jackson, 2017), there has been a lack of theoretical and empirical research to support the specific link between HR practices and M&A performance, particularly the critical role of HR practices in facilitating post-merger integration mechanisms (Y. Weber & Tarba, 2010). In particular, these researchers emphasise that effective HR practices can ensure the smooth transfer of knowledge and resources during the M&A process, leading to optimal integration. For example, during an M&A, both managers and employees receive training to adapt to new roles, positions, or processes, and to understand each other's work habits and establish common communication patterns. In addition, the effective integration of the two companies in the M&A process requires a great deal of coordination and relies heavily on the smoothness of communication between managers and employees of both parties and within the organisation. Therefore, HRD initiatives that focus on strengthening communication can keep employees informed of the latest progress and deployment of the M&A. This reduces psychological uncertainty and increases engagement, which in turn increases trust in the new company and organisationally desired behaviours. Many M&A failures are due to the neglect of human resource issues and actions that should be taken to make it clear that M&A is fundamentally a process of integrating various human resources to achieve synergies (Schuler & Jackson, 2017). Yan and Wang (2005) found that the lower the cultural compatibility and the lower the power gap between the merging parties, the higher the perceived risk of HR integration, and the higher the level of integration strategy that decision makers would choose to implement. Yan and Wang (2005) showed through a case study that companies can flexibly adopt four strategies

according to the actual situation during the M&A. Yan and Wang (2005) suggest that during M&A activities, firms can flexibly adopt four strategies, namely, norms-based strategy, fairness expectation-based strategy, high performance expectation-based strategy, and contract-based strategy, to manage HR integration risks and achieve the goal of HR integration.

HRM plays an important role in promoting the success of M&A as it has the ability to enhance human capital, motivate employees and communicate organisational goals (Birkinshaw et al., 2000). Most of the early research on HRM in M&As was in the form of conceptual studies (Schuler & Jackson, 2017).

However, some recent case studies, such as the one conducted by Antila (2006), have shown that it is necessary for HR departments to adjust the type and intensity of their functions at different stages of an M&A. A more recent study has shown that not only do the different stages of an M&A have an impact on human capital, but also that different types of M&As have different effects on the corresponding functions performed by HR (Bagdadli et al., 2014).

Bagdadli et al. (2014) proposed three types of M&A with reference to previous studies. The first is the expansion type, which is a type of M&A that mainly aims to achieve business growth or diversification; the second is the restructuring type, whose main purpose is to control the other party and export its own advanced technology or management style; and the third is the co-operation type, which mainly aims to construct a new business entity and thus gain corresponding benefits in terms of operation or finance. Bagdadli et al. (2014) found in their case study that HRM needs to play a more strategic role when the M&A parties are more integrated (e.g., collaborative M&A), while HRM should focus on playing the role of a management expert when the M&A parties are less integrated (e.g., expansion M&A). This study shows that even for a specific type of organisational change such as M&A, further segmentation is needed to select the appropriate HRM approach. Therefore, it is important that the content of HRM is closely linked to the basic objectives of organisational change.

In a theoretical paper, Aguilera and Dencker (2004) suggest that the key to the successful integration of cross-border M&As is the close alignment of HR strategies with the firm's M&A strategy. They classify M&A strategies into several typical types according to their purposes, such as capacity enhancement, regional expansion, and product/service expansion. For these different types of M&As, enterprises should adopt corresponding HR management measures to ensure the effective implementation of the strategy.

2.3.3 Human resource management in specific change contexts

2.3.3.1 Human resource management in internationalization and corporate entrepreneurship

Cooke (2012) provides an in-depth analysis of the cases of Huawei and ZTE to demonstrate the central role played by HRM in their internationalisation strategies. The pragmatic approach adopted by these two companies in managing human resources in their overseas branches, which is a combination of established practices of the parent company, innovative practices of local managers and the advanced experience of Western multinationals, has contributed to the expansion of their international business. Localised recruitment, outsourcing of some HR functions and cultural training programmes are some of the widely used and effective HR management approaches.

In a theoretical article, D. S. Chen (2011) discusses the dual challenge of global integration and local adaptation faced by HRM when Chinese companies expand internationally. To meet this challenge, HR managers need to build two dynamic capabilities. One, they need to play a networked role across organisational boundaries, actively integrating good practices from within and outside the company. This is mainly due to the fact that Chinese companies are often in a weak position in the face of different cultural conflicts, especially when Chinese culture meets Western culture, so HR managers need to act proactively and strengthen publicity, for example, proactively promote the parent company's concepts and policies both online and offline, to ensure that the parent company's strategic intent is effectively implemented in all locations; Secondly, HR managers need to act as entrepreneurs by Second, HR managers also need to play the role of entrepreneurs, actively embracing local experience and exploring new approaches that are more in line with local conditions, in addition to the best practices of the parent company and the industry. This is because Chinese companies started late in the international market and are not able to directly extend advanced management practices from their home countries to the world like developed country multinationals, and because they have not yet accumulated enough experience to support more localised and flexible HRM strategies as their international expansion accelerates.

Kaya's (2006) empirical study of Turkish firms shows that firms that engage in entrepreneurial activities choose to implement a range of formal HR practices (e.g. extensive employee training, goal-based incentives, and performance feedback), and that these HRM practices mediate the impact of entrepreneurial activities on firm performance. Qi and Wang

(2010) further understand empirically that differences in the entrepreneurial strategies implemented by firms affect the direction of their HR strategies. Specifically, firms pursuing differentiated entrepreneurial strategies tend to favour flexible HR strategies, while firms adopting cost-leading entrepreneurial strategies are more likely to opt for controlled HR strategies.

2.3.3.2 New framework in the context of change: Flexible oriented human resources systems

As the competitive environment continues to become more complex and rapidly change, the ability of organisations to effectively adapt to local and global environmental change relies heavily on their coordination and flexibility (Morris & Calamai, 2009). Sanchez (1995) introduced the concept of organisational strategic flexibility in the context of product development, which embodies the ability of firms to respond to diversified needs in the dynamic competitive environment. This concept reflects the ability of a firm to cope with diverse needs in a competitive environment that is full of change. Sanchez (1995) divided flexibility into two broad categories: resource flexibility and coordination flexibility. Resource flexibility refers to the abundance of resources an organisation has at its disposal and its ability to convert these resources into multiple uses to produce different products; and coordination flexibility reflects the ability of to re-engineer its product strategy and to efficiently deploy its resources. Firms with a high degree of flexibility are able to perceive changes in the environment, accurately assess market and competitor dynamics, and quickly adjust organisational structure and strategic direction in order to effectively respond to competitive challenges (Teece et al., 1997).

Wright and Snell (1998) creatively integrated the concept of strategic flexibility with strategic HRM. They emphasise that in a rapidly changing environment, strategic HRM becomes a key tool for fostering flexibility in organisations and that the main function of is to facilitate organisations to acquire sufficient human resource flexibility to be able to flexibly adapt to the changing needs of the environment. Lengnick-Hall et al. (2011) further argues that in the face of the turbulent environment of it becomes particularly urgent to foster strategic flexibility through strategic HRM. Fostering strategic flexibility through strategic human resource management has become particularly urgent.

Wright and Snell point out that HR flexibility encompasses a number of aspects of HRM practices, employee skills, and employee behaviour, which inherently incorporate the attributes of resource flexibility and co-ordination flexibility. However, it is worth noting that

although Wright and Snell's article mentions the flexibility of HRM practices themselves, it fails to explore in depth how employee and organisational flexibility can be fostered through the HR system, and this absence has been a regrettable feature of subsequent research in the field of HR flexibility in the many HRs (Beltrán-Martín et al., 2008; Bhattacharya et al., 2005).

However, a recent study made a significant breakthrough on this issue (Chang et al., 2013). Based on Sanchez's (1995) theoretical framework, they innovatively proposed the concept of “flexibility-oriented HR system” and subdivided it into “resource-flexibility-oriented HR system”. The former involves a range of HR practices designed to help organisations acquire and develop diverse talent, such as training, job rotation, and recruiting based on a wide range of skill requirements; while the latter focuses on a range of practices that enable organisations to redeploy this talent quickly and efficiently, not by altering the structure of the talent pool, but by measures such as information sharing, feedback mechanisms, team rewards, and performance management, to stimulate the development. The focus here is not on changing the talent structure, but rather on adopting a range of measures such as information sharing, suggestion feedback, team rewards and performance management to motivate the workforce to better meet the needs of the organisation. In short, the focus is set upon a series of strategies to increase the motivation and effectiveness of the workforce in response to organisational agility needs while maintaining the existing talent structure.

As organisations continue to transform, a number of key aspects of HRM need to be adapted accordingly (Stone et al., 2015). Examples of these changes include attracting talent with diverse skills and experience, introducing more autonomous and flexible working arrangements, adopting a teamwork-focused work structure to cope with complex tasks, and implementing incentives to stimulate innovation among employees. The core objective of these changes is to enhance the flexibility of human resource management and ensure that it is better able to support the growth needs of the organisation. Therefore, the concept of flexible oriented human resource systems advocated by Chang et al. (2013) has far-reaching practical significance in the current context of frequent changes, and management research provides valuable references and insights.

See Table 2.2 for details.

Table 2.2 Classification framework for flexibly oriented human resources systems

Specific types	concrete meaning
Resource flexibility	A range of human resource practices that enable organisations to acquire and develop sufficient talent for application in a wide range of areas
Coordination flexibility	A range of HR practices that enable organisations to quickly and effectively deploy and motivate talent

Source: Hou (2018)

2.3.3.3 Important roles of employee behaviour in the context of change

Employees play a pivotal role in the wave of change. One of the core objectives of strategic human resource management (HRM) in a change environment is to effectively guide and shape the behaviour of employees, which is the core relevance of that this study is dedicated to exploring. The importance of employee change behaviour, as the key outcome variable in this study, cannot be overstated. In the following section, we will outline the latest developments in research on employee behaviour in the context of change.

Beer and Nohria (2000) speculated that more than two-thirds of change projects ultimately fail. Miller (2001) noted that even in the most optimistic sense, only 30 to 40 per cent of organisational changes achieve their original objectives. Fay and Luhrmann (2004) estimated that up to half of all organisational change initiatives fail to achieve success. A survey of global business executives found that only one-third of organisational change initiatives were considered successful (Meaney & Pung, 2008). The failure of many organisations to achieve their stated change objectives is largely due to setbacks in implementation rather than errors in the conception of the change project itself.

Many organisational change efforts have been poorly implemented or have failed. The root causes are many and varied. One of the key factors is that management tends to focus too much on efficiency and profitability gains while ignoring the centrality and importance of employees in the change process, and in particular employees' resistance to the potential outputs of change. In fact, the success of organisational change depends on the individual change of each employee, and the effectiveness of organisational change can only be sustained if employees adjust their behaviours, attitudes, goals, and their values in an appropriate way. From this perspective, employees are undoubtedly the core drivers of organisational change (M. Choi, 2011; Van Knippenberg et al., 2006). In other words, in the context of organisational change, the bottom-up influence of individual employees' attitudes and behaviours in shaping the team and its organisational performance is likely to become more and more significant (Nohe et al., 2013). Therefore, numerous scholars have highlighted that an in-depth understanding of the roles that employees take on during change, as well as

their behavioural patterns, is extremely important for improving the effectiveness of change (Fuchs & Edwards, 2012; Robertson et al., 1993; van den Heuvel et al., 2014). More importantly, we must move away from the traditional view of employees as passive recipients of change and see them as co-creators working with leaders to actively promote change .

During turbulent periods of organisational change, organisations can experience significant shifts and ambiguities in the way they operate and in their work environment (van den Heuvel et al., 2014). Such change is often accompanied by increased demands and pressure on employees. Previous studies exploring employees' reactions in the context of organisational change have mostly focused on employees' psychological states, such as acceptance of change (Wanberg & Banas, 2000), readiness for change (Armenakis et al., 1993), and commitment to change. However, less attention has been paid to how employees respond to organisational change in practice. Oreg et al. (2011), in a review of the past 60 years of research in the field of organisational behaviour on organisational change, found that most of the research has focused on individual differences, such as the effect of proactive personality, self-efficacy, or factors such as leadership, organisational climate, etc., on the effectiveness of change. However, only a few studies have focused on individual behaviours that drive organisational change, such as adaptive and proactive behaviours, as well as organisational citizenship behaviours designed to facilitate change (J. N. Choi, 2007).

The core purpose of organisational change is to improve organisational performance, which is achieved at the employee level by optimising individual behaviours and improving individual performance (Carter et al., 2013). In the context of organisational change, certain employee behaviours become more effective and contribute significantly to the organisation. In increasingly complex and changing environments, organisations not only expect employees to be more engaged in their work, but also to demonstrate change-oriented behaviours such as adapting to environmental changes and proactively anticipating new challenges (Griffin et al., 2010). Business success is now increasingly dependent on employees taking responsibility for driving change by demonstrating personal initiative and motivation (Frese et al., 1996). For those who are in the midst of change, change-oriented work behaviours are crucial (Ghitulescu, 2013) as organisations often need employees to be actively involved in the transformation of work roles and organisational practices to ensure the smooth implementation of change efforts. In addition, T. G. Kim et al. (2011) also introduced the concept of change-supporting behaviours, i.e. the behaviours of employees who actively participate in and contribute to organisation-initiated change programmes. Most of the previous research on organisational citizenship behaviours has focused on facilitative and

affinity aspects, such as interpersonal assistance and compliance behaviours, which aim to enhance performance by maintaining and strengthening existing working relationships and task processes (Podsakoff et al., 2000). In recent years, scholars have also proposed a change-oriented organisational citizenship behaviour. This refers to employees actively seeking and implementing change initiatives in work methods, policies and procedures to improve the status quo and performance (J. N. Choi, 2007). This behaviour draws on concepts such as vocal behaviour (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998), innovative behaviour (Crant, 2000; Scott & Bruce, 1994) and responsible behaviour (Morrison & Phelps, 1999).

Over the course of more than forty years, organisational behavioural understanding of job performance has changed significantly. In the past, job performance was assessed by focusing primarily on an employee's proficiency in completing tasks according to job descriptions. However, as job and organisational characteristics continue to evolve, the traditional view centred on individual task proficiency is being challenged. Increasing interdependence and uncertainty within work systems are two particularly prominent changes. Early conceptualisations of performance did not adequately cover the behaviours that promote effective work in an uncertain and interdependent work environment. To fill this gap, scholars have introduced new concepts such as peripheral performance, adaptive performance (Pulakos et al., 2000), and initiative (Parker et al., 2006). However, there is an overlap in content and unclear boundaries between these concepts, for example adaptive performance as proposed covers some elements of proactivity. Griffin et al. (2010) therefore proposed a new model of role performance that is able to clearly differentiate between the connotations of a wide range of role behaviours, including the three types of proficient, adaptive and proactive behaviours. According to this model, in predictable environments, the key to increasing productivity is to enhance proficient behaviours in task performance, i.e. the extent to which employees conform to established role norms. When uncertainty is low, organisations can achieve their goals by means of external controls, and employees' job roles and descriptions are clear, including the tasks, steps and standards to be performed. However, in high uncertainty environments, external controls can be much less effective, as it is difficult for the organisation to foresee all situations that It is equally difficult to standardise job requirements (Ilgen & Pulakos, 1999), in which case employees need to demonstrate more new job roles in order to be flexible and respond to changes in the environment and demands. Therefore, when organisational uncertainty is higher, employees are expected to be more flexible in their roles (Griffin et al., 2010), in which case adaptive and proactive behaviours are very important to enhance efficiency. Adaptive behaviour refers to the behaviour of employees in response to

the changing needs of the work environment (Pulakos et al., 2000). It reflects the extent to which an individual adapts to changes in the work system or role, and emphasises the importance of individuals responding to the challenges of complex situations by adapting their behaviour. However, changing work scenarios do not only require employees to be adaptive, they are also expected to be able to facilitate change through self-reinvention (Grant & Parker, 2009). By proactive behaviours, we mean those spontaneous actions that lead to change and extend existing job responsibilities (Crant, 2000). Such actions assess an individual's level of autonomy in taking action, anticipating or initiating change in a work system or job role. Employee adaptability and motivation are particularly important when the work environment is full of uncertainty and certain job duties are difficult to standardise. Griffin et al.'s (2010) model, on the other hand, analyses the performance of work roles in an integrated manner at the individual, team and organisational levels. Griffin et al. (2010) emphasise that these three behaviours are not independent and mutually exclusive, and that individual employees need to adhere to clear roles and demonstrate the appropriate level of professional proficiency even when the organisational environment is extremely volatile and uncertain.

Ghitulescu (2013) states that adaptability and proactivity are important factors in the success of organisational change and they can be considered as core work behaviours that drive change. As organisational change is inherently accompanied by uncertainty and ambiguity, it is difficult for organisations to be clear in advance what specific actions employees should take to respond effectively. Adaptive behaviours are particularly important as many organisational change initiatives often lead to shifts in employees' role behaviours during implementation. At the same time, organisational change generally challenges existing job roles and goals, pushing employees to engage in behaviours that go beyond their current responsibilities in order to cope with the new demands of change, highlighting the key value of proactive behaviours.

All in all, the current research on human resources in the context of change is still mainly in the form of qualitative discussion and theoretical analysis. Scholars mostly summarise some typical HR practices with the help of case studies, however, there is a lack of in-depth data analysis to support the interpretation of the specific mechanisms of these practices. In view of this, this study plans to combine qualitative and quantitative research methods to propose targeted HR strategies for the specific context of transformation and upgrading of Chinese enterprises, and to analyse the impact of these strategies on key variables. Meanwhile, combining with the existing research results in the academic world, we call these HR

strategies “transformational HR strategies”. Numerous scholars have gradually realised that the ultimate success of organisational change hinges on individual behavioural change, and that employees need to demonstrate appropriate change behaviours in order to drive the organisation to reach its change goals successfully. Unfortunately, however, there is a relative paucity of research on how to effectively facilitate these change behaviours (Ghitulescu, 2013). A challenge for change leaders is that the adaptive and proactive behaviours of employees are not a predefined normative process that organisations can set in place, but rather are a process that emerges over time as the situation develops, and therefore change leaders are unable to directly coach employees on how to quickly become more adaptive and proactive. Even so, transformational leaders can motivate their employees to exhibit these positive behavioural traits by carefully designing and improving the work environment. In this process, HRM plays a key role as a central factor in creating a conducive work environment. Given the above analysis, this study decided to focus on two key change guides, namely adaptive and proactive behaviours, as an in-depth inquiry.

2.4 Organisational performance

Organisational performance, as one of the core topics of organisational management research, has received extensive attention from scholars and has frequently appeared as a key dependent variable in related studies. Regarding the definition of organisational performance, there are many voices in the academic community. In early classical studies (Seashore & Yuchtman, 1967), organisational performance was considered to be a comprehensive set of evaluative indicators of the effectiveness of a firm's operations, which provide a comprehensive and systematic reflection of the firm's business performance. Due to the differences in research perspectives and research contexts, academics have not yet reached a unified understanding of the concept and structure of organisational performance. Some scholars tend to regard organisational performance as an outcome, i.e. the final result of a series of work activities carried out around a set of objectives. It involves the quantitative evaluation of the results of a particular job function or activity over a period of time (Bernardin, 1984). Murphy et al. (1996) shifted the concept of organisational performance from an outcome to a behavioural dimension, defining organisational performance as a set of observable, measurable behaviours closely linked to objectives, either at the organisational level or at the level of the individual. Based on a combination of outcome and behavioural considerations, some researchers have suggested that organisational performance should be assessed along both behavioural and

outcome dimensions. Numerous studies have defined organisational performance with the help of different models. Of these, three approaches to defining organisational performance are particularly notable (Ford & Schellenberg, 1982). The first approach, known as the goal approach, is based on the assumption that organisations pursue specific goals and views organisational performance as the assumption that these organisations pursue specific goals. The second approach is the System Resource Approach, which is based on the assumption that organisations' resources are scarce and views organisational performance as the ability of organisations to acquire, process and utilise internal and external resources. The third approach is the component approach, which advocates interactions between members within an organisation or interactions between organisations behaviour to describe organisational performance.

Based on the above analysis, this study adopts the perspective of the goal approach and defines organisational performance as the extent to which the goals pursued by the organisation (including behavioural goals and outcome goals) are achieved. In the subsequent part of the study, we focus on two main aspects of project organisational performance and business performance. Project organisational performance aims to assess how efficiently and effectively all parties involved in a project deliver the project. Here, we adopt the consensus of the majority of scholars at that project performance consists of three core dimensions - budget control, schedule management, and output quality (Liang et al., 2012). However, some scholars have challenged the “triangle of progress, cost and quality”, which has traditionally been regarded as the hallmark of project success, by suggesting that project success criteria should be enriched by the introduction of additional dimensions, such as stakeholder satisfaction, customer benefits, satisfaction of users' needs and the ability to achieve the project's stated objectives, as well as project coordination, and project coordination, among others (Subramanian et al., 2007). Business performance is an important indicator of the achievement of expected outcomes and goals of a business, which directly demonstrates the competitive advantage of a business. In order to comprehensively assess business performance, academics have developed a variety of measures that can be broadly categorised into financial performance and non-financial performance, subjective performance and objective performance, internal performance and external performance.

2.4.1 Relevant overview of factors influencing organisational performance

The influencing factors of organisational performance should be analysed from different

perspectives, at different levels and in different dimensions; it is necessary to combine macro and micro, time and space, and process and results, and the influencing factors of organisational performance are mainly summarised as including the following.

2.4.1.1 Strategy development

The strategic choices of the target group, the scope of business, the location of operations, the response to competition, and the adaptability of to the macro-environment of the country, all affect the performance of the organisation to varying degrees. The structure of an organisation at the start-up period is closely linked to the performance of the organisation. In addition, external factors such as technological progress, changes in industry barriers and national macro-policy adjustments will also have a effect on the organisational structure. In the face of these pressures, if an organisation only adjusts its structure, it is far from enough. It is more necessary to optimise the organisational performance and organisational strategy on the basis of structural change. Through the mutual support of strategy, performance and structure, and adaptation, it can enhance the organisation's ability of surviving and developing in a complex and volatile environment.

2.4.1.2 Organisation's top management capacity

There is a close correlation between the managerial competence of top managers, the leadership style they adopt and their thinking patterns, and organisational performance, which plays a positive guiding role on organisational performance. According to the researcher proposed, leadership styles are mainly divided into: authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire. Authoritarian leaders tend to concentrate team power on themselves, focusing on work goals and paying less attention to employees' emotional needs and practical difficulties, although they can quickly achieve team goals, but it may lead to lack of team innovation and co-operation, and the employees are just passive to carry out the orders. In contrast, democratic leaders delegate power to team members and fully consult with them when making major decisions, this leadership style can inspire stronger motivation and ability to complete tasks (K. Cheng, 2017; J. Y. Zhang, 1995). Laissez-faire leaders, on the other hand, hardly participate in team work, such teams tend to be inefficient and lack stability in work progress. Therefore, by regulating the management methods of senior leaders and prompting them to change to a democratic leadership style, it can not only increase the communication and collaboration within the team, but also stimulate the team's innovation ability and work efficiency, thus effectively enhancing organisational performance.

2.4.1.3 Organisational performance indicator appraisal setting

There are studies marking that the setting of performance indicators has a significant effect on organisational performance (Nie, 2017; X. Q. Yang, 2017). In the current performance evaluation system, it is mainly divided into two types of indicators: one is overall evaluation indicators; the other is qualitative and quantitative indicators.

Comprehensive appraisal indicators are a way of evaluating an organisation's performance in a holistic way, as opposed to a single indicator that focuses only on one aspect of, such as customer satisfaction, employee attendance or productivity. Although this approach is operationally easier, it has its inherent shortcomings (Hauff, 2021). Therefore, process monitoring should be integrated when conducting performance appraisals, which means focusing not only on the final outcome, but also on the entire process by which the outcome was achieved. This means achieving process of results and diversity of indicators to ensure that appraisal information is comprehensive and accurate. In constructing a diversified indicator system, scholars have proposed a variety of theoretical frameworks, for example, the five dimensions of overall productivity, effectiveness, employee satisfaction, return on investment, and turnover as a comprehensive measure of organisational performance indicators (Johnson, 2001; Matthews et al., 2002; McCloy et al., 1994). In practice, evaluation indicators are usually divided into two categories: financial and non-financial. As financial indicators are easy to quantify and highly operational, the Therefore, enterprises often pay more attention to them (X. W. Jiang, 2009). However, with the in-depth study, people gradually find that financial indicators cannot fully reveal the whole picture of the operation of enterprises. Because of this, comprehensive assessment has become an indispensable part of performance assessment theory research.

Quantitative indicators, often referred to as hard indicators, and qualitative indicators, also referred to as soft indicators, where quantitative indicators can more objectively measure specific, tangible aspects of organisational performance (Dai, 2016). However, hard indicators appear to be inadequate in assessing long-term goals, while soft indicators reflect more customers' feelings towards the enterprise, employees' values and their attitudes, and other subjective aspects, and in the actual operation, we cannot rely only on a single hard or soft indicator for assessment, but need to take into account the characteristics of the enterprise, scale, and other factors, and conduct a comprehensive assessment of the two. It is worth noting that the assessment of organisational performance is only a review of past achievements, so in the process of comprehensive assessment, the indicator system should be

constantly improved to ensure that the results of the historical assessment have substantial guidance and influence on the future assessment process (W. Wang, 2015).

2.4.1.4 Company operating systems and management systems

From an external perspective, the impact of the operating system on organisational performance is mainly reflected in the synergy and cooperation between subsidiaries and the parent company. While analysing from the internal perspective, the operation system mainly influences the organisational performance by promoting the development of the company's main business, around which a whole set of the company's main mechanism is constructed. The reasonable construction of the operation system and its efficient operation is the key factor to enhance its organisational performance. The system is regarded as the cornerstone and soul of the company, which provides a favourable guarantee for the normal operation of the company. As the saying goes, “Ten years of enterprises rely on the system, and a hundred years of enterprises rely on the culture”, the system plays a pivotal role in the specific stage of the development of the company (Z. G. Zhang et al., 2017). The company system plays a major normative role in the behaviour of employees within the company, a good set of company management system can not only effectively guide and supervise the behavioural performance of employees, but also greatly stimulate the enthusiasm and initiative of employees (Z. G. Zhang et al., 2017).

2.4.1.5 Competitive advantages of the company's products

The company's products are the main source of the company's profitability, and they serve as a bridge connecting the company and the market. Therefore, products play a key role in the internal and external environments of the company, and the quality of the products has a direct relationship with the superiority of the company in the market competition, and the dominance. This also has an impact on employees' trust and loyalty to the company. The competitiveness of the product on the market is crucial for the company's performance: if the company's product has a clear competitive advantage on the market, the likelihood of the company's profitability increases. Conversely, if the competitive advantage is weak, the company is in a disadvantageous position, the chances of earnings are reduced, and the rate of profit growth slows. As a result, a weak product competitive advantage may put a company in a difficult position, lead to a decrease in the confidence of its employees, and may even lead to elimination in a highly competitive market. Having a significant product competitive advantage will motivate enterprises to promote R&D and innovation activities internally, to

continuously improve product quality, to expand product audience base, and to enhance product recognition in the market. In this process, companies are able to deeply explore the potential value and capabilities of their products and thus make their products more competitive. This chain of positive effects will ultimately be reflected in enhancing organisational performance. Therefore, the competitive advantage of products has a profound positive impact on organisational performance (Guo, 2012).

2.4.1.6 Employee motivation

In current academic research, employee motivation is seen as a central factor influencing organisational performance. Employees' personality traits, work attitudes, level of competence, sense of social responsibility, and their identification and sense of belonging to the company are all important aspects that influence organisational performance (Jia & Fang, 2017). Employees' motivation at work has the most direct and significant impact on organisational performance, and their positive work performance reflects their recognition of and commitment to their own work (Sun et al., 2007). In such a state, employees tend to take the initiative to learn (Liang et al., 2012), release their personal potential, and naturally integrate their personal career planning with the enterprise's development strategy to jointly promote the development of the enterprise. On the contrary, if employees are not sufficiently motivated at work, they may display negative attitudes and behaviours at work, refusing to identify and participate in the activities of the enterprise and organisational development, which often leads to a decline in work performance, an increase in employee turnover, and ultimately affecting the day-to-day operational management and overall organisational performance of the enterprise (Van Iddekinge et al., 2018).

2.4.1.7 Organisational culture

Management, as an important part of human social activities, and culture have a natural and close relationship with each other. They support each other and develop together. In the process of organisational evolution, people increasingly recognise the role of culture as a driving force in organisational management, and management activities also further strengthen the transmission and development of culture. Organisational performance constitutes the core element of enterprise development, while performance culture is the essence of enterprise culture, through the construction and practice of performance culture, can prompt individual performance concepts and values to integration, and and promote enterprises and individuals to achieve common growth and progress. The cultural structure of

organisational performance is generally considered to contain four levels: material culture, institutional culture, behavioural culture and spiritual culture, of which, spiritual culture, as the crystallisation of human society's long-term practice and awareness activities, embodies a unique way of thinking. In the process of implementing the organisational performance culture, the promotion of spiritual culture should be placed in an important position. The spiritual culture of organisational performance can multidimensionally show the cohesion and collaborative ability of the team and more profoundly reflect the value orientation of the team, which is the spiritual cornerstone that promotes the continuous development of the organisation and the continuous progress (Ni et al., 2017).

2.4.1.8 The external environment of the organisation

When coping with the complex and changing environment, the first concern of enterprises is how to adapt to and make use of the environment, especially how to cope with the challenges of the external macroeconomic environment, which is so complex and changing that it is difficult to find out the rules. For this reason, the first task for enterprises is to learn to flexibly cope with this complexity and adjust the organisational form of to cope with the changes in the environment. As the structure and form of the organisation changes, organisational performance also adjusts to the new organisational model. Therefore, changes in the external bad environment have a direct and significant impact on organisational performance (Zhong & Chen, 2007). Generally speaking, when the enterprise has adapted to the current external environment, should increase the investment in R&D funds, and establish the improvement of organisational performance on the basis of encouraging innovation and enhancing innovation capacity, so as to build up the innovation advantage in order to cope with the challenges of the future environment which may be more complicated and changeable. On the contrary, if the current environment poses a serious obstacle to the development of the enterprise, then the enterprise should appropriately reduce the investment in R&D, save the related expenditure, and plan and adjust the direction of development according to the future development trend.

2.4.2 Transformational leadership

The concept of transformational leadership has been the subject of sustained attention and in-depth study by scholars around the globe for more than four decades, since it was first introduced in the 1970s It has become an emerging paradigm in the field of leadership theory research.

2.4.2.1 Presentation of transformational leadership theory

In early 1970s, Downton (1973) first proposed the theory of transformational leadership in his book *Renegade Leadership*, which was developed after the traditional trait, behavioural and contingency theories, and represented a new stage in leadership theory. A few years later, in 1978, in book “*Leadership*”, more systematically compared transactional leadership and transformational leadership, and defined the connotation of transformational leadership as: advocating the spirit of the organisation's employees as well as the value of the spiritual dimension, improving their intrinsic moral standard, and stimulating their positive energy and potential from. Meanwhile, Burns (1992) pointed out that the interests of the organization and its members need to be aligned. Such is a task for the transformational leader. In contrast to the transactional leader who practises contingent reinforcement of followers, the transformational leader inspires, intellectually stimulates, and is individually considerate of them. Transformational leadership may be directive or participative. Requiring higher moral development, transformational leadership is recognized universally as a concept. Reza (2019) pointed out that many scholars have conducted detailed research on transformational leadership theory, and tThis emerging theory has aroused great interest in the global academic community, with topics such as the definition of the concept of transformational leadership, the delineation and quantification of its dimensions, the updating of its scales, and the mechanisms of its influence becoming the central focus of research. Moreover, these results are continuously enriched and improved, and have become an important basis for business managers and various kinds of change behaviours.

2.4.2.2 Definition of transformational leadership theory

Over the past four decades, researchers across the globe have continued to advance the evolution of this theory, enriching and refining its definition. As numerous scholars have been involved in the study of this theory, the understanding of transformational leadership has shown diversity. Based on a comprehensive analysis of a large body of literature, this paper summarises the definitions of transformational leadership by some of the more influential experts. See Table 2.3 for specific details.

Table 2.3 Summary of research on transformational leadership

Serial number	Research on transformational leadership	Year
1	Leaders exert power over followers through different levels of transactional commitment.	Downton (1973)
2	Leaders motivate their employees through their own moral qualities, which enables followers to work wholeheartedly for the organisation and improve their own performance while achieving inner growth. The uninterrupted interaction between the leader and the employee achieves an increase in needs and motivation.	Burns (1978)
3	By making employees aware of the significance of their responsibilities and stimulating their subordinates' inherent high-level aspirations, the formation of a mutual trust and mutual assistance organisational culture inspires subordinates to go beyond self-interest and place the interests of the organisation in a higher position to achieve results higher than the expected performance.	Bass (1985)
4	Transformational leadership is based on the description of a good vision and encourages the members of the organisation through motivation, caring, sharing, etc. It is a continuous process of raising and changing the ideas and expectations of the employees in the course of the organisational activities, so that they can have an optimistic view of the future of themselves and the organisation.	Leithwood and Jantzi (1990)
5	Transformational leaders are able to present a shared vision to their employees and demonstrate their own leadership charisma in order to gain buy-in from their followers, leading them to put a simple exchange of benefits on the back burner.	Fields and Herold (1997)
6	Making employees aware of the important role of the tasks they undertake is the burden of transformational leadership, which aims to stimulate the needs of subordinates at a higher level and to enhance the overall output of the organisation in self-fulfilment.	C. P. Li et al. (2006)
7	The ultimate goal of transformational leadership is to unlock the full potential capital of subordinates.	Cho and Hwang (2007)
8	Transformational leadership has been shown to change the effectiveness of transactional leaders on subordinates' attitudes and performance, i.e., the "enhancement effect" of the theory.	Bass and Stogdill (2010)
9	The psychological empowerment of a transformational leader over employees who are happy to follow him has greater power than that of a transactional leader.	C. Z. Wei (2012)

Overall, these definitions show that, in most theories definitions of leadership change, it is still Bass's interpretation of this theory that is at the centre. The role of the leader has transcended the traditional managerial function and is no longer based solely on the rational assumption that organisational interests are maximised by optimising the allocation of material resources. Instead, leaders inspire a sense of responsibility and intrinsic motivation in their followers and satisfy their need for self-actualisation through their personal charisma, professional skills and overall care for their team members. By enhancing the goals and visions of team members and boosting their confidence in achieving beyond their goals, leaders not only achieve organisational goals and improve performance, but also help team

members maximise their personal values.

2.4.2.3 Dimensions and scales of transformational leadership

After comprehensively analysing the research results from around the globe, it can be observed that scholars studying transformational leadership generally divide this theory in terms of dimensions from the perspective of theoretical structure, and these divisions include different approaches of three, four, five and even six dimensions. Moreover, scholars have developed corresponding scales for these dimensions in order to conduct empirical analyses and research. Among them, the four-dimensional division is one of the most researched divisions of the theory by scholars.

Initially, researcher subdivided transformational leadership theory into six distinct research areas, which then further simplified by merging them into three core research dimensions: charismatic leadership, individualised caring and intellectual stimulation. In subsequent empirical research at, further divided charismatic motivational leadership into two dimensions: the Multifactorial Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) has become a widely-adopted instrument for scholars studying transformational leadership. The MLQ has been tested in a series of empirical studies and has been shown to perform well in terms of validity and reliability. Carless (1998) conducted an analysis of the MLQ by applying the The dimensions of change were explored by Carless in 1998 through the use of the MLQ questionnaire. Rafferty and Griffin (2006) isolated five dimensions through the use of the MLQ questionnaire as Intelligent Inspiration, Visionary Inspiration, Motivational Inspiration, Personal Identity, and Supportive Leadership. Podsakoff et al. (2000), based on previous research, incorporated a six-dimensional formulation into the transformational leadership theory, which were vision expression, role modelling, collective interest overriding, personalised attention, intellectual stimulation, and high expectations of performance. Based on Leithwood and Jantzi's (1990) study, Hipp and Bredeson (1995) suggested that about transformational leadership includes five dimensions: role modeling behaviours, pursuing group goals, high expectations, helping support, and providing additional rewards. Due to the differences in the historical development paths of various countries, they have developed their own unique national cultures. Chinese culture is heavily infused with Confucianism, resulting in a composition of transformational leaders that is different from other countries. In view of this, Chinese scholars have conducted an in-depth study of transformational leadership based on China's unique cultural background, focusing on the classification of leadership dimensions and the construction of scales. Based on a survey of 249 managers and employees,

they concluded that the transformational leadership behaviours of Chinese leaders can be classified into eight types. After expert discussions, they developed a Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (TLQ) that fits the Chinese context. In order to test the validity of the scale, 431 questionnaires were distributed, and with the help of data correlation analysis, it was concluded that transformational leadership encompasses the four structural dimensions of charismatic leadership, ethical role modeling, personalised care, and visionary motivation. Subsequent empirical research has further validated the validity and reliability of this transformational leadership questionnaire based on the Chinese cultural context (C. Q. Li & Shi, 2005). In subsequent research conducted by Chinese scholars, they have tested the four-dimensional model proposed by Li Chaoping. .

2.4.2.4 Transformational leadership effectiveness research

Since the introduction of transformational leadership theory, researchers have focused on its effectiveness in the areas of performance enhancement and psycho-emotional domains. In the area of performance, research has covered the individual, team and organisational dimensions, while in the psycho-emotional dimension, the impact has been seen in the dimensions of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, psychological empowerment and psychological capital. By examining the validity of this theory, the researchers arrived at two core conclusions.

There is a correlation between transformational leadership and organisational output performance (Howell & Dorfman, 1981). Transformational leadership can enhance overall organisational effectiveness through its unique path of influence. According to Den Hartog et al. (1997), the impact of transformational leadership was explored from the perspective of team performance and it was found that this type of leadership was able to stimulate the potential of its members at the team level, thus enhancing the overall performance of the team. Barling et al. (1996) concluded that organisational effectiveness can be affected by transformational leadership from the perspective of banks in the financial sector and Colbert et al. (2008) concluded that transformational leadership behaviours can promote goal congruence in executive teams and thus improve corporate effectiveness.

In addition, Waldman et al. (2001) found that the impact of transformational leadership on organisational performance was not significant until the uncertainty of the environment was taken into account into. Tosi et al. (2004) reached the same conclusion in a subsequent study. However, these scholars also found that in the process of sustained change in the firm's external environment, CEOs implement a range of transformational behaviours, which in turn

lead to and good output outcomes for the firm. This at least suggests that the ultimate effect of CEO-led change depends on the environment in which the CEO operates, i.e., CEO leadership behaviour has its own sphere of influence (Waldman et al., 2001).

Chinese researchers have had fruitful results from in exploring this emerging leadership style. Ling et al. (2008) used a multi-source survey method to investigate the relationship between transformational leadership and company performance, targeting CEOs and their senior management teams from 121 companies. The research findings indicate that transformational CEOs have a significant positive impact on performance in smaller, private companies, and this impact is moderated by company size, CEO founder identity, and CEO tenure. C. Yang et al. (2020) used a time lag research method to investigate 218 frontline employees and their supervisors from ten carefully selected five-star hotels in China, and conducted data analysis using structural equation modeling. Research has shown that transformational leaders and proactive employees have a significant impact on excellent service performance, with organizational embeddedness playing a key role. In a paper published in 2022, regarding the theme of transformational leadership and organizational performance, Zhao and Huang (2022) conducted a quantitative survey of 239 employees from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in different industries in China to study key variables such as green transformation leadership, green human resource management, green innovation, organizational support, and sustainable business performance. The research results indicate that green transformation leadership, green human resource management, green innovation, and organizational support have a significant positive impact on the sustainable business performance of enterprises. These factors interact with each other and jointly promote the sustainable development of enterprises. Cui et al. (2022) used empirical research methods to survey leaders and employees of Chinese small and medium-sized enterprises through questionnaires, and conducted data analysis using structural equation modeling to explore the impact of leadership styles (transformational and transactional) on innovation performance of small and medium-sized enterprises. Research has shown that transformational leadership and transactional leadership have a significant positive impact on the innovation performance of small and medium-sized enterprises by promoting organizational learning. Organizational learning plays a crucial intermediary role in this process.

2.4.2.5 Review of transformational leadership research

In reviewing the existing literature, it can be seen that there is a general consensus between

China and the West based on survey data that transformational leadership has a direct or indirect effect on organisational effectiveness through certain mediating variables. However, previous empirical studies have focused on the individual and group levels, and there is a lack of empirical analysis on the effectiveness of transformational leadership at the macro-organisational level. The few studies on the mechanisms of transformational leadership behaviour and organisational performance have generally failed to analyse the moderating and mediating factors adequately. Therefore, this study provides an empirical study at the organisational level to examine whether transformational leadership has the same effectiveness at the larger organisational level.

2.5 Research related to human resources practices

2.5.1 The meaning of human resources practices

The rapid advancement of science and technology and the intensification of market competition, further highlight the strategic position of human resources. Since the 1980s, the U.S. manufacturing industry has been exploring the path of human resource management reforms based on scientific management theories, and striving to build a highly effective human resource management model in order to achieve the optimal allocation of human resources. Scholars in the field of strategic human resource management have found after a long period of exploration that certain human resource management initiatives can widely improve enterprise performance, showing obvious universality, that is, these initiatives can effectively promote enterprises to achieve high performance. As the research on strategic human resource management continues to deepen, more and more scholars are inclined to integrate various dispersed human resource practices into a systematic human resource management system from a macroscopic point of view, and are committed to studying the deep relationship between this system and organisational performance.

The definition of HR practices can be understood in both broad and specific terms. In a broad sense, it involves the comprehensive and efficient deployment of various types of resources, including human resources, and the adoption of a series of strategies aimed at achieving improved organisational performance. For example, in 1993, the US Department of Labor introduced the concept of 'high-performance work organisations' and stated that these organisations should be able to 'empower employees with the necessary information, skills, motivation and responsibilities to enable them to make innovative, improved, and adaptive

decisions quickly in response to changes'.

Most research tends to adopt a more specific definition, focusing on the capabilities of organisations to ensure the achievement of their strategic objectives through the use of human resource practices. For example, in AMO model, organisational performance is viewed as a functional performance derived from a structure of core organisational components, which consists of the three core elements of employee competence, motivation and engagement opportunities (Appelbaum, 2013). HR practices need to leverage these three elements to achieve the goal of improving organisational performance. Since early 21st century, the AMO theoretical framework has been adopted by more than half of the research literature to explain and define HR practices (Boselie, 2010). The definitions of HR practices by previous scholars are detailed in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 Definitions of human resources practices

Serial number	Definition	Year
1	High performance work organisations should be able to give employees the information, skills, motivation and responsibility to make decisions such as innovation, improvement and rapid response that can cope with change.	1993
2	High-performance HR practices are a set of human resource management practices that improve the business performance of an organisation in a line-by-line additive manner.	1994
3	High-performance HR practices are a set of policies and activities that are highly aligned within a company to ensure that HR serves the strategic goals of the organisation.	1997
4	High performance HR practices encompass a range of HR practices and ultimately deliver performance and competitive advantage to organisations by transforming the capabilities, motivations and job opportunities of employees.	2000
5	High-performance human resource practices are a set of distinct but interrelated human resource management practices used to select, develop, retain and motivate an organisation's workforce, which equip employees with excellent competencies and make them willing to use their competencies in job-related activities that lead to excellent performance and sustained competitive advantage.	2002
6	High performance human resource practices are the optimal combination of human resources, technology and organisational structure to enable the full and effective use of an organisation's resources and strengths.	2004
7	High-performance human resource practices are a set of human resource practices used to enhance the skills, commitment and productivity of employees so that they become a source of sustained competitive advantage for the organisation.	2005

Source: Hou (2018)

In order to have a deeper understanding of the core content of HR practices, some scholars have adopted the methods of factor analysis or theoretical induction to classify the various aspects of HR practices. For example, Huselid (1995) has based on the results of the previous research on and constructed a system of high-performance HR practices on which

includes the dimensions of employee skills, organisational structure and employee motivation, and so on. and other high performance HR practice systems including employee motivation. The classification of HR practice dimensions in previous literature is shown in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5 Dimensional division of HR practices

Serial number	Dimension	Dimensionality	Year
1	2 Dimensions	Employee Skills and Organisational Structure, Employee Motivation	1995
		Incentive and investment practices, expectation-enhancing practices	2009
		Motivational HR practices, participatory HR practices	2009
2	3 Dimensions	Employee Skills, Employee Motivation, Position and Job Structure	1996
		Human Resource Mobility, Rewards, Employee Influence	2006
		Employee Development, Compensation/Organisation Structure, Feedback System	2000
		Competence, motivation, opportunities for participation	2010
		High Engagement Work Practices, Long-Term Motivation: Investment and Incentive Practices, Short-Term Motivation, Performance Enhancement Practices	2011
3	4 Dimensions	Structured training and development, retention-oriented compensation, seniority-oriented pay, employee diversity	1998
		Human Resource Mobility, Work Systems, Reward Systems, Employee Influence	2003
		Communication, Climate, Performance and Motivation, Skills	2004

Source: Hou (2018)

Similarly, some scholars do not classify HR practices into dimensions, but directly select a number of specific practices to constitute the HR practice system. For example, Sun et al. (2007) suggest that HR practices include the following eight core components: talent selection, systematic training, internal job rotation, job security, clear definition of job responsibilities, results-based performance evaluation, incentive-based compensation system, and active employee participation. Scholars' views on the specific practices included in HR practices are shown in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6 Specific practice elements of HR practices

Number of projects	Concrete action	Year
5	Organisational structure, mission design, staffing (selection, training and development), compensation systems and information systems	2000
7	Internal career opportunities, formal training systems, evaluation methods, benefit-sharing, employment security, grievance mechanisms and working definitions	1996
7	Employment security, selective employment of new recruits, self-managed teams and decentralization of decision-making as basic principles of organisational design, relatively high levels of remuneration based on organisational performance, extensive training, reduction of status differentials and barriers, wide sharing of financial and performance information throughout the organisation	1998

7	Internal promotion opportunities, training system, performance appraisal, job security, participation system, work protocols, profit sharing	1996
8	Personnel selection, extensive training, internal mobility, security of employment, clear job descriptions, results-oriented evaluations, incentive compensation and employee engagement	2007
10	Extensive recruitment, selection and training processes, formal information sharing, attitude assessments, job design grievance procedures, labor-management participation schemes, performance appraisals, promotion and incentive pay, merit pay for employees	1995
10	Recruitment and Hiring, New Employee Training, Hot Worker Training, Situational Pay, Work Teams, Problem Solving Teams, Employee Proposals, Job Rotation, Decentralization, Situational Differentiation	1995

Source: Hou (2018)

Based on previous research, this study adopts the definition of Sun et al. (2007): Human resource practices are a series of activities that aim to enhance the ability of employees to work at, increase participation in decision-making, and stimulate self-drivenness, which ultimately aim to improve the performance of the organisation and sustain competitiveness. Specifically, these practices include personnel selection, comprehensive training, internal job mobility, security of employment stability, clearly defined job responsibilities, results oriented appraisal mechanism, motivationally effective compensation system and active participation of employees (Sun et al., 2007). Specifically, these practices include staff selection, comprehensive training, internal job mobility, job security, clearly defined job responsibilities, results-based appraisal, motivating remuneration system and active employee participation (Sun et al., 2007).

2.5.2 Measurement of human resources practices

So far, scholars in China and internationally have designed a variety of scales for assessing HR practices (Sun et al., 2007). Because the measurement items in these scales closely rely on different divisions of the conceptual dimensions of HR practices and often do not make clear distinctions between similar concepts, there are large differences in the content of the various scales currently available for measuring HR practices. Table 2.7 lists the most commonly used scales.

Table 2.7 Human resources practice measurement scale

Dimensionality	Items (number of items in parentheses)	Year
3 dimensions	staff selection (3), training (3), incentive pay (3), grievance procedures (1), decentralized decision-making (8), internal labour market (5), direct hierarchy (1)	1996
4 dimensions	selective personnel (7), comprehensive training (8), developmental performance evaluation (9), fair reward system (8)	1992
5 dimensions	extensive training (6), delegation of authority (7), highly selective personnel (8), pay for performance (3), generic design (3)	2000

7 dimensions	internal career opportunities (4), training (4), results-oriented evaluation (2), employment security (4), employee involvement (4), job descriptions (4), profit-sharing	1996
--------------	---	------

Source: Hou (2018)

Comparison of the previous scales reveals that there are significant differences in the specific HR practices covered by each scale, which to some extent hinders the comparative analyses of the results of different scales. To overcome this problem, K. Jiang et al. (2012) developed a comprehensive measurement model based on the AMO theory, covering three levels: HR policies, strategic areas, and overall conceptualisation, which alleviated the limitations of previous measurement models.

Single-indicator measures make comparisons between different studies feasible.

2.5.3 Impact of HR practices on individuals

Much of the current research on the impact of HR practices on individuals focuses on the levels of individual work attitudes, work behaviours and work outcomes.

(1) Individual work attitude

Takeuchi et al. (2007) conducted a survey and study on 324 managers and 522 employees in 76 companies in Japan and their findings showed that the effective implementation of HR practices can enhance employee job satisfaction as well as affective commitment and that this positive effect is mediated through a caring climate at the organisational level. P. C. Wu and Chaturvedi (2009) conducted a questionnaire survey covering employees in China and showed that HR practices have a positive effect on enhancing employee job satisfaction as well as on organisational commitment and revealed that perceived fairness in the process mediates this positive impression. Messersmith et al. (2011) analysed questionnaire data from Wales and showed that HR practices positively contribute to employee job satisfaction, as well as to organisational commitment, and psychological empowerment, and that this positive attitudinal variable further motivates employees to demonstrate organisational citizenship behaviours, which ultimately leads to improved departmental performance.

Ang et al. (2013) showed that HR practices were positively associated with job satisfaction and affective commitment in hospitals only if they were supported and endorsed by employees. Giannikis and Nikandrou's (2013) study of 424 employees in a Greek manufacturing company found that HR practices were positively associated with increased employee job satisfaction, and organisational commitment which were mediated by the breach of the psychological contract. Yan and Wang (2005) showed that new generation employees' perceptions of a high performance work system strengthened their job satisfaction

and were negatively correlated with burnout. Miao et al. (2015) pointed out that human resource practices can significantly increase employees' job satisfaction and affective commitment by virtue of the mediating role of the leader-member exchange relationship.

Castanheira and Story's (2016) study of front office sales executives in the retail industry suggests that employees' perceptions of performance-oriented human resource management can have an effect on their level of commitment, which in turn can have an effect on affective commitment and ultimately on the overall level of commitment. Van De Voorde and Beijer (2015) conducted a study of 1,065 employees in 150 workplaces, which showed that HR practices can drive employees' attribution of well-being and performance to work outcomes. attribution of work outcomes. Among other things, employees who see benefits as an attribution typically show higher employee commitment and lower levels of stress at work.

Ang et al. (2013) also found a positive association between hospital employees' work engagement and HR practices. Castanheira and Story (2016) argued that employees' perceptions of work engagement can be enhanced through the implementation of performance-focused HRM strategies. On the other hand, Fan et al.'s (2014) survey of 1,488 healthcare workers in 25 hospitals in China showed that HR practices positively enhance the subjective well-being of healthcare workers. Zhang and Jia, in a 2010 survey of 146 CEOs or HR directors and 730 employees in China, found that HR practices positively contributed to employees' perceptions of organisational support, and that this sense of organisational support played an intermediary role in mediating the construction of corporate entrepreneurship.

In addition, previous studies have shown that HR practices are positively associated with employee motivation, engagement, identification with the organisation and levels of organisational trust. Ramdani et al. (2014) explored the effectiveness of HR practices in developing countries using employees in Algerian firms and concluded that at the individual level, HR practices are were effective in enhancing positive attitudes and motivation of employees in the workplace. In the study of Miao et al. (2013), on the other hand, it was noted that, HR practices significantly enhance employees' job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and organisational trust through the mediating role of the leader-member exchange relationship.

HR practices can help reduce the likelihood of employees developing a negative mindset, such as a tendency to leave their jobs. Pichler et al. (2014) surveyed 171 HR executives in the Chicago metropolitan area and concluded that HR practices and their culture were negatively associated with employees' proactive turnover behaviours, and that this negative correlation was more significant for female employees. Ang et al. (2013) found a negative correlation

between HR practices and turnover intentions. Mostafa's (2016) study of 340 Egyptian public health workers showed that HR practices succeeded in alleviating job stress and reducing turnover intentions by improving the fit between the individual and the organisation. L. Zhong et al. (2016) conducted a questionnaire study with 605 employees, their direct supervisors, and human resource managers from 130 companies. The results of the study showed that HR practices contribute to employee engagement by strengthening employees' perceptions of organisational support, which in turn positively contributes to employee job performance and leads to a reduction in turnover intentions.

In addition, HR practices play a positive role in alleviating employees' occupational fatigue and emotional exhaustion. Fan et al. (2014) found that HR practices significantly reduced burnout. Yan and Wang (2005) study suggested that there is a significant negative correlation between high-performance work systems and burnout as experienced by new-generation employees. M. Zhang et al.'s (2013) study of 207 medical staff and managers in six hospitals in mainland China found that HR practices could increase medical staff's work engagement and satisfaction, which in turn could curb emotional exhaustion.

HR practices can cause employees to attribute outcomes to both benefits and performance, especially when employees attribute outcomes to performance, which may result in employees developing weaker loyalty and facing higher job strain.

(2) Individual work behaviour

L. Y. Sun et al. (2007) conducted a questionnaire survey of 86 hotels in 12 cities along the eastern seaboard of China, which revealed that HR practices have a significant impact on service-oriented organisational citizenship behaviours. Y. Wei et al. (2010) focused on 11 manufacturing firms in Taiwan, and through a survey of 576 employees in these 11 firms, revealed that HR practices were mediated by job satisfaction and positively contributed to employees' demonstrated organisational citizenship behaviours. J. Shen et al. (2014), through a survey of 1,051 teachers and their supervisors in 63 schools in China, showed that optimised HR practices contributed to teachers' organisational citizenship behaviours by improving their quality of work and life. Similarly, Kehoe and Wright (2013), through a food service company's survey, found that employees' perceptions of HR practices further evoked organisational citizenship behaviours by increasing their affective loyalty. M. Zhang et al. (2013) conducted a survey of 700 Chinese employees, which showed that HR practices were associated with employees' organisational loyalty and positive organisational behaviours. The results showed that HR practices were positively associated with employees' organisational loyalty and positive organisational behaviour. Miao et al. (2013) conducted a survey of 233

employees and their immediate supervisors in 21 small- and medium-sized private enterprises in China and concluded that HR practices were beneficial in strengthening employees' sense of belonging to the organisation and perceived organisational support, promoting in-role behaviours, and positively contributing to citizenship behaviours by improving communication between leaders and members. D. Cheng and Wang's (2011) study found that HR practices can contribute to organisational citizenship behaviours by increasing employees' cognitive and affective trust.

A study conducted with 618 Indian hotel employees and 31 of their managers showed that HR practices contributed to the behaviour of hotel employees in the area of service innovation by reinforcing organisational commitment (Dhar, 2015). Fu et al. (2015) conducted a study in Ireland with 195 managing partners and human resource managers from 120 accounting firms and found that HR practices had a positive effect and positive influence on employees' innovative work behaviours. found that HR practices have a positive impact on employees' innovative work behaviours.

In addition, HR practices are strongly associated with employee participation in decision-making, positive constructive behaviours, retention intentions, and absenteeism, among other things. Sikora et al.'s (2015) study found that HR practices have a positive effect on increasing employee participation in decision-making. Miao et al. (2013) found that HR practices can strengthen employees' sense of identity and support for their organisations, which indirectly leads to more positive constructive behaviours. Kehoe and Wright (2013) also found that perceived HR practices had a positive effect on retention intentions and were negatively associated with absenteeism.

(3) Individual work results

J. Shen et al. (2014) found that optimised HR practices significantly enhanced the role performance of teacher employees by improving their quality of work and life. Liao et al. (2009) conducted a large-scale survey of managers, employees, and customers in 91 bank branches, and the results of the study showed that HR practices exerted positive effects through mediating elements such as enhancing employees' human capital, strengthening the sense of organisational support, and increasing psychological empowerment. Shih et al. (2013) conducted a questionnaire survey of employees in 49 Taiwanese companies in mainland China. The results of the study showed that HR practices strongly contributed to employee performance by optimising employees' psychological contract and enhancing their work engagement. Sikora et al. (2015) study found that HR practices play an extremely crucial role and play an extremely important role in the process of employee performance enhancement.

Heffernan et al.'s (2016) study of 169 firms in Ireland suggests that HR practices not only have a positive effect on employee performance and HRM performance, but also positively contribute to organisational performance, and that these interrelationships are mediated by the organisational climate for creativity.

Chiang et al. (2015) conducted a study with 158 R&D engineers in Taiwan, and the results showed that well-established HR practices can greatly enhance employees' creative performance with efficient information exchange mechanisms. Guidice et al. (2016) used manufacturing employees as a research sample, and found that the impact of HR practices on employees' challenge performance varied depending on the employees' supervisory priorities. Specifically, employees with a defensive supervisory focus tend to underperform in challenging performance compared to those with a facilitative focus, and it is only when they have a high level of creativity and responsibility that they are likely to achieve breakthroughs in performance. To further explore the relationship between sustainable human resource actions and organizational outcomes, particularly the impact of training on employment relationships and employee retention, Ybema et al. (2020) used data from the Fourth European Company Survey (ECS 2019) to test hypotheses using two independent logistic regression models on employees from 21869 companies. The research results indicate that sustainable HRM has a positive impact on the quality of employment relationships, especially in highly competitive market environments. However, improving employee employability may increase the attractiveness of employees to other jobs, thereby reducing the organization's ability to retain employees. Innocenti et al. (2024) conducted a questionnaire survey on 669 chronic disease employees of a large Italian company to collect data, and used structural equation modeling for data analysis to explore the role of different combinations of human practices (including developmental, exploitative, maintenance, and adaptive practices) in enhancing the work engagement of chronic disease employees. The research results indicate that different combinations of HR practices have varying impacts on the work engagement of employees with chronic diseases. Developmental and exploitative practices have a significant positive impact on work engagement, while adaptive practices have a significant negative impact. In addition, the perception of disease discrimination plays an important moderating role in the relationship between exploitative practices and job engagement.

Numerous studies have shown that HR practices are positively correlated with employee performance at work, such as service quality, absenteeism and morale at work. B. Zhang and Morris (2014) conducted an in-depth study of 168 companies in China, which showed that HR practices positively contribute to organisational performance as it influences employee

absenteeism, turnover, employee morale, employee commitment, and job performance. Bartram et al. (2014) conducted a survey of 254 healthcare workers in an Australian hospital and concluded that human resource practices can affect the social identity of healthcare workers, which can serve as a bridge to the psychological empowerment of healthcare workers, and ultimately have a further impact on the quality of their work in caring for patients. The study concluded that human resource practices can have an impact on the social identity of healthcare workers, which can be used as a bridge to influence the psychological empowerment of healthcare workers and ultimately have a further impact on the quality of their patient care. To explore the relationship between positive employee behavior and human resource practices, Alikaj et al. (2021) used empirical research methods to collect data from a questionnaire survey of 438 employees and their supervisors, and analyzed the data using structural equation modeling. The research results showed that proactive individualism has a significant positive impact on creative behavior by promoting employees' flourishing development in the workplace. High participation in human resource practices plays an important regulatory role in this process.

Chapter 3: The Focal Organisation

The company has 25 years of existence and ever since its establishment it has evolved through three phases. The first comprises the years up to 2020 (the first 21 years of existence) with a specific market niche in high quality steel pipe production. It then experienced a change in ownership which created a transition phase in 2021, and presently it has shifted into gold and other minerals mining. The evolution of the company will be shown in detail with anecdotes that establish relevant events throughout its history. Its timeline covers three phases (see Figure 3.1). The information in this chapter was collected from documents internal to the company.

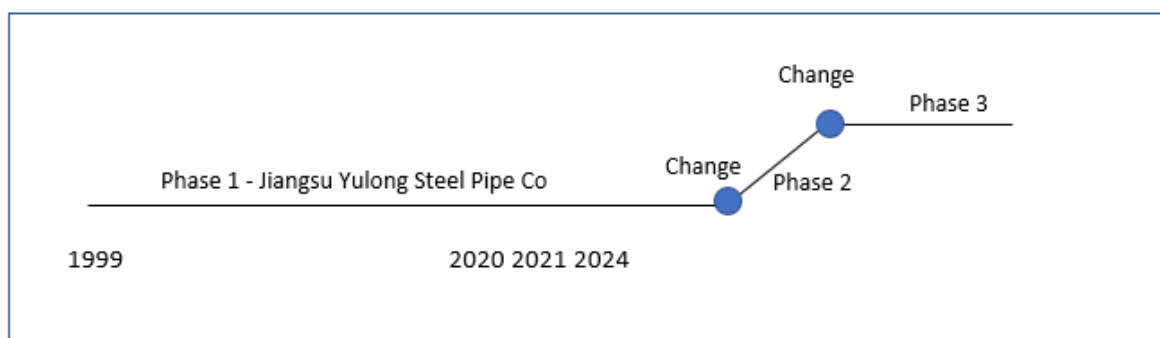


Figure 3.1 Timeline

3.1 Phase one: Jiangsu Yulong Steel Pipe Co., Ltd. (1999-2020)

The company was originally named Jiangsu Yulong Steel Pipe Co., Ltd., a private enterprise specializing in the production of welded steel pipes, founded in 1999 and headquartered in Yuqi Town, Wuxi City, Jiangsu Province. The company became a significant steel pipe production base in East China, covering an area of 320,000 square meters with total assets of 700 million yuan and more than 1,000 employees.

Yulong primarily produced high-frequency resistance welded steel pipes, longitudinal submerged arc welded pipes, spiral submerged arc welded pipes, and anti-corrosion steel pipes, widely used in petroleum, natural gas, and water transportation fields. The company owned several modern production lines with an annual production capacity exceeding hundreds of thousands of tons.

In June 2007, the company transitioned to a joint-stock company and was subsequently listed on the Shanghai Stock Exchange under the stock code 601028, abbreviated as Yulong. The company implemented this transformation, and by 2011, the company had successfully gone public.

The table below, excerpted from the 2011 announcement by Jiangsu Yulong Steel Pipe Co., Ltd. on the Shanghai Stock Exchange, displays financial data from 2011 and the three previous years (see Table 3.1). From the financial data, it can be observed that key financial indicators such as total revenue, operating profit, and total profit remained stable and reliable from the decision to go public in 2007 to the successful listing in 2011.

Table 3.1 The company's main accounting data and financial indicators for 2009—2011 (unit: million; market type: RMB)

Main accounting data	2011	2010	Annual growth (%)	2009
Total operating revenue	2,740,777,004.40	2,276,222,017.48	20.41	2,083,404,563.25
operating profit	192,571,360.57	268,066,997.10	-28.16	248,830,605.50
Total profit	202,383,728.49	262,570,761.06	-22.92	247,777,209.55
Net profit attributable to shareholders of the listed company	141,396,277.27	178,621,731.81	-20.84	177,161,556.97
Net profit attributable to shareholders of the listed company after deducting non-recurring gains and losses	131,572,749.74	178,894,530.75	-26.45	176,102,657.66
Net cash flows from operating activities	-26,337,434.49	-101,309,762.76	74.00	308,155,094.92
	At the end of 2011	At the end of 2010	Annual growth (%)	At the end of 2009
Total assets	2,914,172,281.46	1,989,850,426.43	46.45	1,788,539,317.54
Total liabilities	1,011,610,625.79	1,022,594,285.50	-1.07	985,370,947.00
Owner's equity attributable to shareholders of listed companies	1,883,273,062.13	889,706,291.44	111.67	711,084,559.63
Total share capital	317,500,000.00	238,000,000.00	33.40	238,000,000.00

Source: Internal data of the company

Additionally, Yulong actively expanded its international market, with products exported to countries and regions such as the United States, Canada, Italy, Spain, South Korea, and Japan, serving many internationally renowned engineering projects.

The company also had significant management and technical advantages, with an efficient management team and experienced professional technicians, actively promoting the introduction of high-end talent and the optimization of internal governance.

During this first phase of Yulong's development, we have uncovered some interesting

stories and details from the perspective of leadership and human resource management practices, which add more color and depth to the company's history. The following are four stories and details that reflect the challenges, opportunities, and key decisions the company faced during this phase:

1. Challenges in the Early Days

In 1999, at the time of the company's establishment, China was experiencing a period of rapid economic growth, and competition in the Chinese steel pipe industry was intense. To secure a foothold in the market, the founder repeatedly experimented with product quality and technology. During one phase of equipment testing, the production line frequently halted due to the inexperience of the technicians. To resolve this issue, the founder personally visited Germany to study and introduce more advanced production technology, which allowed the production line to run smoothly and ensured the quality of the products.

2. Introduction of Key Talent and Technological Breakthroughs

In the early 2000s, as the steel pipe industry continued to evolve technologically, Yulong Co., Ltd. faced technical bottlenecks. To overcome this challenge, the company decided to invest heavily in hiring an expert with extensive experience in steel pipe welding technology. After joining the company, this expert not only improved the production process but also established a technical R&D team. The team successfully developed high-frequency resistance welding technology, which significantly improved product quality and production efficiency, helping the company stand out in the fiercely competitive market.

3. Employee Engagement Improvement Case

In 2005, the company faced increased production pressure due to market demand fluctuations. To address this issue, the Human Resources Department launched an initiative called the "Employee Innovation Suggestion" program, encouraging frontline employees to propose ideas for improving the production process. Of the more than 200 suggestions collected, over 30 were adopted, directly leading to a significant increase in production efficiency. This not only alleviated the short-term production pressure but also strengthened employees' sense of belonging and engagement.

4. Decision-Making Dilemma Before the First IPO

In 2007, when Yulong was preparing to go public, there was an internal debate over whether to continue focusing on the steel pipe business. Some senior executives suggested expanding the business scope to diversify the portfolio and mitigate risks, while others believed the company should concentrate on its core business. Ultimately, the company chose to focus on the steel pipe sector, improving product quality and expanding production lines,

which led to significant profit growth and a successful IPO.

In China IPO processes are lengthy and Yulong Gold was able to successfully get it by 7th November 2011. In the meantime, the subprime global financial crisis ensued but its effects were cushioned by governmental policies. The stock value of the company increased to a peak in 2015 in line with the market as indicated by the Shanghai Composite Index. The stock value accompanied the general stock market variation but in 2017 up to 2021 there was a continuing underperformance as compared to the market (see Figure 3.2).



Figure 3.2 Stock value changes in time

3.2 Phase two: shareholder changes and business transformation (2020)

In 2020, the company adjusted its shareholder structure, divesting its steel pipe business, with the controlling shareholder changing to Hainan Houkai Technology Co., Ltd. Established on May 23, 2019, and registered in Chengmai County, Hainan Province, Hainan Houkai Technology Co., Ltd. It is represented by Mr. Lai Yuchen, and is a private fund investment company. The actual controller of Yulong changed to Mr. Lai Yuchen. The company transitioned from steel pipe production to the development of gold and precious metal minerals and some bulk commodity trading businesses.

This phase was marked by visible leadership changes and adjustments in human resource management, that were critical. The new investors introduced market-oriented management mechanisms, redefined the company's strategic goals, and injected new vitality and innovative thinking. In terms of human resources, the focus was on attracting and cultivating

high-end talent, ensuring the company could quickly adapt to and thrive in its new field.

We have collected four changes from the second phase, during the period of shareholder changes and business transformation, that illustrate the main events and relate to the perspective of transformational leadership and human resource management practices.

1. Cultural Conflict Resulting from Shareholder Changes

When Hainan Houai Technology Co., Ltd. became the controlling shareholder, it brought a different corporate culture. Hainan Houai emphasized fast-paced investment returns, while Yulong Co., Ltd. had maintained a tradition of steady growth. This cultural difference initially caused internal conflicts within the company. To resolve these issues, the new management organized multiple internal discussions and team-building activities to gradually integrate the two cultures, resulting in a management style that is both innovative and stable.

2. Challenges in Divesting the Steel Pipe Business

The steel pipe business had been a core part of the company for many years. However, after the shareholder change in 2020, the company decided to divest this business and shift its focus to gold and precious metal mining. This decision sparked considerable debate within the company, particularly among long-term employees who were unsettled by the change. To ensure a smooth transition, the company's top management held several employee meetings to explain the reasons behind the strategic adjustment and future development plans. They also provided affected employees with relocation plans and training opportunities, ultimately achieving a smooth transition.

3. Talent Retraining Plan During the Transition

After the company divested its steel pipe business and transitioned in 2020, many employees who had been focused on the steel pipe industry faced a skills mismatch. To address this issue, the company launched a large-scale talent retraining program. Employees were offered the opportunity to receive training in new fields such as mineral resource development, mining management, and international trade. Through these training programs, many employees successfully transitioned into professionals in the mining sector. This not only retained experienced employees but also injected new vitality into the company's new business.

4. Organisational Culture Integration and Change Management

After the shareholder change, the clash between the old and new cultures led to some issues in team collaboration. The Human Resources Department implemented a "Cultural Integration Workshop" that allowed employees from various levels to participate, express their concerns, and offer suggestions. The outcome of these workshops not only helped

alleviate employees' anxiety regarding the changes but also fostered a new corporate culture that combined the structured management of state-owned enterprises with the flexible innovation of private companies. This cultural integration contributed to the company's operational stability during the transition.

These challenges have contributed to a successful transition that Yulong's 2021 Annual Report shows, as judged on the company's performance improvement, as stated in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 The company's main accounting data and financial indicators for 2019—2021 (unit: million; market type: RMB)

Main accounting data	2021	2020	Annual growth (%)	2019
Operating revenue	11,351,946,697.48	11,908,280,689.48	-4.67	1,839,497,247.71
Net profit attributable to shareholders of the listed company	364,329,567.72	117,232,500.34	210.78	20,415,360.23
Net profit attributable to shareholders of the listed company after deducting non recurring gains and losses	365,728,180.97	116,728,094.48	213.32	6, 837,730.73
Net cash flows from operating activities	49,523,630.21	-293, 046, 374.22	-	-1,051,380,898.59
	At the end of 2021	At the end of 2020	Annual growth (%)	At the end of 2019
Net assets attributable to shareholders of the listed company	2,547, 496, 436.60	2,184, 513, 192.34	16. 62	2,067,280,692.00
Total assets	3, 649, 271,347.37	3,712,030,779.15	-1.60	2,216,859,088.83

3.3 Phase three: nationalization and expansion into the mining sector (2021-present)

In 2021, Hainan Houkai Technology Co., Ltd. transferred its equity to Jinan Hi-Tech Holding Group Co., Ltd., a state-owned enterprise group under the government of Jinan High-Tech Zone, established in 1991, mainly engaged in industrial investment, infrastructure construction, real estate development, and financial services. With this change, Yulong further adjusted its business structure, adding a mineral business segment, while also focusing on bulk commodity trading. The company has since become a state-controlled company.

Shandong Yulong Gold Co., Ltd. is now a state-controlled company listed on the main board of the Shanghai Stock Exchange (stock code: 601028, referred to as Yulong Co., Ltd.). The

company primarily engages in the mining and processing of gold, precious metals, and minerals for new energy materials. The company is registered in Jinan, Shandong Province, with its office located in Pudong New Area, Shanghai.

The company adheres to a “dual-wheel drive” strategy focused on both gold and new energy materials. Currently, it has over 10 wholly-owned or partially-owned subsidiaries in China and internationally.

Since 2022, the company has been focused on advancing gold and new energy mineral projects in line with the 14th Five-Year Plan and high-quality development requirements, forming a dual-driver model of gold and new energy minerals with coordinated Chinese and international development.

Some major events occurred since the inception of this phase which add to the understanding of the company’s current situation.

Firstly, the acquisition of the Pajingo Gold Mine was a key step in the company’s transformation. During the negotiation process, Yulong Co., Ltd.’s team faced fierce competition from other international mining companies. To secure the deal, the company sent a highly experienced negotiation team, which held multiple rounds of discussions with the Australian government and local Indigenous representatives. Ultimately, through its commitment to local economic development and strict environmental protection measures, the company gained trust and successfully acquired the mining area. Currently, Pajingo Gold Mine in Queensland, Australia, contains JORC-compliant ore reserves of 10.9 million tons, with 202.1 ounces of gold (62.86 tons), and an average grade of 5.8 g/ton. The deep areas and surrounding regions of the Pajingo mine have significant exploration potential. With continued exploration investment, the metal resource is expected to exceed 100 tons.

Following this acquisition, the company has further expanded its business among which currently owns three main mining sites (see Figure 3.3).



Figure 3.3 Schematic diagram of three main mining sites

Ankwabe Graphite Mine Project, held by C&T Mining, is located in Cabo Delgado Province, Mozambique, with a mining area of 102.74 square kilometers and resources amounting to 46.1 million tons, with an average fixed carbon grade of 6.6%. This project is a large to super-large flake graphite mine, composed of three adjacent mining rights. The development prospects are significant, and the mineral resources are widely used in lithium-ion battery anode materials and in the production of expanded graphite for corrosion resistance, wear resistance, and energy-saving materials.

Loufangou Vanadium Mine Project is located southwest of Shangnan County, Shaanxi Province, with a mining area of 2.513 square kilometers and an annual production capacity of 660,000 tons. Verified reserves include 49,990 tons of vanadium pentoxide with an average grade of 1.08%. Once completed and operational, the mine is expected to produce 5,000 tons of vanadium pentoxide annually. The surrounding area holds multiple vanadium exploration and mining rights, providing significant integration advantages and resource prospects. The company has signed a strategic cooperation agreement with Dalian Rongke Power Group to collaborate on vanadium resource investment and development, vanadium product procurement, and the development and expansion of the vanadium flow battery market both

in China and internationally. During the supplementary exploration of tunnels, newly discovered ore bodies are expected to increase the V2O5 resource by 151,600 tons. The company will continue exploration and mining activities to support the development of its new energy material business.

Silica Mine Project in Dengta City, Liaoyang, Liaoning Province, covers an area of 0.3975 square kilometers, with a total resource of 16.65 million tons and a grade of 97.35%. By expanding the surrounding area, the resource could potentially increase to over 100 million tons.

A second event in this phase concerns four HRM-related initiatives. Namely, the “Mentoring” Program for the Management Team, which was introduced by the HR department during the company’s transition to state ownership, targeting “mentoring” talent development strategy, where experienced senior employees mentored new staff, particularly in new mineral development and international business expansion. This strategy not only helped new employees quickly adapt to the company’s new business directions but also allowed a group of young, capable managers to emerge, driving the company’s continued healthy growth. A second HRM-related initiative concerned the “Succession Plan for Key Positions” as a response to the growing needs for large number of management personnel with a global perspective and specialized skills due to the expansion of its business and internationalization. Through internal selection and external recruitment, the company identified a group of young, promising managers and designed systematic career development paths and training plans for them. These successors played a key role in subsequent business expansion, ensuring the company's success in new fields. A third HRM-related initiative concerned the “Employee Incentive and Retention Plans”, which included stock options, performance bonuses, and career development opportunities. These measures significantly increased employees’ work enthusiasm and loyalty. For example, during the development of the Pajingo Gold Mine, frontline employees demonstrated high levels of motivation, not only completing their tasks with quality and efficiency but also proposing several optimization solutions that greatly improved the mine’s gold production efficiency. As a result, the company’s overall performance improved significantly, and employee stability and satisfaction reached an all-time high. A fourth relevant HRM-related initiative concerned the “Global Human Resource Management Strategy” as the Human Resources Department faced cross-cultural management challenges when the company expanded in the international market, particularly with mining projects in Australia and Africa. To address these challenges, the company developed a global human resource management strategy, sending experienced

managers overseas while also recruiting local talent. They conducted two-way cultural training to combine localization with globalization. This management model not only enhanced the management efficiency of overseas projects but also promoted the stable development of the company's global business.

In April 2024, Yulong Co., Ltd. announced its 2023 annual performance. The company achieved revenue for 2023 was 2.424 billion yuan, a year-on-year decrease of 77.83%, while the net profit attributable to shareholders of 445.5 million yuan, representing a year-on-year growth of 52.9%.

The sharp decline in revenue was mainly due to the change from gross to net accounting for the trading business. The significant increase in net profit attributable to shareholders was primarily due to the company's acquisition of 100% equity in NQM at the end of 2021. By the end of 2022, NQM was officially included in the company's consolidated financial statements, and Yulong gained control over the Pajingo Gold Mine in eastern Australia, adding gold mining and processing to its business portfolio. With the surge in gold prices in 2023, the company's profits from its gold business increased substantially.

The Pajingo Gold Mine produced 91,500 ounces of gold (2.85 tons), marking the highest production in the past 15 years. The gold business has become the company's core focus: in 2023, Yulong's gold mining and processing business generated revenue of 1.26 billion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 772.98%, accounting for 52.01% of the company's total revenue.

In 2023, the company's gold mining business generated sales of 2.85 billion yuan, with a gross profit of 660 million yuan and a gross margin of 52.7%. The gold production cost per gram was 210 yuan, and the profit was 396 million yuan, accounting for 88.76% of the net profit for the period. The net profit per ton of gold was 140 million yuan, with cost control and profit levels being industry-leading.

In the first quarter of 2024, the average price of London spot gold was \$2,070 per ounce, equivalent to 472.7 yuan per gram, up 57 yuan per gram year-on-year, an increase of 13.5%. The company achieved revenue of 354 million yuan in the first quarter, up 6.1% year-on-year. Based on the average gold price and the company's gold segment revenue, it is estimated that the sales volume reached 0.75 tons. The company's gold business achieved a net profit of 131 million yuan in the first quarter of 2024, a year-on-year increase of 28%, with a net profit per ton of 175 million yuan. In the first quarter of 2024, the gold business contributed 354 million yuan, accounting for 93.2% of total revenue, with other business income continuing to shrink, and the trading business is expected to be fully divested. Assuming the average gold price reaches 520 yuan per gram in 2024 and the gold production reaches 3 tons, the gold business

is expected to generate a net profit of 630 million yuan. Considering the divestiture of the trading business and the expansion of the new energy mineral segment, this segment may incur a small loss, and the company is expected to achieve a net profit of approximately 590 million yuan.

This phase was characterized by Yulong Company's efforts in human resources management and how they effectively responded to the challenges at different development stages, directly driving the company's performance improvement. Through practices such as talent acquisition, skills retraining, cultural integration, employee incentives, and global management, Yulong Company seems to not only have successfully completed its industrial transformation but also established a strong market position in new fields. These practices highlight the critical role of human resources management in driving corporate success and long-term development. In summary, there is an increase in transformational leadership in the last phase compared to the previous phases. The same, for HRM.

[This page is deliberately left blank.]

Chapter 4: Method

4.1 Research design

Because this research is intended to extract meaning from a real case company that experienced transitions and made multiple decisions about its strategy, resource deployment and many other variables that are entailed in the complex organisational change processes, as depicted in W. W Burke and Litwin's (1992) model, an exploratory qualitative approach was found to be the most suitable to achieve this objective.

Organisations are intrinsically complex and such complexity is hardly captured by simple quantitative conceptual models that simplify the relationship between the many variables entailed in the making of organisational life as linear relationship. The qualitative approach to organisations acknowledged such complexity and dynamics in organisations that result from interdependent and often unpredictable events. By targeting authentic settings such as real organisations, as against conducting laboratory experimental research, the researcher can capture more meaningful insights about organisational phenomena (Aguinis et al., 2010). This is especially true when the researcher is targeting latent constructs such as beliefs, cultural values or other inferable dimensions that operate but are not readily visible (Yauch & Steudel, 2003).

Additionally, literature has been lacking a strong contextual foundation although context has been long theorized to be a critical factor in explaining organisational phenomena and also modeling how certain processes lead to certain outcomes, as a moderating factor. According to Birkinshaw et al. (2000) to conduct meaningful research, a deep understanding of organisational context is required, and qualitative research offers contextual clarity.

4.2 Data collection

Data was collected with in-depth interviews, which are suitable to gain a solid understanding of the personal experiences and meanings individuals attach to such experiences (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Specifically, we have opted for semi-structured interviews which allow us to follow the general outline of questions, but also to freely adjust or add questions that are

deemed to clarify or bring any subject of interest that was not planned (Adams, 2015).

To capture diverse perspectives on organizational evolution, a stratified random sampling approach was adopted, prioritizing two key dimensions: tenure-phase alignment and role-based stratification. Specifically, interviewees were randomly selected among categories of individuals according to the needs of the research. Because the research wanted to identify and understand events and subjective perceptions concerning the evolution of the organisation, we have opted to segment the target interviewees in groups according to the tenure in the organisation matching it with the phases of the organisation, and some opted not to participate. Also due to the need to include individuals holding diverse responsibilities in the organisation in the three periods, we have also segmented according to such roles, as detailed in the sample section below.

A list of potential employees was requested to the HR services, and based on this list, the researcher personally contacted each interviewee that was still working in the organisation to invite to participate while providing a clear description of the context and purpose of the interview (a preview of the informed consent). Additionally, for the former employees that were still relevant in the data collection process the researcher contacted by phone call or message with the same purpose and procedure. For those invitees that opted not to participate, the researcher thanked for the time and replaced this invitee with another of a similar profile. When invitees stated their agreement to participate, the researcher booked the interview considering also the conditions to best conduct the interviews.

Certain caveats were observed when planning the interviews (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Namely, at the beginning of the interview, the purpose of the interview was explained to the interviewees, and confidentiality of the content was guaranteed to eliminate concerns and encourage them to speak freely. Once the informed consent was given, the researcher started the questions. The pace of the interview was carefully controlled to avoid making the interview feel rushed or overly lengthy, with appropriate guidance provided. Likewise, alongside the cares taken to write the interview script, due to the flexible way in which the semi-structured interviews can develop, the researcher avoided leading or biased questions that could influence the interviewees' true thoughts. Also, as recommended by the authors, the researcher paid attention to non-verbal expressions (e.g., body language, facial expressions) to complement the verbal information provided. The interviews occurred from March 2023 to June 2023 and were planned to last about 60 minutes, and the place chosen varied according to the convenience of the interviewees, but all locations were judged as regards being quiet and comfortable locations to ensure interviewees felt relaxed and avoiding interruptions.

In the informed consent, it was explained that the interview is confidential but that for rigorous' sake it is usually advisable to record. Therefore, the interview was audio recorded and later transcribed for content analysis.

4.3 Sample

As stated, interviewees matched certain criteria used for being invited namely that they should integrate one of the following roles: HR Manager and HR deputy manager; Top manager; Senior and Junior Line Manager; or Employee. These roles consider current or former positions, as the full timeline of the organisation is being covered by the research.

A total of 70 individuals were interviewed covering the three periods of the organisation. The 11 top managers interviewed were distributed by the periods (Period 1=3, Period 2=4, Period 3=4), in the same manner that the 8 HR managers and HR deputy managers (P1=2; P2=3; P3=3), the 24 line managers (P1=7; P2=8; P3=9), and the 27 workers (P1=9; P2=8; P3=10).

As regards sociodemographic characteristics, the sample comprises 66% male interviewees, averaging 44.6 years-old (SD=6.9; ranging from 29 to 60 years-old). Table 4.1 shows the demographics.

Table 4.1 Demographics of the sample

Period	Period 1			Period 2			Period 3		
Interviewee type	Gender	Age	Education	Gender	Age	Education	Gender	Age	Education
top manager	male	57	bachelor degree	female	46	bachelor degree	female	37	master
	male	60	bachelor degree	female	44	bachelor degree	male	40	master
	female	59	bachelor degree	male	48	master	male	47	bachelor degree
line manager	-	-	-	male	44	bachelor degree	male	39	master
	male	47	college education	male	45	bachelor degree	female	37	master
	male	43	bachelor degree	male	42	bachelor degree	male	38	bachelor degree
	male	46	bachelor degree	male	42	bachelor degree	male	36	bachelor degree
	male	44	bachelor degree	female	43	college education	male	37	bachelor degree
	male	57	senior high school	male	44	bachelor degree	male	36	bachelor degree
	female	55	college education	male	47	bachelor degree	male	34	bachelor degree
	male	51	bachelor degree	male	45	bachelor degree	female	36	bachelor degree
	-	-	-	male	44	college education	female	52	college education
	-	-	-	-	-	-	male	48	bachelor degree
HR manager	female	55	bachelor degree	female	46	bachelor degree	female	38	bachelor degree
	female	51	bachelor degree	female	42	bachelor degree	male	41	bachelor degree
	-	-	-	female	55	bachelor degree	female	29	master
worker	male	47	college education	male	43	bachelor degree	female	35	bachelor degree
	male	53	bachelor degree	male	44	bachelor degree	female	37	bachelor degree
	male	51	bachelor degree	female	46	bachelor degree	male	40	bachelor degree
	male	49	college education	male	52	bachelor degree	male	38	bachelor degree
	male	48	senior high school	male	51	bachelor degree	female	37	bachelor degree
	male	44	college education	female	48	bachelor degree	female	40	bachelor degree
	male	51	bachelor degree	male	41	bachelor degree	female	34	bachelor degree
	male	57	college education	male	48	bachelor degree	female	38	bachelor degree
	male	49	college education	-	-	-	male	34	bachelor degree
	-	-	-	-	-	-	male	37	bachelor degree

4.4 Interview script

To align questions with the research objectives and interviewee roles, because not all questions were suitable to all interviewees, we have designed three types of interview script according to the status of the interviewee, which is strategic leaders (e.g., Directors), it focus on macro-level strategy and external dynamics, operational managers (e.g., Department Heads), it is bridges strategic intent and frontline execution, frontline staff (e.g., Project Executors), it is aims to surface ground-level cultural and procedural realities.

The questions used in the interview are mainly divided into 13 big blocks of detailed questions besides the necessary block of sociodemographic questions to depict the interviewee and understand the relationship with the company, such as the age, gender, and role. The 13 blocks of the questions are in the following in detail.

When did you start working in the company? Doing what?

Proposition: Organizational memory is shaped by pivotal events. Long-tenured members' narratives reveal how formal milestones intersect with informal turning points.

Question 1 - Since the beginning of your relationship with the company, how would you describe the history of the company and what were the main events that you retained in your memory? These main events can be the official ones but also some that occurred to you or your team and that made some difference in the way you work, feel, or relate.

External environment

Proposition: Leaders' strategic choices are constrained by market conditions. This question targets strategic leaders only.

Question 2 - How would you describe the external environment and market when you start working in this company? (for top managers)

Mission, strategy, vision, purpose

Proposition: Strategy implementation gaps arise when leadership vision diverges from frontline understanding.

For managers: Question 3a - What was the strategy and vision then? Can you depict it in a small sentence? Was it clear and guiding people or was it mostly in the mind of some people only?

For workers: Question 3b – What is the general goal of the company? What is it striving to achieve?

Leadership

Proposition: Leadership efficacy depends on contextually blending transformational, transactional, and paternalistic approaches.

Question 4 - How would you describe the predominant leadership style by then? How did typically managers behave (close versus distant, communicative versus silence, harsh vs. easy going, etc)?

Q4.1 – Transformational leadership: Did managers generally give direction about the work to subordinates? Did managers give people inspiration about the future? Were they incentivizing people to come forward and propose initiatives, give ideas, take risks? Did they talk much with direct subordinates and give feedback about how they were doing and what they could improve?

Q4.2 – Transactional leadership: Is it more about inspiring subordinated workers or is it more about fairly rewarding them according to everyone's performance? If both occur, which one prevails? (Always ask for examples at the end, if possible).

Q4.3 – Paternalistic leadership:

Q4.3.1 - Do you think leaders show a concern with each individual subordinated worker for his or her personal wellbeing? Or are leaders more aloof about this issue? Will subordinates describe their immediate manager as being benevolent and concerned about their well-being? If you would put it in a 0-10 scale, being 10 total benevolence, what number would you chose? (shi-en) (Always ask for examples if possible).

Q4.3.2 - Do you think leaders expect absolute obedience from subordinates? Or do they tolerate individual divergent ideas and autonomous decision? If someone does something differently from your expectation how much do you tolerate it? Can you put it in a 0-10 scale, being 10 total tolerance, what number would you chose? (li-wei) (Always ask for examples if possible).

Q4.3.3 - Do you think leaders strive to be an example of moral superiority? To be known as virtuous? If you put it in a 0-10 scale, being 10 absolutely virtuous, what number would you chose? (shu-der) (Always ask for examples if possible).

How to leaders react to a worker's low performance due to that worker's lack.

Organisational culture

Proposition: Culture manifests through shared values, risk tolerance, and hierarchy orientation

Question 5 – how would you describe the main work values shared by people (in that time)? How would you describe the organisational culture?

If the interviewee does not elaborate much, we then asked the following: How much are

rules orientation and hierarchy a defining feature of the organisational culture? How much is team orientation a defining feature of the organisational culture, intended to create cohesive work teams? How important was the market in determining the priorities of the company? Does this concern prevail over other considerations? What was the incentive to take risks, to innovate?

Management practices

Proposition: HPWS enhance productivity through selective hiring, autonomy, and feedback.

Question 6 – What were the main management practices as regards HR? We will focus here on HPWS practices.

To which extend do you think HR had the following practices implemented?

HPWS1 Offer stable and secure employment, and work contracts? Is it giving priority to work stability or to a rotating workforce?

HPWS2 When hiring new people, is the organisation putting a lot of effort in using high quality selection tests or just simple selection process for hiring?

HPWS3 How much is the organisation fostering autonomy in teams, trusting team to self-manage and make their own decisions without the need for superior control?

HPWS4 How much is the salary and incentives generous compared to other similar companies? Does it reflect one's own effort and performance?

HPWS5 How much is the organisation investing in training workers? Is the training extensive to everyone, and useful to develop skills to do the work better?

HPWS6 How much do supervisors/managers keep an open channel to communicate with workers? How much is there a culture of equal treatment and not a strong status distinction inside the organisation?

HPWS7 How much is the organisation giving everyone information about productivity indices, quality and financial performance?

HPWS8 How routine is performance feedback given to workers? Is it coming from one source only (e.g. direct supervisor) or it comes from more than one source? Is it accompanied with suggestions for improvement?

HPWS9 How much are there opportunities for promotion in the career? And are these promotion decisions more based on performance and merit or are they made on other criteria?

Structure

Proposition: Ambiguous structures create coordination costs.

Question 7 – How much do you think the organisational structure is complex and easy to

understand? How clear are departmental responsibilities defined or is there overlap? (differentiation-integration poles We can collect complementary information from documents and then we do the comparative analysis)

Systems (procedures & policies)

Proposition: MIS coherence enables adaptive policymaking.

Question 8 – How integrated is the information from the organisation into a single management information system (MIS) so that decision makers can know what is happening at each moment? Are policies and procedures revised according to the MIS indicators?

Organisational climate

Proposition: Organizational climate reflects shared affective evaluations of work environments. Adjectives chosen by employees reveal latent cultural dimensions that quantitative metrics may overlook.

Question 9 – Think about how people generally think and feel about the organisation. What adjectives do you believe they would normally use to characterize the experience of working in it (by then)?

Task requirements and ability skills

Proposition: Skill-task misfit reduces job satisfaction and productivity.

Question 10 – How much does / did you work match your skills? For phase 1 & 2: In case the match is not perfect, do you think by then it would made sense for the organisation to provide you with more training?

Individual needs and values

Proposition: Value incongruence predicts turnover intent. This question surfaces tensions between individual ethics and enacted cultural norms.

Question 11 – How much do you think the organisational culture values are in line with your own personal values about how work should be done and how people should relate at work?

Motivation

Proposition: Motivation stems from value alignment and growth.

Question 12 – What makes you feel more motivated in this organisation and what makes you feel less motivated also? In a scale 0 to 10, being 10 the top maximum possible, how much would you rate your motivation (by then)?

Performance (individual and organisational)

Q13.1 - How would you rate the company's performance compared to the average company in the same sector?

Q13.2 - How would you rate yourself as regards your job performance compared to the average worker in this company?

Table 4.2 shows the summary of these questions.

Table 4.2 Distribution of interviewees per category, period and dimension inquired

Dimension		Top managers n=11 n=3(P1)/n=4(P2)/n =4(P3)	HR manager n=8 n=2(P1)/n=3(P2)/n =3(P3)	Line managers n=24 n=7(P1)/n=8(P2)/ n=9(P3)	Workers n=27 n=9(P1)/n=8(P2)/n =10(P3)	Summation n=70 n=21(P1)/n=23(P2)/n =26(P3)
Main events (narrative)	Q1	3(P1)/4(P2)/4(P3)	2(P1)/3(P2)/3(P3)	7(P1)/8(P2)/9(P3)	9(P1)/8(P2)/10(P3)	21(P1)/23(P2)/26(P3)
External environment	Q2	3(P1)/4(P2)/4(P3)		7(P1)/8(P2)/9(P3)		10(P1)/12(P2)/13(P3)
Mission, strategy, vision, purpose	Q3a	3(P1)/4(P2)/4(P3)	2(P1)/3(P2)/3(P3)	7(P1)/8(P2)/9(P3)	9(P1)/8(P2)/10(P3)	21(P1)/23(P2)/26(P3)
Leadership	Q4	3(P1)/4(P2)/4(P3)	2(P1)/3(P2)/3(P3)	7(P1)/8(P2)/9(P3)	9(P1)/8(P2)/10(P3)	21(P1)/23(P2)/26(P3)
Organisational culture	Q5	3(P1)/4(P2)/4(P3)	2(P1)/3(P2)/3(P3)	7(P1)/8(P2)/9(P3)	9(P1)/8(P2)/10(P3)	21(P1)/23(P2)/26(P3)
Management practices	Q6		2(P1)/3(P2)/3(P3)		9(P1)/8(P2)/10(P3)	11(P1)/11(P2)/13(P3)
Structure	Q7			7(P1)/8(P2)/9(P3)		7(P1)/8(P2)/9(P3)
Systems (procedures & policies)	Q8			7(P1)/8(P2)/9(P3)		7(P1)/8(P2)/9(P3)
Organisational climate	Q9			7(P1)/8(P2)/9(P3)	9(P1)/8(P2)/10(P3)	16(P1)/16(P2)/19(P3)
Task requirements & ability skills	Q10			7(P1)/8(P2)/9(P3)	9(P1)/8(P2)/10(P3)	16(P1)/16(P2)/19(P3)
Individual needs and values	Q11	3(P1)/4(P2)/4(P3)	2(P1)/3(P2)/3(P3)	7(P1)/8(P2)/9(P3)		12(P1)/15(P2)/16(P3)
Motivation	Q12	3(P1)/4(P2)/4(P3)	2(P1)/3(P2)/3(P3)	7(P1)/8(P2)/9(P3)	9(P1)/8(P2)/10(P3)	21(P1)/23(P2)/26(P3)
Performance (individual & org.)	Q13.1	3(P1)/4(P2)/4(P3)		7(P1)/8(P2)/9(P3)	9(P1)/8(P2)/10(P3)	19(P1)/20(P2)/23(P3)

Note: P = Period, n = Number of interviewees

A small sample of pilot interviews was used to check the clarity and comprehensiveness of the scripts. Two top managers, two HR managers, three department line managers, and four non-managerial workers were include in this pilot interview phase. One thing to be noted that, because the original interview scripts were in English, we first translated the scripts from English to Chinese, and after finishing all the pilot interviews, all the answers were recorded and translated from Chinese to English again. Finally, we got the following information data from the pilot interview. The detailed information data can be seen in the annex 1.

After checking these interviewing data information, some inappropriate and invalid answers were found which made us refine some questions.

4.5 Data analysis

The case study method is widely recognised in many social science studies especially when in-depth explanations of a social behaviour are sought after (Ellinger et al., 2005). In the case study method, the study design is flexible, data gathering and analyses are largely determined by the subject matter, and specific procedures are decided upon while the study progresses (Rowley, 2002).

Because content analysis is intended to produce inferences based on the contents of messages that should be replicable (Krippendorff, 2019) we have opted to use both codes from the literature review and accept new ones based on emerging meanings that are not captured by such existing codes. This author names the first type of code as a priori and the second one as a posteriori. Therefore, we have opted for a mixed approach which we believe offers the most robust features of both a priori and a posteriori coding, as it builds upon established categories form literature but does not lack the flexibility to reflect the precise new meanings that can stem from the situation under analysis.

Codes are hierarchically ordered, with larger scope codes comprehending others that express meanings entailed. Therefore, we differentiated between dimensions (the largest possible codes), that comprehend categories (smaller qualitative units of meaning) that comprehend subcategories (even more specific units of meaning that are directly related to the respective category). In producing categories and subcategories, we gave predominance to the meanings even when they were conveyed by different wording. Words per se were interpreted based on the paragraph as their polysemy nature can be misleading.

Coding follows a thematic content analysis (Neuendorf, 2018) where some codes originate from literature, i.e. they are created a priori, such as those from W. W. Burke and

Litwin (1992) model, from AMO framework (Jiang et al., 2012) or from leadership theories with a focus on transformational leadership (Bass, 1999). As a good practice, there is always the possibility that new categories emerge and, therefore, coding also considers the possibility of novel codes that are defined a posteriori.

As commonly recommended in qualitative research methods literature, content analysis is not conducted with the support of computer software so to mitigate the errors made due to the high cognitive processing demands and need to keep memory the existing and possible novel categories. The semantic analysis is entirely subjective and benefits from grasping the entirety of the category map. Therefore, advanced programs such as MaxQDA are available and effective in helping researchers conducting this sort of analysis. This software has built-in capacities that are designed to support the coder with all the semantics and decisions involved. MaxQDA produces trees and maps and graphically shows frequencies for the codes while also allowing to easily reach the text excerpts that serve as the grounds to extract each code. Additionally, the software summarizes findings by relating categories to excerpts which allows the researcher to iterate between all information to progressively refine categories, subcategories and coding decisions.

Chapter 5: Results

Due to the focus of the research on the evolution of the case organisation, it is clearer to show results in such a way that one is able to chronologically follow such changes. For each period, details on findings are shown in sections, pertaining to the leading research questions: How important are transformational leadership and HRM practices in the transition from private-owned to state-owned radical organizational change? How do transformational leadership and human resource management evolve during the transition from private ownership to state-owned ownership? These questions match W. W. Burke and Litwin (1992) main organisational change drivers and features. For each of these leading questions, the chapter will show categories' frequency and the number of interviewees that named such categories, alongside with illustrative text excerpts that allow a clear understanding of each category. A table that offers a comprehensive view of all categories, content and frequencies is included at the end of each section for the first period. For readability and clarity's sake, all frequencies tables for periods 2 and 3 are shown in appendix.

5.1 The first period: Traditional industry

5.1.1 How was the external environment of YG in period 1?

The external environment is characterized by two dimensions: market dynamism and market prosperity. Market dynamism comprehends categories targeting the international conditions (international trade policies, geopolitical situation, the volatile international oil market, the global energy structure changes) but also national market conditions (saturation of oil market and national market competition) as well as national policies (sustainable development and environmental protection pressure). Market prosperity comprehends categories targeting favorable conditions for the business namely the development of China's economy and the consequent in demand for energy, the technological development with the implications for generating more and of higher quality products, and the industrial climate related to uncertainty.

As regards the market dynamism, participants mostly stressed that the market was under pressure from governmental regulation shifting towards sustainable development and

environmental protection (F=7, N=6) and that there was a fierce marketing competition (F=6, N=5).

“at that time, the government's concern for environmental protection and sustainable development was growing.” (I15-P1)

“At that time, the company was facing fierce competition from both domestic and foreign markets, and in order to enhance the competitiveness of our products, we invested a lot of resources in technological research and development.” (I9-P1)

The international context was mentioned to a lesser extent with three categories and was characterized by its volatility (F=3, N=3), international trade policies (F=3, N=3) and geopolitical situation (F=2, N=2) as driving forces for managerial decision.

“factors such as international trade policies and geopolitical situations may also have had an impact on the company's development.” (I13-P1)

“the international oil market was volatile and price fluctuations are high. This means changes in supply and demand for the oil drilling pipes that the company produces and sells.” (I13-P1)

As regards market prosperity, participants strongly acknowledged the surge in demand for energy in China (F=11, N=10) together with the technological innovation and digitalisation trends (F=4, N=3) which one participant named as the “golden period” for oil drilling industry (I1-P1).

“At that time, the global oil market was in its golden age, with frequent drilling activities and a strong demand for drilling pipes.” (I21-P1)

“I personally experienced a certain upgrade of the company's oil drilling pipe production line. In order to meet the increasingly strict quality requirements, we introduced advanced production equipment and processes to improve production efficiency and quality level. This upgrade not only improved the competitiveness of our products, but also made me realise the importance of continuous improvement and innovation for the development of the company.” (I4-P1)

Overall, reports on this period characterize the external environment as being one of strong market dynamism with growth but also pressures for environmental protection and higher quality demand. The period can be labeled following one interviewee as the “Golden Era for oil drilling”

See Table 5.1 for details.

Table 5.1 Frequencies for external environment period 1

		Period 1 External environment (N max = 10)		
Category	Subcategory	Excerpt	Freq.	N
Market dynamism	International trade policies	“factors such as international trade policies and geopolitical situations may also have had an impact on the company's development. Frontline managers should always pay attention to changes in the international situation and rationally adjust product pricing, market layout and supply chain management strategies according to the situation in order to cope with the risks and opportunities that may arise under different circumstances. (I19-P1)	3	3
	Geopolitical situations	“factors such as international trade policies and geopolitical situations may also have had an impact on the company's development.” (I13-P1)	2	2
	Sustainable development and environmental protection pressure	“at that time, the government's concern for environmental protection and sustainable development was growing.” (I15-P1)	7	6
	The volatile international oil market	“the international oil market was volatile and price fluctuations were high. This means changes in supply and demand for the oil drilling pipes that the company produces and sells.” (I13-P1)	3	3
	Fierce market competition	“At that time, the company was facing fierce competition from both domestic and foreign markets, and in order to enhance the competitiveness of our products, we invested a lot of resources in technological research and development.” (I9-P1)	7	5
	Saturation of oil market	“With the adjustment of global energy structure and saturation of domestic oil market, the company faced unprecedented challenges.” (I11-P1)	2	2
	The adjustment of global energy structure	“With the adjustment of global energy structure and saturation of domestic oil market, the company faced unprecedented challenges.” (I11-P1)	2	2
	The demand for energy surged	“At that time, the global oil market was in its golden age, with frequent drilling activities and a strong demand for drilling pipes.” (I21-P1)	11	10
	Uncertainty of the market	“Oil is not only a booster of domestic development, but also plays an important role in the international arena. The shifting winds of international trade, the fine-tuning of policies, and the ups and downs of international market sentiment are all like a climactic drama, and finding a balance in the middle of it all is sometimes more like a dancer's leap on a tightrope. But it is these uncertainties and possibilities that brought unprecedented excitement and vigour to the industry.” (I2-P1)	2	2
	The rapid	“During that period, with the rapid development of	1	1
Market proeperity				

development of China's economy	China's economy, the demand for energy surged, and the oil drilling industry had a golden period.” (I1-P1)		
Technological innovation and digitalisation trends	“I personally experienced a certain upgrade of the company's oil drilling pipe production line. In order to meet the increasingly strict quality requirements, we introduced advanced production equipment and processes to improve production efficiency and quality level. This upgrade not only improved the competitiveness of our products, but also made me realise the importance of continuous improvement and innovation for the development of the company.” (I4-P1)	4	3
Strong production capacity and high quality products	“The company's products were in short supply in the market and its performance grew steadily. The success of this phase was mainly due to the strong market demand for oil drilling pipes, as well as the company's strong production capacity and high quality products.” (I1-P1)	1	1

5.1.2 What sort of leadership style was predominant? How much was transformational leadership felt in the company?

Predominant leadership style is characterized with three categories: transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and paternalistic leadership. Transformational leadership comprehends the dimensions as subcategories that were identified in the literature review (inspirational motivation, idealized influence, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation) and the same occurs for transactional (management by exception, contingent rewards) and paternalistic (ethical, compassionate and, authoritative behaviours).

The prevailing leadership style was definitely the transformational one. Among the subcategories the first four in terms of frequency are exactly the four dimensions that are comprehended in the transformational leadership style. Among these, individualized consideration is the most outstanding (F=66, N=20), followed by intellectual stimulation (F=47, N=20), inspirational motivation (F=26, N=17) and idealized influence (F=22, N=17).

“As for whether or not they have a lot of conversations with their direct reports, giving them feedback on the way they work and on improving the quality of their work, this was even more an important part of the daily work of our company's managers. They needed to know how each team member was doing, identify and solve problems in a timely manner, and at the same time provide them with the necessary training and support to help them do their jobs better.” (I4-P1)

“my leader paid a lot of attention to the opinions and suggestions of his employees. He encouraged us to come up with our own ideas and suggestions in our work and would listen to

us carefully and make adjustments. This open and inclusive atmosphere made us feel very comfortable and at ease, and made us more willing to contribute to the development of the company.” (I8-P1)

“Managers not only provided technical guidance to their teams, but also gave them inspiration about the future, so they usually provided work guidance to their subordinates. (I16-P1)

“I remember once we encountered some technical problems in the drilling process. In order to solve this problem, our leaders personally led the technical team to tackle the problem. They were busy with various affairs during the day and worked overtime at night to study the technical data. Under their leadership, we also actively participated in it and discussed the solution together. In the end, we succeeded in overcoming this technical problem, which not only improved the working efficiency, but also enhanced the technical level of the whole team.” (I7-P1)

Transactional leadership is the least mentioned with contingent rewards being the only subcategory mentioned (F=21, N=15) and it is interesting that management by exception was never mentioned.

“there were leaders who may prefer to maintain a certain distance. They may be more focused on the division of responsibilities and performance appraisals, as well as paying more attention to results.” (I18-P1)

Within the paternalistic leadership style, it is the authoritative behaviours that deserve more mentioning (F=16, N=11) together with ethical leadership (F=12, N=9)

“there were leaders who underperform in ethical behaviour. They may seek short-term gain or power above all else, ignoring basic principles such as fairness and integrity.” (I2-P1)

“Some leaders would have a strong focus on their own ethical codes and moral standards and would want to lead by example and be a role model for others to follow.” (I17-P1) 12

Overall, there is a strong acknowledgement that the prevailing leadership style in this period was the transformational with stronger emphasis on individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation, albeit there was also a recognition that contingent rewards were used (from transactional style) and authoritative and ethical leadership were also observed in the company.

5.1.3 How were mission, strategy and organisational culture characterized?

Mission, strategy and organisational culture comprehends the same number of categories with

the exact naming. Strategy is characterized by five subcategories (referring to business strategy as market expansion and consolidation through customer satisfaction enhancement; to development strategy as technological innovation and skills training, and to product strategy as higher quality and performance of drilling pipes). Mission is characterized by two subcategories (industry leadership positioning, and sustainable development). Finally, culture is characterized by eight subcategories that express values that stress market and goal orientation (expressed as growth-oriented, the pursuit of excellence, and profit oriented), but also community orientation (expressed as team orientation and guided by ideals such as collectivism and honor), together with innovation orientation, but also rule-orientation. Lastly, a subcategory that highlights integrity and responsibility as a shared set of beliefs about the goodness of honesty, trustworthiness and commitment.

As regards culture, the prevailing idea highlights team orientation (F=14, N=13) that together with collectivism ideals (F=6, N=6) compose the social or community orientation that is the overarching more mentioned culture. The second strongest subcategory highlight goal orientation as expressed by profit orientation (F=8, N=7) and growth orientation (F=6, N=6). Lastly, the two complementary cultural orientations of innovation (F=6, N=6) and rules (F=5, N=5) show in a balanced way.

“A team-oriented organisational culture, on the other hand, encouraged cooperation and sharing among employees to work together towards the organisation's goals.” (I8-P1)

“In terms of organisational culture, collectivism as the core was the common value at that time, which was further strengthened at the organisational level. The organisation encouraged employees to care for and help each other, creating a positive working climate. At the same time, emphasis was placed on collective honour and recognition of outstanding individuals and teams were used to motivate staff to develop and achieve more.”(I18-P1)

“in the oil pipeline business, innovation and risk-taking were guided by a combination of profits and ideals. On the one hand, oil pipeline companies needed to ensure that profits were maximised and remained competitive by providing high quality and efficient services.” (I21-P1)

“Equal emphasis was also placed on employee welfare, equality and teamwork. They focused on the quality of life of employees, family balance and providing a safe environment. This organisational culture was based on employee satisfaction and loyalty, and creates an intimate, relaxed yet purposeful and orderly environment. In the case of an educational organisation, for example, we promoted the sharing of knowledge and resources and focused on teamwork to achieve social responsibility.” (I19-P1)

“in the oil pipeline business, innovation and risk-taking were guided by a combination of profits and ideals. ...On the other hand, as concepts such as environmental protection and sustainable development continued to gain attention, firms also need to actively promote technological innovation to meet society's call for clean energy needs. Therefore, oil pipeline companies needed to find a balance between profits and ideals in order to pursue sustainable development.” (I21-P1)

“maintaining order was also an important value emphasised in this culture. People valued rules, regulations and work processes and ensure order and stability in the work environment by following these rules. They valued time, commute to and from work and complete tasks on time, ensuring that the work process is well organised.” (I17-P1)

As regards the mission, the two subcategories of becoming the industry leader, and promoting sustainable development, are reported in equivalent frequency among the participants. Becoming an industry leader (F=6, N=6) and promoting sustainable development (F=6, N=6) are then equally important.

“The company's strategy and vision aimed to be a global leader in the oil drill pipe industry through innovative technology and operational excellence.” (I18-P1)

“Our vision was to build a sustainable business, expand our markets globally, and work with our partners to build a more prosperous, greener and cleaner future.” (I15-P1)

As regards the strategy, participants highlighted two of the subcategories: high quality and performance of products (F=13, N=14) and technological innovation (F=9, N=7).

“to deliver superior products and services to customers and to achieve sustainable business growth.” (I10-P1)

“The company's strategy and vision aimed to be a global leader in the oil drill pipe industry through innovative technology and operational excellence.” (I18-P1)

Overall, the organisational culture that characterizes this period is mostly represented by a community social orientation followed by goal orientation with a balance between rules and innovation felt to a lesser extent, that are somewhat in line with the mission of becoming a global leader through innovation and contributing to sustainable development. This fits the strategy of delivering high quality products and betting in innovative technologies.

See Table 5.2 and Table 5.3 for details.

Table 5.2 Frequencies for leadership period 1

Category	Subcategory	Period 1 Leadership (M max =21)	Freq	N
		Excerpt		
Transformation leadership	inspirational motivation	“Managers not only provided technical guidance to their teams, but also gave them inspiration about the future, so they usually provided work guidance to their subordinates. (I16-P1)	26	17
	idealized influence	“I remember once we encountered some technical problems in the drilling process. In order to solve this problem, our leaders personally led the technical team to tackle the problem. They were busy with various affairs during the day and worked overtime at night to study the technical data. Under their leadership, we also actively participated in it and discussed the solution together. In the end, we succeeded in overcoming this technical problem, which not only improved the working efficiency, but also enhanced the technical level of the whole team.” (I7-P1)	22	17
	individualized consideration	“As for whether or not they have a lot of conversations with their direct reports, giving them feedback on the way they work and on improving the quality of their work, this was even more an important part of the daily work of our company's managers. They needed to know how each team member was doing, identify and solve problems in a timely manner, and at the same time provide them with the necessary training and support to help them do their jobs better. “(I4-P1)	66	20
	intellectual stimulation	“my leader paid a lot of attention to the opinions and suggestions of his employees. He encouraged us to come up with our own ideas and suggestions in our work and would listen to us carefully and make adjustments. This open and inclusive atmosphere made us feel very comfortable and at ease, and made us more willing to contribute to the development of the company.” (I8-P1)	47	20
	Manag by exception	-	0	0
Transactional leadership	passive	-	0	0
	active	-	0	0
Paternalistic leadership	contingent rewards	“there were leaders who may prefer to maintain a certain distance. They may be more focused on the division of responsibilities and performance appraisals, as well as paying more attention to results.” (I18-P1)	21	15
	ethical leadership	“Some leaders would have a strong focus on their own ethical codes and moral standards and would want to lead by example and be a role model for others to follow.” (I17-P1)	12	9
	compassionate leadership	-	0	0
	authoritative leadership	“there were leaders who underperform in ethical behaviour. They may seek short-term gain or power above all else, ignoring basic principles such as fairness and integrity. “(I2-P1)	16	11

Table 5.3 Frequencies for mission, strategy and culture period 1

Period 1 Mission, Strategy, Culture (N Max= 21)				
Category	Subcategory	Excerpt	Freq.	N
Culture	growth-oriented	“Equal emphasis was also placed on employee welfare, equality and teamwork. They focused on the quality of life of employees, family balance and providing a safe environment. This organisational culture was based on employee satisfaction and loyalty, and creates an intimate, relaxed yet purposeful and orderly environment. In the case of an educational organisation, for example, we promoted the sharing of knowledge and resources and focused on teamwork to achieve social responsibility.” (I19-P1)	6	4
	the pursuit of excellence	“As a company specialising in the oil drilling pipe sector, we were here for excellence and were committed to providing our customers with the highest quality products and services.” (I6-P1)	3	3
	integrity and responsibility	“integrity and responsibility were the cornerstones of this organisation. Employees firmly believe that only through honesty, trustworthiness and commitment could they win the trust and respect of their colleagues and customers.” (I3-P1)	2	2
	innovation	“in the oil pipeline business, innovation and risk-taking were guided by a combination of profits and ideals. ...On the other hand, as concepts such as environmental protection and sustainable development continued to gain attention, firms also need to actively promote technological innovation to meet society's call for clean energy needs. Therefore, oil pipeline companies needed to find a balance between profits and ideals in order to pursue sustainable development. “(I21-P1)	6	6
	team orientation	“A team-oriented organisational culture, on the other hand, encouraged cooperation and sharing among employees to work together towards the organisation's goals. “(I8-P1)	14	13
	Profit oriented	“in the oil pipeline business, innovation and risk-taking were guided by a combination of profits and ideals. On the one hand, oil pipeline companies needed to ensure that profits were maximised and remained competitive by providing high quality and efficient services. “ (I21-P1)	8	7
	Guided by ideals	“In terms of organisational culture, collectivism as the core was the common value at that time, which was further strengthened at the organisational level. The organisation encouraged employees to care for and help each other, creating a positive working climate. At the same time, emphasis was placed on collective honour and recognition of outstanding individuals and teams were used to motivate staff to develop and achieve more.”(I18-P1)	6	6
	rule-orientation	“maintaining order was also an important value emphasised in this culture. People valued rules, regulations and work processes and ensured order and stability in the work environment by following these	5	5

		rules. They valued time, commute to and from work and complete tasks on time, ensuring that the work process was well organised. “(I17-P1)		
Strategy	market expansion	“The overall goal of our company included technological innovation, product quality assurance, market expansion, and customer satisfaction enhancement.” (I7-P1)	4	4
	skills training and team building	“This not only required us to stay at the forefront of technology, production, and management, but also to focus on environmental protection, employee welfare, and social responsibility, and to work with all parties to promote sustainable development.” (I15-P1)	2	2
	customer satisfaction enhancement	“The overall goal of our company included technological innovation, product quality assurance, market expansion, and customer satisfaction enhancement.” (I7-P1)	2	2
	technological innovation	“The company's strategy and vision aimed to be a global leader in the oil drill pipe industry through innovative technology and operational excellence.” (I18-P1)	9	7
	high quality and performance of drilling pipes	“to deliver superior products and services to customers and to achieve sustainable business growth.” (I10-P1)	13	14
Mission	the industry leader	“The company's strategy and vision aimed to be a global leader in the oil drill pipe industry through innovative technology and operational excellence.” (I18-P1)	6	6
	sustainable development	“Our vision was to build a sustainable business, expand our markets globally, and work with our partners to build a more prosperous, greener and cleaner future.” (I15-P1)	6	6

5.1.4 What management practices, namely HRM, were predominant? / How much were HPWS used in the organisation? (AMO)

Predominant management practices comprehend three categories, namely control (implies monitoring and correcting deviations), structuring work & allocating HR resources (that entails seven subcategories: compensation and incentives, information sharing and performance feedback, training and development, team autonomy and self-management, recruitment & selection, job stability and shift systems, employment stability and work contracts), and Plan, budgeting, and goal setting (that entails budgeting, bonus scheme, training programmes and promotion mechanisms and within goal setting the intention to provide oil drilling solutions together with achieving sustainable business growth).

The most frequently mentioned category is training and development (F=19, N=10) followed by an emphasis on high quality recruitment and selection (F=11, N=10), and closely by information sharing and performance feedback (F=10, N=10) tied with fostering team autonomy (F=10, N=10) and employment and work contracts stability (F=10, N=10). This is

patently the most predominant view on managerial practices as no mention was made as to the control and monitoring and also a relatively weaker presence is observed for plan, budgeting and goals setting, with the highest frequency observed precisely for planning regarding investment in training and upskilling employees.

“Companies should provide their employees with extensive and targeted training programmes to help them develop their skills and improve their productivity. This investment not only helps to increase employee satisfaction and loyalty, but also creates long-term value for the company.” (I9-P1)

“Supervisors and managers maintain open lines of communication with their employees in order to resolve issues and share information in a timely manner. This helps build trust and good working relationships, as well as employee satisfaction and productivity....With regard to information sharing, companies should provide employees with comprehensive information on production targets, quality and financial performance. This helps employees to understand the overall state of the company and their own contribution, thus increasing their sense of responsibility and participation.” (I9-P1)

“When recruiting new people, companies should place emphasis on high-quality selection tests to ensure that they are recruiting the most suitable candidate for the role. This should not only include a skills assessment, but should also cover considerations such as personality, potential and cultural fit. A comprehensive recruitment process will help improve overall team effectiveness.” (I9-P1)

“Team autonomy and self-management: ...By trusting teams and empowering them to make decisions, employees can be motivated and innovative.” (I4-P1)

“In my personal experience, ...They establish work contracts with employees to ensure that they have legal rights and interests and provide a stable working environment for them.” (I2-P1)

See Table 5.4 for details.

Table 5.4 Frequency descriptives for management & HRM (period 1)

Period 1 Management & HRM (N Max=11)				
Category	Subcategory	Excerpt	Freq.	N
Monitor, control, correct	Monitor, control, correct	-	0	0
Structuring work & allocating resources	compensation and incentives	“Compensation and incentives: The company's compensation and incentives should be competitive compared to similar companies. This is not only reflected in the basic salary, but also includes various bonuses,	8	8

	benefits and career advancement opportunities. “(I3-P1)		
information sharing and performance feedback	“Supervisors and managers maintain open lines of communication with their employees in order to resolve issues and share information in a timely manner. This helps build trust and good working relationships, as well as employee satisfaction and productivity....With regard to information sharing, companies should provide employees with comprehensive information on production targets, quality and financial performance. This helps employees to understand the overall state of the company and their own contribution, thus increasing their sense of responsibility and participation.”(I9-P1)	10	10
training and development	“ Companies should provide their employees with extensive and targeted training programmes to help them develop their skills and improve their productivity. This investment not only helps to increase employee satisfaction and loyalty, but also creates long-term value for the company. “(I9-P1)	19	10
team autonomy and self-management	“Team autonomy and self-management: ...By trusting teams and empowering them to make decisions, employees can be motivated and innovative. “(I4-P1)	10	10
recruitment & selection	“When recruiting new people, companies should place emphasis on high-quality selection tests to ensure that they are recruiting the most suitable candidate for the role. This should not only include a skills assessment, but should also cover considerations such as personality, potential and cultural fit. A comprehensive recruitment process will help improve overall team effectiveness. “(I9-P1)	11	10
job stability and shift systems	“Job stability and shifts: this depends on the specific needs of the enterprise and the expectations of the employees. Our industry may require shift work due to safety concerns to ensure 24-hour service or production continuity.”(I3-P1)	7	7
employment stability and work contracts	“In my personal experience (...) they established work contracts with employees to ensure that they had	10	10

			legal rights and interests and provide a stable working environment for them. “(I2-P1)		
Plan, budgeting, goal settinge		budgeting plan	-	0	0
		bonus scheme	“we had a bonus scheme that evaluated the performance of our employees based on the exceptional skills they have demonstrated on projects and the high level of qualification they have demonstrated in the execution of safety. In this way, oil drilling tubes that excel, lead their teams to achieve their goals and ensure safety are given additional bonuses to encourage them to continue to excel. “(I14-P1)	1	1
		training programm es and promotion mechanis ms	“There is also the strengthening of staff training and development programmes: to improve the professionalism and skill levels of its staff, the company continued to invest in the training and development of its junior staff and frontline managers, so that they could better adapt to the changes in the industry and the demands of the market. “(I13-P1)	3	3
	goal settinge	provide oil drilling solutions	“For this company, the overarching goal was undoubtedly to provide its customers with the safest and most efficient oil drilling solutions...”(I3-P1)	1	1
		achieve sustainabl e business growth	“For this company, the overarching goal was undoubtedly to (...) achieve sustainable business growth in the process. “(I3-P1)	1	1

5.1.5 What behavioural outcomes were experienced? (unit climate, motivation, abilities)

Behavioural outcomes were conceived based on the AMO framework comprehending the logically ascribed HPWS activities. Namely, Ability comprehends three subcategories (comprehensive Recruitment, rigorous Selection, and extensive training), while motivation comprehends six subcategories (Recognition, Job security, Promotion and career development, Extensive benefits, Competitive compensation, incentives and rewards, and Developmental performance management). Lastly, opportunity comprehends four subcategories (Flexible work design, Work teams, Employee involvement, and Information sharing).

In the AMO model, motivation was more referred to by interviewees (F=74, six categories) followed by Ability (F=11, three categories) and lastly, Opportunity (F=10, four categories). Within motivation, the most frequently mentioned subcategory was “developmental performance management” (F=19, N=15), closely followed by

“compensation, incentives, and rewards” (F=19, N=13). With almost equivalent presence, “Promotion and career development” (F=18, N=15) also emerged.

“the company has set up a comprehensive appraisal system that takes into account employees' base salary and benefits, as well as setting bonuses and promotion opportunities based on their performance.”(I7-P1)

“Recruitment Process and Selection Criteria: Recruitment process involves multiple rounds of interviews, skills tests and psychological assessments to ensure that the most suitable talent is selected.”(I4-P1)

“Supervisors and managers maintained open lines of communication with their employees in order to resolve issues and share information in a timely manner. This helps build trust and good working relationships, as well as employee satisfaction and productivity (...). Routine performance feedback was an important means of driving employee improvement and development.”(I9-P1)

As regards ability, the most mentioned category is “Extensive training” (F=5, N=3) followed by “Comprehensive recruitment” (F=4, N=4) and only marginally, “Rigorous selection” (F=2, N=2).

“In terms of investment in training, our company spends significant financial resources and effort to provide a wide range of training opportunities. This includes skills training, career development programmes, etc.,...”(I2-P1)

Lastly, from the opportunity a priori four categories, only one was mentioned by interviewees: Information sharing (F=10, N=10) which means there was not a single instance where “Flexible work design”, “Work teams” or “Employee involvement” were mentioned.

“Supervisors and managers maintained open lines of communication with their employees in order to resolve issues and share information in a timely manner. This helped build trust and good working relationships, as well as employee satisfaction and productivity (...). Routine performance feedback was an important means of driving employee improvement and development.” (I9-P1)

See Table 5.5 for details.

Table 5.5 Frequency descriptives for behavioural outcomes (period 1)

Period 1 Behavioural outcomes (N Max=varies according to category)					
Category	Subcategory	Excerpt	Freq.	N	
Ability enhancement	Recruitment	“Recruitment Process and Selection Criteria: Recruitment process involves multiple rounds of interviews, skills tests and psychological assessments to ensure that the most suitable talent is selected.”(I4-P1)	4	4/16	
	(Comprehensive)				

Motivation enhancement	Selection (Rigorous)	“Quality selection testing is an integral process when it comes to hiring new employees. Companies invest a great deal of effort in ensuring that they recruit candidates who meet their requirements and fit into their organisation's culture.”(I2-P1)	2	2/16
	Training (Extensive)	“In terms of investment in training, our company spends significant financial resources and effort to provide a wide range of training opportunities. This includes skills training, career development programmes, etc., ...”(I2-P1)	5	3/16
	Recognition	“When I had the opportunity to participate in the development and production of these new technologies and products, I felt great satisfaction and motivation. For example, when our team succeeded in developing a new material for oil drilling pipes that could effectively improve drilling efficiency and reduce environmental pollution, the sense of achievement and motivation was hard to express in words. “(I3-P1)	7	7/21
	Job security	“In my personal experience (...) they established work contracts with employees to ensure that they had legal rights and interests and provide a stable working environment for them.”(I2-P1)	1	1/21
	Promotion and career development	“...the company also motivated employees by providing training, promotion opportunities and other non-material rewards to enhance their professional ability and career development space.”(I5-P1)	18	15/21
	Extensive benefits	“In our company, ...Depending on the project and the difference between peak and off-peak seasons, we may organise various team building activities, set up bonus schemes, provide career development opportunities, etc. to encourage employees to actively engage in their work and improve the cohesion of the whole team.... we may give outstanding performers more promotion opportunities, salary increases or equity awards.” (I19-P1)	11	11/21
	Competitive compensation, incentives and rewards	“Companies motivate their employees so that they are motivated to get the job done and be more productive, as well as attract and retain good employees. Motivation comes in many forms, such as offering competitive salaries and benefits, setting up a bonus system, and providing development opportunities for employees. “(I7-P1)	19	13/21
	Developmental performance management	“companies usually reward employees fairly based on their day-to-day performance, abilities and contributions. These rewards may include promotions, pay rises, bonuses or other forms of recognition. For example, companies select	19	15/21

		“top performers” based on project contributions, technical proficiency and innovation, and award them with honours and rewards. This practice both motivates employees to continue working hard and ensures that rewards are fair.” (I10-P1)		
Opportun	Flexible work	-	0	0/16
ity	design			
	Work teams	-	0	0/16
enhancem	Employee	-	0	0/16
ent	involvement			
	Information	“Supervisors and managers maintained open lines of communication with their employees in order to resolve issues and share information in a timely manner. This helps build trust and good working relationships, as well as employee satisfaction and productivity (...). Routine performance feedback was an important means of driving employee improvement and development.”(I9-P1)	10	10/16
	sharing			

5.1.6 How is the performance of people and the company?

Performance has been categorized differentiating the organisation from the individual levels. As regards organisational performance, the most mentioned subcategory is “innovation” (F=7, N=7), followed by “profitability and financial stability” (F=4, N=4), and “high market share” (F=3, N=3). Individual level performance is barely mentioned with only once occurrence for each subcategory to the exception of “improve knowledge and skills” which was mentioned twice (F=2, N=2).

“In terms of profitability, the profitability of the oil drilling pipe industry is affected by a variety of factors, such as fluctuations in oil prices and the global economic situation. Our Company was able to maintain relatively stable profitability (...) despite these uncertainties. With our focus on cost control and efficiency improvement, we ...) maintained good financial performance during periods of economic instability.”(I17-P1)

“we can examine the company's innovation ability and technology level in the field of oil drilling pipe technology. As a key player in the same industry, our company constantly promoted technological progress and innovation, and invested a lot of resources in research and development. We were committed to providing high-quality and reliable products to meet customers' needs for oil drilling pipes.”(I13-P1)

See Table 5.6 for details.

Table 5.6 Frequency descriptives for performance (period 1)

Category	Subcategory	Period 1 Performance (N Max=19)	Freq.	N
		Excerpt		
Organisational performance	good cooperative relationships	“The third point is that we focused on good cooperative relationships with governments, users and suppliers. Establishing stable and reliable partnerships enabled us to obtain timely market information, understand industry developments, and work together with relevant parties to address challenges.” (I20-P1)	1	1
	high level customer satisfaction	“customer satisfaction was an important indicator for evaluating the company's performance. Our company attached importance to the cooperation and communication with customers, constantly improved products and services, and ensured that customer satisfaction was enhanced.” (I19-P1)	1	1
	rich technical experience and expertise	“our company has rich technical experience and expertise in the field of oil drilling pipes. We have a high-quality R&D team that constantly promotes technological innovation and product improvement. This enables us to provide high-quality, high-performance drilling pipe products to meet our customers' needs in oil exploration and development.”(I18-P1) .	2	2
	profitability and financial stability	“In terms of profitability, the profitability of the oil drilling pipe industry is affected by a variety of factors, such as fluctuations in oil prices and the global economic situation. Our Company was able to maintain relatively stable profitability (...) despite these uncertainties. With our focus on cost control and efficiency improvement, we (...) maintained good financial performance during periods of economic instability. “(I17-P1)	4	4
	high market share	“In terms of size and market share, our company occupied an important position in the field of oil pipelines. We had an extensive transport network covering key producing and consuming areas across the country. This enabled us to meet the demand for petroleum product transport and to have a large competitive advantage in the market.” (I21-P1)	3	3
	innovation	“we can examine the company's innovation ability and technology level in the field of oil drilling pipe technology. As a key player in the same industry, our company constantly promoted technological progress and innovation, and invested a lot of resources in research and development. We were committed to providing high-quality and reliable products to meet customers' needs for oil drilling pipes.”(I13-P1)	7	7
	high visibility and reputation	“the company had a very high visibility and reputation in this field, which gave me a sense of belonging and honour. The fact that the company's products and services were popular in the global market is a testament to the company's expertise and technical level.”(I7-P1)	2	2
	robustness	“In terms of sustainable development, our company	4	4

Individual performanc e	and sustainability	has always focused on environmental protection and social responsibility. We were committed to implementing green transport and low-carbon development, and taking measures to reduce emissions and resource wastage. At the same time, we actively participated in social welfare activities to fulfil our corporate social responsibility.”(I21-P1)		
	the forefront of the market	“In the decade between 2009 and 2019, this company was firmly at the forefront of the market with its solid oil drilling pipe production capacity. “(I11-P1)	2	2
	high degree of safety awareness	“I am a frontline safety officer, so I am more concerned about the awareness of production safety. In the production process, safety was crucial. Frontline employees need to strictly abide by safety regulations to ensure their own personal safety and that of others. In the oil drilling pipe industry, I needed to have a high degree of safety awareness, to be able to find and deal with all kinds of safety hazards in a timely manner, to ensure that drilling operations were carried out safely and smoothly. “(I8-P1)	1	1
	innovation	“As a front-line employee, the difference between me and ordinary employees may be reflected more in the ability to innovate. With the intensification of market competition and the continuous progress of technology, frontline employees need to have a sense of innovation and be able to actively participate in technological improvement and innovation activities to increase the competitiveness and market share of enterprises.”(I7-P1)	1	1
	work experience	“Based on the experience and learning ability brought by the long-term front-line working condition, I think my work performance in the field of oil drilling pipe has certain advantages and values compared with the general staff, especially in the autonomous and systematic work self-assignment. “(I4-P1)	1	1
	improve knowledge and skills	“As a frontline employee, I have a certain level of technical skills and expertise to be able to skillfully operate relevant equipment and tools to ensure the smooth running of the production process.” (I5-P1)	2	2
	development	“If I were to use adjectives to describe the experience of working at Oil Drilling and Tubing Company, I would probably choose words such as ‘fulfilling’, ‘challenging’, ‘exercise’ and ‘development’” (I3-P1)	1	1

Overall, the organisational performance that characterizes this period is mostly represented by innovation followed by profitability and financial stability, a concern for environmental and social responsibility but also with high market share. This is in line with the mission of becoming a global leader through innovation, which fits the strategy of delivering high quality products and betting on innovative technologies.

5.2 The second period: Transition

5.2.1 How was the external environment of YG in period 2?

As stated, the external environment is characterized in terms of market dynamism and prosperity. As regards market dynamism, participants highlighted the greater volatility of the market due to the abnormal global health crisis (F=9, N=7), and surge demand (F=7, N=6). Table A.1 in appendix shows the frequencies.

“The years 2020-2021 were undoubtedly a period full of challenges and opportunities for the Company. Fluctuations in the global economic situation, increasing scarcity of mineral resources and rising environmental protection requirements have put the Company through great trials in these two years.” (I14-P2)

“For the gold minerals sector, market demand remained solid. As a safe-haven asset, the investment value of gold has become more and more prominent against the backdrop of increased global economic uncertainty.” (I21-P2)

As regards market prosperity, interviewees mostly highlight the policy support that drove gold price up (F=5, N=5), and market uncertainty and riskiness (F=5, N=4).

“the monetary policies of major central banks around the world also pushed up the price of gold. In response to the recession brought about by the epidemic, central banks adopted loose monetary policies, and a large amount of money flooded into the market, driving up the price of gold. This trend was particularly evident in 2020-2021.”(I14-P2)

“uncertainty and volatility in the global economy remained (...) These factors have brought certain pressure and challenges to the global gold market.” (I16-P2)

5.2.2 What sort of leadership style was predominant? How much was transformational leadership felt in the company?

Using the same categories as shown in Period 1, the leadership categories are overwhelmingly highlighting in Period 2, the transformational leadership. Among the subcategories, the first four in terms of frequency are exactly the four dimensions that are comprehended in the transformational leadership style. Among these, individualized consideration is the most outstanding (F=45, N=12), followed by intellectual stimulation (F=39, N=12), inspirational motivation (F=17, N=10) and idealized influence (F=13, N=9). Table A.2 in appendix shows the frequencies.

“I know first-hand that managers often provide specific work instructions for us front-line

staff. I remember that once, when I was handling a large gold transaction, I was confused about certain details of the contract terms. When my supervisor learnt about it, he took the initiative to talk to me, explained the meaning of these terms one by one, and taught me how to better protect the company's interests in the transaction. "(I7-P2)

"Managers were not only the ones who directed their employees to complete tasks, they were also the ones who inspired their employees to step up to the plate with initiatives, ideas and risks. They inspired their employees to be motivated and innovative by leading by example and demonstrating their leadership skills and creative thinking. "(I12-P2)

"whether top management would give people inspiration about the future was also certain. In the gold mining industry, companies need to keep exploring new mining areas and developing new technologies and management models to maintain a competitive edge. Top management, as the leaders of the organisation, need to be forward-looking and innovative in their thinking to provide inspiration and direction to their subordinates about the future. By sharing information on industry trends, market opportunities and challenges, they inspired their subordinates to innovate and drive their organisations to grow and develop. "(I22-P2)

"I know first-hand that managers often provided specific work instructions for us front-line staff. I remember that once, when I was handling a large gold transaction, I was confused about certain details of the contract terms. When my supervisor learnt about it, he took the initiative to talk to me, explained the meaning of these terms one by one, and taught me how to better protect the company's interests in the transaction. "(I7-P2)

Transactional leadership is the least mentioned with contingent rewards being the only subcategory mentioned (F=13, N=7) and, again, management by exception was never mentioned.

"others may have paid more attention to work results and efficiency."(I22-P2)

Within the paternalistic leadership style, it is again the authoritative behaviours that deserve more mentioning (F=10, N=8) followed at a distance by ethical leadership (F=4, N=4).

"In some cases, leaders may have required absolute obedience from subordinates to ensure the smooth running of the work, such as in emergency situations or jobs that require a high degree of discipline."(I22-P2)

"It seems to me that my leaders did strive to be models of moral superiority. They have earned the respect and praise of their colleagues by being fair and leading by example in the conduct of their affairs."(I6-P2)

Overall, there is a strong acknowledgement that transformational leadership style

remained the prevailing one in this period. Again, contingent rewards and authoritative leadership were also observed in the company in this period.

5.2.3 How were mission, strategy and organisational culture characterized?

Mission, strategy and organisational culture comprehends the same number of categories with the exact naming and have some common subcategories identified in Period 1, and some new ones.

As regards culture, the prevailing idea in Period 2 highlights innovation (F=10, N=6), closely followed by team orientation (N=9, F=7). Also mentioned as equivalent levels, sustainable development and environmental protection emerged as new frequently cited cultural values (F=9, N=6) together with social responsibility (F=8, N=7). Table A.3 in appendix shows the frequencies.

“Gold Minerals Company advocated the enterprise spirit of unity, innovation, pragmatism and efficiency, and focused on the growth and development of employees. Under such a cultural atmosphere, I deeply feel that I was a member of the company's big family and contributed to the company's development together with everyone.” (I18-P2)

“Environmental protection and sustainable development: With the increase of global environmental protection awareness, gold mining companies have also begun to pay attention to the construction of green mines, environmental protection and sustainable development. The company was committed to building safe and green mines, caring for its employees, and at the same time, actively taking social responsibility and enthusiastically participating in public welfare undertakings.” (I16-P2)

“...The company cared for its employees, was committed to the construction of a harmonious community, actively undertook social responsibility, and enthusiastically participated in public welfare undertakings. These initiatives not only reflected the company's sense of social responsibility, but also enhanced the company's brand image, laying a solid foundation for the company's long-term development.”(I14-P2)

As regards the mission, the subcategory “Sustainable social and environment responsibility” emerged as most outstanding (F=8, N=8) followed by becoming industry leader (F=5, N=5).

“Gold Minerals also focused on sustainable development, was committed to building a safe green mine, and constantly consolidated the achievements of green mine construction. The company cared for its employees, was committed to the construction of a harmonious

community, actively undertook social responsibility, and enthusiastically participates in public welfare undertakings. These initiatives not only reflected the company's sense of social responsibility, but also enhanced the company's brand image, laying a solid foundation for the company's long-term development.” (I14-P2)

As regards the strategy, participants highlighted technological innovation (F=6, N=5) and improving customer satisfaction (F=4, N=4).

“A simple description: to be a global leader in the gold mining industry through continuous innovation and technology leadership, and to achieve sustainable development and social responsibility.”(I14-P2)

“... company's overarching objectives may cover a number of areas, such as increasing market share, optimising supply chain management, enhancing brand presence, improving customer satisfaction, and so on. “ (I8-P2)

Overall, the organisational culture that characterizes this period is mostly represented by a innovation orientation followed by team orientation with an emerging value of social responsibility. This is aligned with mining sustainability as a mission and investing in technological innovation as a strategy.

5.2.4 What management practices, namely HRM, were predominant? / How much were HPWS used in the organisation? (AMO)

Management practices comprehend the same three categories (Control; Structuring work & allocating HR resources, and Plan; budgeting, and goal setting) as well as the subcategories mentioned in Period 1.

The most frequently mentioned category is again training and development (F=8, N=4) followed at a distance by high quality recruitment and selection (F=4, N=4) tied with team autonomy (F=4, N=4). and employment and work contracts stability (F=10, N=10). Again, structuring work and allocating resources remains the most predominant view on managerial practices as, again, no mention was made as to the control and monitoring and plan, budgeting and goals setting is only lightly mentioned (F=2, N=2). Table A.4 in appendix shows the frequencies.

“The company invested heavily in training. When new employees joined the company, they received a series of basic training to help them adapt quickly to their jobs. In addition, the company regularly provided advanced training for employees to enhance their professional skills and knowledge. These trainings were not only for frontline staff, but also

for management.”(I7-P2)

“The company had a strong focus on fostering team autonomy. They believed that employees were more engaged and productive when they were trusted and empowered to self-manage and make decisions. “(I7-P2)

“When it comes to recruitment, investing a lot of effort in quality selection testing is key to ensuring that the right people are recruited. This testing may include skills assessments, personality tests, background checks and many other aspects to ensure that new hires were able to quickly integrate into the team and contribute to the organisation.” (I1-P2)

5.2.5 What behavioural outcomes were experienced? (unit climate, motivation, abilities)

In the AMO model, motivation was more referred by interviewees (F=35, six categories) followed by Ability (F=12, three categories) and lastly, at a large distance Opportunity (F=3, four categories). As regards motivation, “competitive compensation, incentives, and rewards” (F=19, N=13) was the most frequently mentioned (F=10, N=7), followed by “developmental performance management” (F=7, N=6). Also “Promotion and career development” (F=6, N=5) and extensive benefits (F=6, N=3) also emerged. Table A.5 in appendix shows the frequencies.

“Compared with its peers, Gold Trading Company's salaries and incentives were relatively generous. Not only did the company set reasonable salaries based on the position, work experience and skill level of its employees, but it had also established a series of incentive systems such as bonuses and commissions to recognise the contributions and efforts of its employees.”(I7-P2)

“the incentives given to me by the company were also an important source of motivation for my work. The company not only had a perfect salary system, but also a variety of training opportunities and promotion opportunities, which all let me see my future and hope in the company. At the same time, the company also attached great importance to staff welfare, such as providing health insurance, regular medical check-ups, etc. All these made me feel that the company cared about and supports its employees. “(I16-P2)

“The company offered a wealth of promotion opportunities for its employees. In promotion decisions, we evaluated employees primarily based on their performance and performance. This means that as long as an employee excels in his or her job, he or she had the opportunity to be promoted. In addition, we also considered other criteria such as an employee's potential, teamwork and leadership skills. “(I8-P2)

As regards ability, the most mentioned category is “extensive training” (F=8, N=5) followed at a large distance by both “Comprehensive recruitment” (F=2, N=2) and “Rigorous selection” (F=2, N=2), which were mentioned only marginally,

“The company invested heavily in training. When new employees joined the company, they received a series of basic training to help them adapt quickly to their jobs. In addition, the company regularly provided advanced training for employees to enhance their professional skills and knowledge. These trainings were not only for frontline staff, but also for management.”(I7-P2)

Lastly, as observed in the Period 1, among the opportunity a priori four categories, only Information sharing was mentioned (F=3, N=3). Again, not a single instance occurred for “Flexible work design”, “Work teams” or “Employee involvement”.

“Supervisors and managers placed great emphasis on communication with their employees. They maintained close contact with their employees through a variety of channels, such as regular team meetings, one-on-one conversations, and internal newsletters. At Gold Trading, employees were encouraged to put forward their ideas and suggestions, and the company's decisions took into account their opinions...”(I7-P2)

5.2.6 How is the performance of people and the company?

As regards organisational performance, the most mentioned subcategory is “high market share” (F=7, N=6) followed by “strong competitiveness” (F=6, N=5), and “profitability stability” (F=4, N=4). At the individual level performance, again, there are marginal frequencies observed in teamwork skills (taken as performance in working in teams) and professional knowledge and practical experience, both tied (F=2, N=2). Table A.6 in appendix shows the frequencies.

“Compared with other companies in the same industry, our company's market share has increased during 2020-2021. This indicates that our company's market strategy and product positioning have been recognised by the market and our company's influence in the industry is gradually expanding.”(I12-P2)

Overall, the organisational performance that characterizes this period is mostly represented by high market share followed by strong competitiveness and profitability stability, that represent a strategy of growth and competitiveness gains.

5.3 The third period: Gold industry

5.3.1 How was the external environment of YG in period 3?

Again, the external environment is characterized in terms of market dynamism and prosperity. As regards market dynamism, participants highlighted the fierce competition in the market (F=8, N=8), closely followed by technological innovation and digitalisation trends (F=7, N=7) and the surged demand (F=7, N=7). Table A.7 in appendix shows the frequencies.

“the intensity of competition in the market is also a point that I deeply feel. As one of the traditional industries, the gold industry has a relatively mature market with many competitors.”(I23-P3)

“the global economy is undergoing a transformation driven by digital transformation. In this change, the application of new technologies such as big data, cloud computing and artificial intelligence is reshaping the competitive landscape of various industries. We in the gold industry are not immune to this. On the one hand, these new technologies bring great convenience and efficiency improvements to our production, sales and supply chain management...”(I24-P3)

“with the increase in consumer demand for gold investment, the consumer demand for gold is also growing steadily.”(I21-P3)

As regards market prosperity, interviewees highlight again the policy support (F=6, N=6) although this policy does not refer to indirect positive effects on the industry as previously. The policy was targeting directly business with tax incentives and financial leverage and other instruments for business development.

“With the national policy adjustment of the gold industry, the industry has ushered in a more relaxed development environment. Such as the introduction of tax incentives, financial support and other policies, for enterprises to provide a broader space for development.”(I25-P3)

5.3.2 What sort of leadership style was predominant? How much was transformational leadership felt in the company?

Using the same categories as shown in the previous periods, the leadership categories are, again, overwhelmingly highlighting the transformational leadership in Period 3.

Among the subcategories, the first four in terms of frequency are, again, exactly the four dimensions that are comprehended in the transformational leadership style. Among these,

individualized consideration is the most outstanding (F=76, N=23), followed by intellectual stimulation (F=66, N=22), idealized influence (F=30, N=21), and inspirational motivation (F=25, N=18). Table A.8 in appendix shows the frequencies.

“Take a former leader of mine as an example, he not only cared about our work progress, but also frequently enquired about our health conditions. When he learnt that an employee was sick, he would take the initiative to provide medical help and adjust the work schedule to alleviate the employee's burden. “ (I14-P3)

“We encourage our employees to put forward their opinions and suggestions, and we believe that the company can only continue to improve if the voices of our employees are heard. “(I1-P3)

“The company's strategy and vision builds a style of leadership that I would describe as “leading by silence, leading by example”. In this style, the typical manager doesn't talk too much, but rather influences and motivates the team through his or her actions. They are down-to-earth, demonstrating their ideas and commitments with real actions, not just verbal promises.” (I14-P3)

“Yes, managers usually give people inspiration about the future. They usually have a long-term vision and strategic thinking, and are able to see the future direction and opportunities of the company. By communicating with their subordinates and sharing the company's strategy and vision, managers are able to inspire their subordinates to be enthusiastic and expectant about the future and motivate them to work hard to achieve the company's long-term goals. “(I16-P3)

Transactional leadership is again the least mentioned with contingent rewards being the only subcategory mentioned (F=9, N=8) and, again, management by exception was never mentioned.

“the company to set up clear promotion channels and attractive salary system, so that employees understand that as long as they work hard, they will be able to get better career development and higher income; or through the establishment of the “best employee”, “best team” and other awards, regular recognition of outstanding Or by setting up awards such as “Best Employee” and “Best Team” to regularly recognise outstanding employees and teams, in order to set an example and motivate all employees.”(I9-P3)

Within the paternalistic leadership style, ethical leadership emerged (F=15, N=14) with more than double citations of authoritative leadership (F=6, N=6).

“Some leaders do pay great attention to their own moral cultivation. Not only do they show a high degree of integrity and responsibility in their work, they also set a good example

for their employees by setting a good example in their daily life. Such leaders, in my opinion, can achieve a score of 10 on their moral index.” (I1-P3)

Overall, there is a strong acknowledgement that transformational leadership style remained the prevailing one in this period, and now the ethical leadership gained a strong position in detriment of authoritative leadership style.

5.3.3 How were mission, strategy and organisational culture characterized?

Mission, strategy and organisational culture comprehends the same number of categories with the exact naming and have some common subcategories identified in the previous periods.

As regards culture, the prevailing idea in Period 3 highlights team orientation (N=28, F=18), closely followed by innovation (F=20, N=15). Table A.9 in appendix shows the frequencies.

“The values of teamwork, innovation, accountability, integrity and continuous learning are at the heart of the organisation's culture. In such a culture, every member is encouraged to realise his/her potential, actively participate in teamwork, take responsibility, and continue to learn and improve. Such an organisational culture not only provides strong competitiveness for the organisation, but also provides room for each member to grow and develop. “(I5-P3)

“we also encourage innovation and exploration, and provide our employees with broad space and opportunities for development. This cultural atmosphere leads to trust and respect among team members, who are willing to collaborate and make progress together. “(I25-P3)

As regards the mission, the subcategories “Prosperity and development of the gold trade” (F=14, N=11) and “Becoming industry leader” (F=13, N=13) predominate in this period. Alongside, but to a slight less extent, “Sustainable social and environmental responsibility” (F=13, N=10) is an important focus.

“The golden rule for first-line managers: dig deep into minerals, expand trade, and forge industry benchmarks. This statement not only captures the company's strategic vision to explore gold mineral resources and expand gold trading business extensively, but also reflects the company's pursuit of industry leadership.”(I19-P3)

“The strategy and vision of the gold producing and trading company, acquired by state-owned capital, for the period from 2021 to date can be summarised as 'deepening domestic resource integration, innovation-driven development, and striving to become a leader in the global gold industry.’“ (I2-P3)

“we also attach great importance to social responsibility and sustainable development,

and endeavour to contribute to the protection of the environment and the promotion of social progress.” (I25-P3)

As regards the strategy, participants highlighted again the technological innovation (F=13, N=9) as a developmental driver.

“the company invested a lot of R&D resources in a mining technology upgrade project at a mine, which not only greatly improved the efficiency of gold mining, but also paid attention to environmental protection and ensured that the ecological environment around the mine was properly protected. Such a project is a vivid embodiment of the company's strategic vision of 'scientific and technological innovation and sustainable development'“. (I25-P3)

Overall, the organisational culture that characterizes this period is represented by team orientation followed by innovation orientation. This reinforces the internal team as productivity leverage with a focus on innovation also.

5.3.4 What management practices, namely HRM, were predominant? / How much were HPWS used in the organisation? (AMO)

Management practices comprehend the same three categories (Control; Structuring work & allocating HR resources; and Plan, budgeting, and goal setting) as well as the subcategories mentioned in the previous periods.

The most frequently mentioned category is information sharing and performance feedback (F=17, N=10) followed by employee training and development (F=14, N=9). In a second tier, there are many categories that also deserve mention, namely stability and flexibility (F=10, N=10) and, tied among themselves Recruitment and Selection; Team autonomy; and Compensation and Incentives (F=9, N=9, each). Although structuring work and allocating resources remains the most predominant view on managerial practices, in this period, monitor, control and correction do have some emerging subcategories (Improve work and feedback within the “correction” with F=5, N=5 each). Plan, budgeting and goals setting is now more present but irrelevant in comparison with the other categories. Table A.10 in appendix shows the frequencies.

“they organise regular team meetings to have face-to-face communication with their staff to share information, feedback and suggestions. This type of communication not only improves the efficiency of the team, but also enhances the cohesion and centripetal force of the team. “(I9-P3)

“When it comes to training, companies usually invest heavily in providing extensive

training opportunities for their employees. These trainings not only include skills training, but may also cover leadership development, communication skills, etc., aiming at helping employees to improve themselves in all aspects and better fulfil their work tasks. “(I10-P3)

“Stability and flexibility go hand in hand at Gold Trading. The company will provide long-serving employees with stable work contracts to ensure their sense of career security. For some temporary or project work, the company will adopt flexible work contracts to adapt to the rapid changes in the market.”(I6-P3)

5.3.5 What behavioural outcomes were experienced? (unit climate, motivation, abilities)

In the AMO model, motivation was again more referred by interviewees (F=74, six categories) followed by Ability (F=38, three categories) and lastly, at a large distance Opportunity (F=7, four categories).

As regards motivation, “competitive compensation, incentives, and rewards” (F=22, N=15) was the most frequently mentioned, followed by “Promotion and career development” (F=20, N=15), and closely after, the “developmental performance management” (F=16, N=14). Table A.11 in appendix shows the frequencies.

“company has set up an innovative reward mechanism in order to motivate their employees. They set monthly, quarterly and annual individual and team goals for each employee, and those who complete these goals will receive generous bonuses and extra days off. In this way, employees not only have a clear direction for their work, but also have the motivation to strive for it.”(I23-P3)

“incentives are also an important factor in keeping me motivated. As a frontline manager, my salary and promotion opportunities are linked to performance. This mechanism makes me clearer about my work goals and gives me more motivation to push my team forward. “(I16).

As regards ability, the most mentioned category is again “extensive training” (F=24, N=14) followed at a large distance by both “Comprehensive recruitment” (F=8, N=8) and “Rigorous selection” (F=6, N=6).

“When it comes to training, companies usually invest heavily in providing extensive training opportunities for their employees. These trainings not only include skills training, but also cover leadership development, communication skills, etc., aiming at helping employees to improve themselves in all aspects and better fulfil their work tasks. “(I10-P3)

Lastly, contrasting with the previous periods, among the opportunity a priori four categories, flexible work design emerged although with minimal frequency (F=, N=3). To the

exception of “work teams” the remaining subcategories received at least one mention by interviewee, albeit marginal

“The company also does a great job regarding performance feedback. Not only do we get timely feedback from multiple sources, but we also receive specific suggestions for improvement. “(I2-P3)

5.3.6 How is the performance of people and the company?

As regards organisational performance, the most mentioned subcategory is “High level of customer satisfaction” (F=9, N=8) followed by “high quality of products” (F=6, N=6), and “leading position” (F=6, N=6). At the individual level performance, “growth” (F=5, N=5) and “Learning new knowledge and skills quickly” (F=4, N=4) are emerging subcategories. Table A.12 in appendix shows the frequencies.

“we have a high level of customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction. In this context, we can consider our company to be a strong performer in the goldware sales industry. “(I18-P3)

“By optimising the production process and improving the quality of our products, our gold was highly rated in the market, and the company's performance has increased significantly as a result. “(I15-P3)

“our company has maintained an industry-leading position in the exploration, mining and production of gold mineral resources. “(I23-P3)

“Growth is the biggest feeling I have had here. I have been fortunate enough to be involved in a number of important projects, which has given me a lot of opportunities to exercise and grow. The company also provides a wealth of internal training and external learning opportunities, allowing me to continuously improve my skills. “(I17-P3)

5.4 Integration of results (the three periods together)

For simplicity's sake, Figure 5.1 shows the evolution of frequencies per category. As the number of participants per period differs, we converted the frequencies into a ratio where the original frequencies are divided by the number of participants interviewed in the corresponding period. Ratios per each period and category are shown with a chronological order. Therefore, this figure shows the evolution of ratios for the external market.

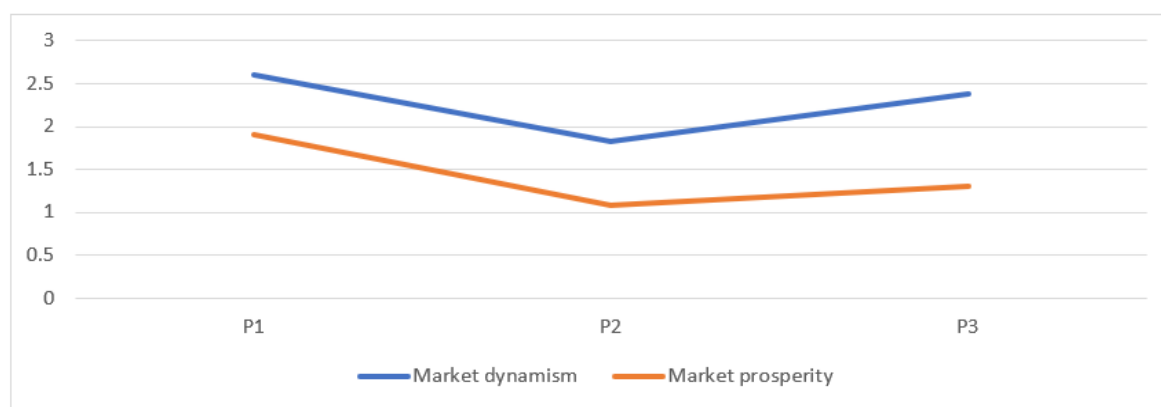


Figure 5.1 Ratio evolution for external market

The figure suggests that during period 1, the market was more strongly depicted as being dynamic and that such an idea slightly dismayed in the transition period to regain strength today. Market dynamics that mostly characterize the first phase was due to fierce competition, which is observed throughout the entire life span of the company, but also to the governmental pressure for sustainable development and environmental protection. Today these pressures shifted to technological innovation and digitalization. In both phases (first and today) the market is in strong demand for products of the company and the strongest feature related to the first phase's market dynamics is the level of competition and market saturation.

Leadership is a very frequently mentioned topic and during the whole evolution of the company it is transformational leadership that predominates among the possible styles (see Figure 5.2). Transformational leadership is now more predominantly reported than it was in the previous periods.

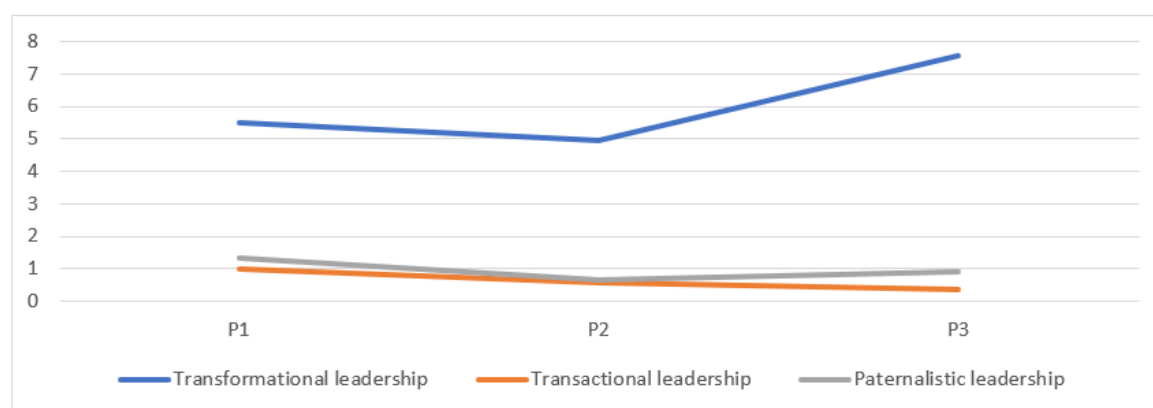


Figure 5.2 Ratio evolution for leadership

Within transformational leadership, there is a stability in the relative importance of its components (inspirational motivation, idealized influence, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation) with individualized consideration being the mostly cited, followed by intellectual stimulation. In the transition period however, there was a shift in the relative

importance of inspirational motivation and idealized influence, as the former became the third most prominent. In the current phase, transformational leadership is then mostly perceived in the leaders showing individualized consideration, intellectually stimulating employees, providing inspiration that motivates employees, and behave in a way that makes them role models, thus providing idealized influence in employees.

As per transactional leadership style, only “contingent rewards” is mentioned, and it is both the least prevailing in the history of the company and seemingly decreasing in importance across the three phases.

Paternalistic leadership components (ethical, compassion, and authoritative) also changed over time, with authoritative leadership behaviours being the most mentioned in both the first and transition periods. In the current third period, ethical leadership emerged as the prevailing component, overshadowing authoritative leadership behaviours.

The corporate culture also predominates as the main topic of attention within the set of culture, strategy and mission. Comparatively, Mission gained more centrality today than it has in the past.

See Figure 5.3 for details.

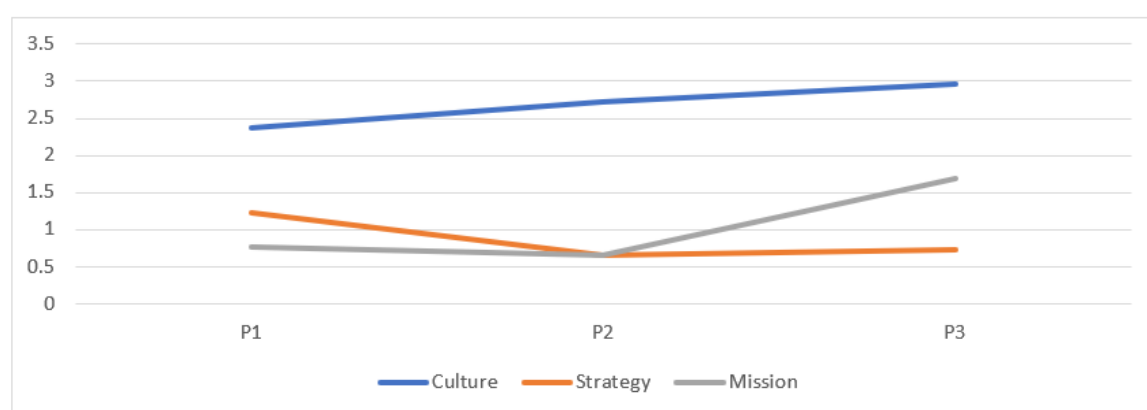


Figure 5.3 Ratio evolution for culture, strategy and mission

Within organisational culture and taking Quinn’s Competing Values Model as a reference (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1981), the cultural evolution (see Figure 5.4) shows that the first period was mostly community oriented with a favorable community-market orientation. The transition period witnessed a shift towards market orientation and a growth in innovation. The current period has greatly changed in innovation orientation and resumed the strength of a community orientation culture. The rules orientation is observed in the first period but mentions to this are almost absent in the ensuing periods.

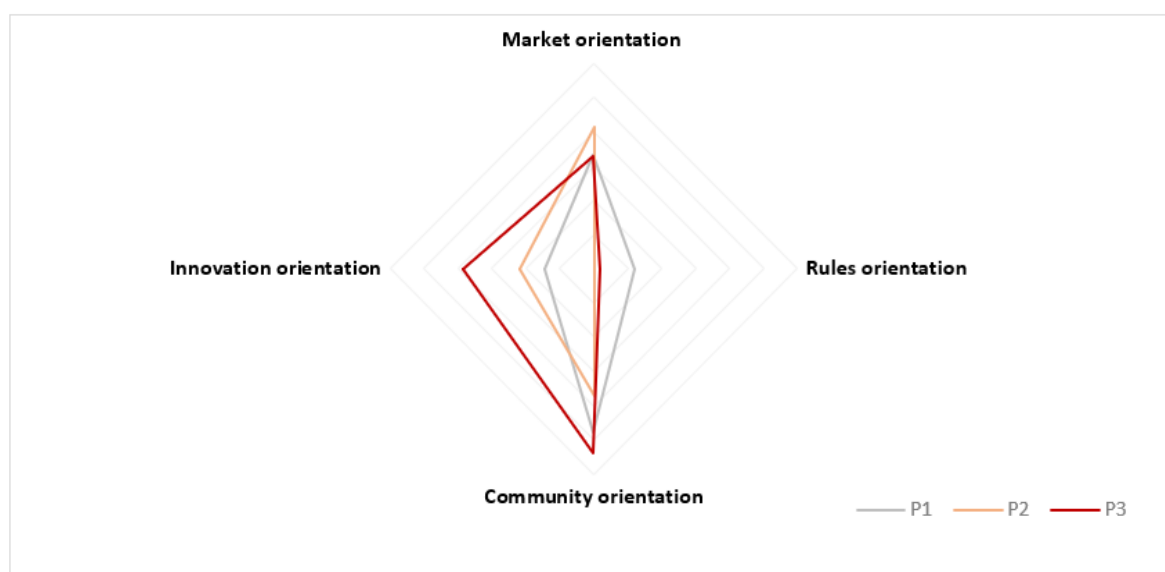


Figure 5.4 Evolution of organisational culture

Closely related to culture, strategy has also witnessed changes over these periods. In the first period there was an emphasis on technological innovation, but the prevailing strategy was to offer high quality and performance of products and services. The transition period kept technological innovation but at a lower relative frequency while concerns about customer satisfaction emerged. The current period has now a resurgence of technological innovation.

As per the mission evolution over time (as perceived by the interviewees), the first period is mostly driven in equivalent strength by becoming an industry leader and promoting sustainable development. The transition period witnessed a stronger emphasis on sustainable development to which social and environmental responsibility was made explicit, and currently, the mission is mostly driven by contributing to the prosperity and development of the industry, and becoming industry leader while ensuring the fulfillment of social and environmental responsibility duties. The mission has been stable over time.

As regards management practices, Structuring work & Allocating resources is the predominant category which also lost some centrality during the transition but has now regained importance. Training and development has been always the dominant HR practice with a lowering relative presence in the transition period. Plan, budgeting and goal setting is always present but in modest magnitude compared to training and development. Monitoring and control is absent to the exception of the third period where it gains a presence albeit also very modest compared to the training and development ratio. See Figure 5.5 for details.

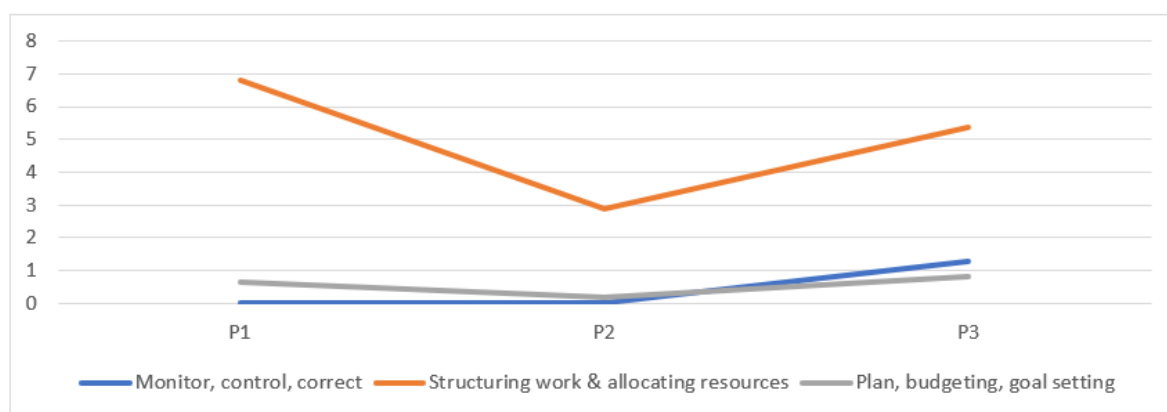


Figure 5.5 Ratio evolution for management practices

As per HRM practices, taking AMO as a reference, Motivation is the top mentioned category, which is always dominant, but now has been closely followed by ability enhancement (see Figure 5.6).

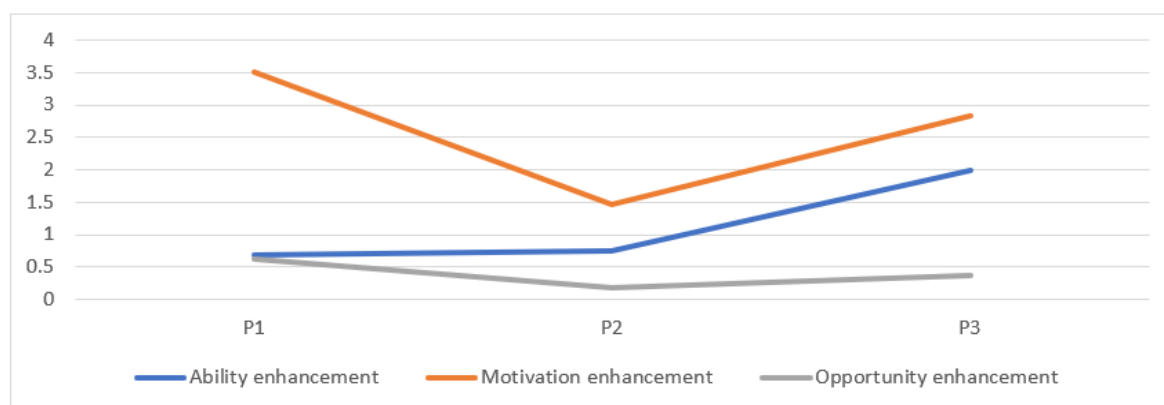


Figure 5.6 Ratio evolution for AMO

Considering the individual HRM practices comprised by AMO category, the ratios for frequency/maximum N indicate that the strongest trend and highest perceived practice is “Extensive Training”. Comprehensive recruitment and Rigorous selection are also showing an upward trend.

For most of the activities belonging to the Motivation category, there was a downtrend in the transition period that was followed by an increase to the previous period 1 levels or slightly less present. The exception seems to go to “Recognition” that is proportionately less mentioned today as compared to the previous periods, thus showing a downward trend. Opportunity HRM practices are constantly less mentioned, but one of those, information sharing, was more frequently mentioned in the first period as compared to today’s perceptions.

In contrasting the rank order of HRM practices in the first and third periods, the three most highly ranked in the first period were competitive compensation, developmental

performance management, and career and promotion. Currently, the highest ranking is training and development, competitive compensation and career and promotion. The most visible contrast is training and development. Figure 5.7 shows the individual HRM practices that compose the AMO categories. Lastly, organisational performance has a stronger presence compared to individual performance and this is a constant across the entire span of the reports (see Figure 5.8 for details).

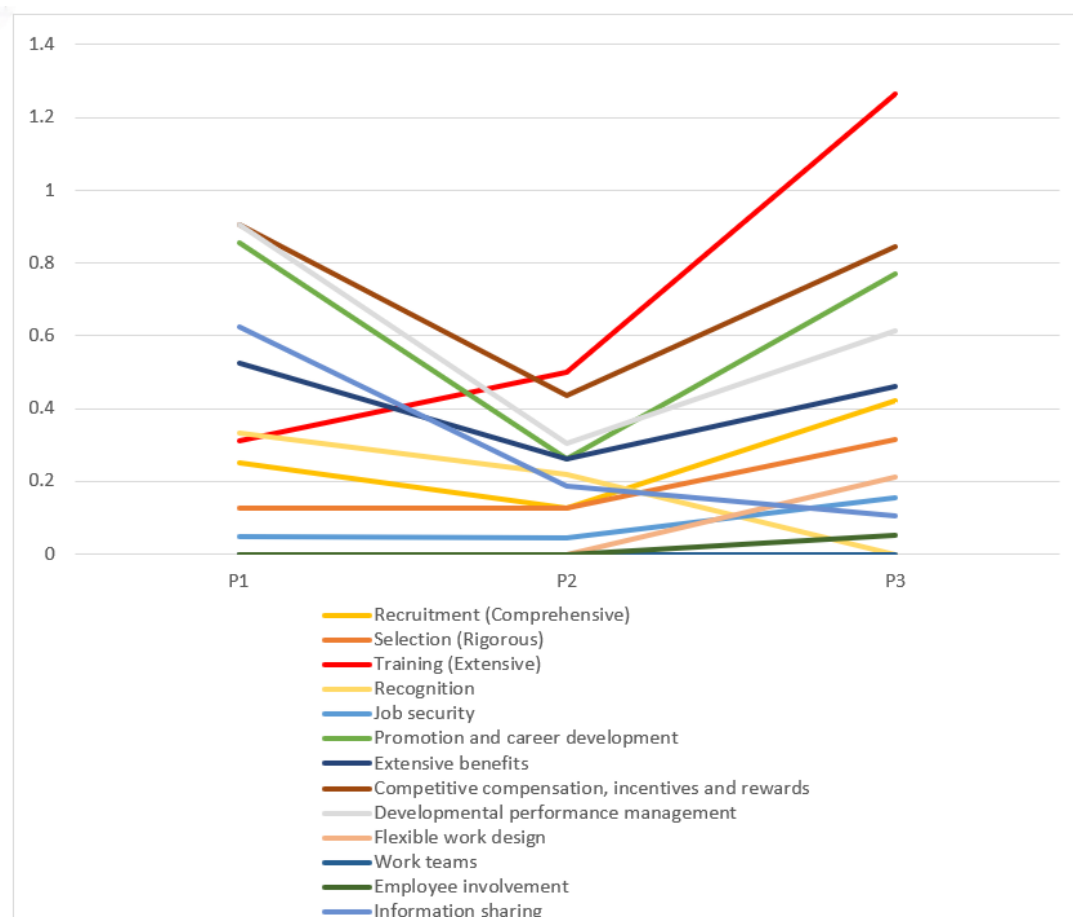


Figure 5.7 Individual HRM practices

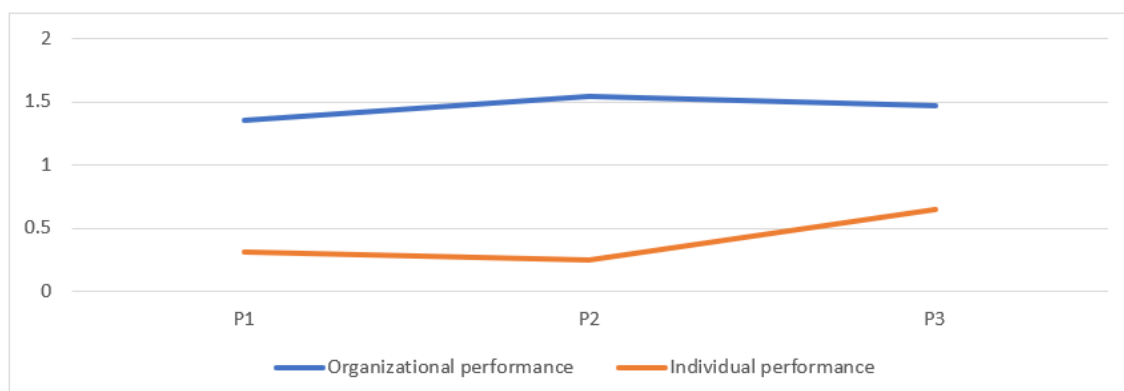


Figure 5.8 Ratio evolution for performance

The components of organisational performance have been matched and compared across

periods (albeit using differing naming, to reflect the specificities of each period, subcategories can be matched) to find that within organisational performance components, there is a visible emphasis on the first period on innovation performance which has now become comparatively less predominant, as well as a focus on business and profit stability (which also dominated the focus on the first period). Conversely, there is a strong upward trend visible in the current period that shows team building and management performance together with high quality of products and customer satisfaction became the dominant components. As regards individual performance, changes mostly show that the current period is dominated by learning new knowledge and skills quickly followed by working efficiently and with quality.

Table 5.7 provides the information of comparative frequencies of each dimension (external environment, leadership, culture, HRM, behavioural outcomes, and performance) and categories in period 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

Table 5.7 Comparative frequencies for categories per period

Dimension	Category	Period 1			Period 2			Period 3		
		Freq.	Max N	Ratio	Freq.	Max N	Ratio	Freq.	Max N	Ratio
External environment	Market dynamism	26	10	2.60	22	12	1.83	31	13	2.38
	Market prosperity	19	10	1.90	13	12	1.08	17	13	1.30
Leadership	Transformational leadership	116	21	5.52	114	23	4.95	197	26	7.57
	Transactional leadership	21	21	1.00	13	23	0.56	9	26	0.34
	Paternalistic leadership	28	21	1.33	15	23	0.65	24	26	0.92
Mission, Strategy, Culture	Culture	50	21	2.38	63	23	2.73	77	26	2.96
	Strategy	26	21	1.23	15	23	0.65	19	26	0.73
	Mission	16	21	0.76	15	23	0.65	44	26	1.69
Management & HRM	Monitor, control, correct	0	11	0.00	0	11	0.00	17	13	1.30
	Structuring work & allocating resources	75	11	6.81	32	11	2.90	70	13	5.38
Behavioural outcomes	Plan, budgeting, goal setting	7	11	0.63	2	11	0.18	11	13	0.84
	Ability enhancement	11	16	0.68	12	16	0.75	38	19	2.00
	Motivation enhancement	74	21	3.52	34	23	1.47	74	26	2.84
	Opportunity enhancement	10	16	0.62	3	16	0.18	7	19	0.36
Performance	Organisational performance	26	19	1.36	31	20	1.55	34	23	1.47
	Individual performance	6	19	0.31	5	20	0.25	15	23	0.65

[This page is deliberately left blank.]

Chapter 6: General Discussion and Conclusion

By taking together findings concerning the three periods, one can infer the paths and evolution of the dimensions that characterize organisational change and HRM.

The analysis of the evolution of the market clearly shows that market dynamics goes hand-in-hand with market prosperity, and that the path tracked until the transition period was marked by a downward trend. This is consistent with the literature that posits a cumulative effect of small incremental changes ending up into radical changes (Weick & Quinn, 1999) such as the company's decision to shift from the pipe oil industry to the mining industry. This can be explained due to decreasing company stock value mirroring the market decreasing prosperity, but also due to the growing pressures stemming from the external environment drivers which have experienced a strong *tour-de-force* as regards technologies, digitalization, and regulatory pressures to comply with sustainability goals (Levy & Kolk, 2002).

Judging from literature reports of well-known positive outcomes associated with transformational leadership (D. S. Chen, 2011; Colbert et al., 2008; Den Hartog et al., 1997), the company has, since its inception, been led under this style, which suggests leadership has been a positive driving force in its development. Alongside, transformational leadership consolidated over the periods, with the change in ownership, and the new trends highlight a swap between authoritative to ethical leadership. As literature highlights, paternalistic leadership can have both positive and negative effects upon employees, among which Bedi (2020) differentiates the effects of its components. Authoritative is the one that has been associated with negative outcomes, while morality and benevolence have been associated with positive outcomes. Therefore, the evolution of leadership shows the current period is stronger on ethics (which also aligns with the morality dimension of paternalistic leadership style) and less on authoritative, which offers a positive expectation about the effects of leadership.

Findings showed that the organisational culture did not remain the same across periods, starting with a balance between market and community, which indicates positive outcomes as regards organisational effectiveness (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1981) towards a stronger market focus and growth through innovation. Overall, external focus gained predominance throughout the history of the company. This shift stressed innovation as

a main driver of organisational success in a mining industry that has been gaining technological complexity in the latest decades but also an overall innovation driven policy in China (Keane, 2006). This strong emphasis on innovation may explain why the reports about the last period has a very modest representation on rules culture, which is eventually a bias in findings as the traditional work culture in China values hierarchy and rules.

In line with cultural changes, the first period expressed a traditional strategy of focusing on the high quality of products with the ensuing rise of importance given to customer satisfaction, which is consistent with market culture. The latest period is mostly characterized by a return of the product quality strategy alongside the innovation focus which is critical in highly international competitive industries. The organisational mission stability across time indicates the company has, since its beginning, a good alignment with the main societal and political legitimating objectives of promoting sustainable development and contributing to the prosperity of the industry via high quality.

This evolution of culture towards stronger innovation and market values, alongside a strategy focused on high product quality based on a stable mission related to sustainability has produced some managerial practices in line with the values. Namely, training and development has been a watermark of this company with stronger emphasis on the aftermath of the transition period. Human capital has been repeatedly posited and empirically supported, as a critical driver of organisational competitiveness (Hatch & Dyer, 2004; Lin et al., 2017) and ever since the Total Quality Management movement gained ground in the 1970s (Weckenmann et al., 2015), training and collective learning gained a core position in HRM strategy and practices. Therefore, it is not surprising to learn that this company has been characterized by a focus on training and development of its workforce with a steep rising in the last period. Lately, the emergence of monitoring and control, although modest in magnitude, may express the need to align such learning and human capital with the strategic goals of the company which can also relate to Quinn's competing values theory, as expression of the need to balance flexibility (learning) with control (monitoring, structuring work, allocating resources).

From an AMO approach (Jiang et al., 2012), the evolution of HRM practices in line with HPWS brings important insights into how HRM played a role in this successful organisational transformation. From the general outlook of the relative presence of HPWS in the company, the first to the transition period path is clearly one of a losing movement with decreasing presence of all relevant HRM practices. Still, because the data has not been collected year-by-year we cannot ascertain whether such a decline was continuous, abrupt or just a

punctual changing moment. By comparing the first period with the last one, findings suggest some HRM practices are constant (competitive compensation, promotion and career management) while others are clearly gaining presence (extensive training). These three mark the main HPWS drivers or human capital. Some others have also been more perceived in the last period as directly compared to the first period, i.e. comprehensive recruitment, rigorous selection; and some others just slightly stronger (job security, and job involvement). Conversely, information sharing, and recognition seems to have a weaker perception currently and team working is the least mentioned in all the periods. Overall, HPWS has been partially built in the company ever since its inception. The changes in the exact set of practices express a bundle that is successfully driving employees, namely competitive compensation, career growth opportunities and training and development. The underlying theme of this bundle is “individual growth” and the underlying cultural value given to potential and current employees is “you will grow and be prosperous working with us”.

As regards performance, the company has always given emphasis on the organisational level which is constantly represented above individual performance level. The specific components of performance seem to counter the findings on culture and strategy (like e.g. innovation performance is apparently decreasing in centrality while team building and management performance in on the rise) but we reason that the subjective perceptions of performance somehow reflect the interviewees concern with the aspects that might deserve more attention now. This would produce an inverter mirror of the previous culture, strategy and HRM findings, which is exactly what results show. Most likely the salience of team building as prime focus of interviewees discourse when it is the least mentioned in HPWS.

Overall, in the process of transformation-upgrading the organisational change drivers stated by W. W. Burke and Litwin (1992) model are logically related to explaining the success of the transformation observed in Yulong Gold. The importance of external factors is evident and underlines the intrinsic market dependence of business. Still, market dependence does not mean that the company was driven by such external forces as there are stable anchors that offer the company a sense of stability and meaning in dealing with such changes. This is the case of leadership and mission, that remained transformational across the periods and even consolidated its transformational character highlighting the centrality of ethics, while mission always remained the same with a focus on the legitimizing societal factors such as sustainability and prosperity. As a basis and also an instrument to transform-and-upgrade, organisational culture was managed to shift towards a market focus and grow through innovation, in line with official policies that gave innovation a prime position in the Chinese

economic strategy. This is also visible in the way the strategy changed along the periods by shifting from product quality towards innovation (which takes for granted product quality and customer satisfaction).

At an instrumental level, management practices focused on training and development of the workforce, which is also aligned with the innovation strategy. From a strategic HRM viewpoint, the transformation-upgrading was leveraged by a constant emphasis on motivation practices (in the AMO model) while strongly reinforcing some ability practices (i.e. training and development) and moderately reinforcing some other ability practices (i.e. recruitment and selection). Thus, HPWS is observed already in the first period (which can explain its relative success) but the transformation success and the way the company overcame the risks of changing business can also be ascribed to the strengthening of HPWS aligned with both the external and internal macro factors (i.e. external market and societal changes with an emphasis on sustainability and innovation, and the internal higher-level factors of culture, mission and leadership). In this way, vertical congruence, expressing an alignment from mission-strategy-managerial practices-HRM practices is an important feature together with horizontal congruence, expressing an alignment between the AMO practices.

These findings are in line with some theoretical assertions that can be found in the literature. Namely, in strategic HRM, the idea of vertical and horizontal alignment has been expressed as a required feature of successful organisational transformations (Kehoe, 2021). W. W. Burke and Litwin (1992) model is also built upon the idea that organisational change must bring together all the dimensions in a consistent way, because the model has a flow logic, starting with the external and ending in the internal performance. As per the AMO model theory (Jiang et al., 2012), this study adds to the existing body of research that has been given support to its contentions relating to the advantages of investing in ability, motivation, and opportunity to develop organisations, and their competitive capacity. The current thesis extends this to the context of transformation-and-upgrading within a business change as bold as moving from one specialized market to another one (from oil pipe industry to gold mining).

The applied value of these findings is clear in the sense that it encourages managers to adopt HRM policies in line with AMO and HPWS, under a transformational leadership to leverage their organisational performance. More important, findings are instrumental for managers to have clear direction about which factors play an important role when conducting business-transformation shift such as the one observed in Yulong Gold, from one industry (oil pipe production) to another industry (gold mining). As per managers themselves, the traditional paternalistic leadership style has found in these findings the already visible trend in

literature that benevolence and moral character are much more effective dimensions than authoritarian behaviour. The features of transformational leadership are, once again, evidenced as effective to successfully drive organisations through disruptive changes. Therefore, findings encourage managers to adopt a transformational leadership style.

These findings and contributions must be interpreted in the context of the methodological options made. Namely, by opting to conduct qualitative research that is restricted to a single case study, one cannot generalize findings to other organisational transformation cases, where the specific industry context and market may change the relative importance of HRM factors. Although mining industry is an intensive technological business (which discards many HR from operations) the qualifications and skills needed to operate such technology in a hostile environment (such as the deep core of a mine) gives HRM a critical place in the success of business.

The type of industry and context itself may imply some nuances in the way AMO leverages organisational performance as the interviewees are all from China, and the societal culture and Chinese characteristics of corporate governance may facilitate some alignment with higher-level factors (e.g. the focus on sustainability and innovation) which could not be so easily aligned in other corporate governance systems outside China. This is especially relevant as the case is a SOE, which is, by definition, closely linked to official guidelines for business and economic development policies. In conclusion, it is found that transformational leadership and HRM acted as stabilizer, maintaining ethical alignment despite market turbulence.

In terms of theoretical contributions, it is that extension of Burke and Litwin's model. This paper demonstrated how external triggers cascade through transformational leadership and mission stability to enable HRM-cultural congruence, and pay attention to Moral leadership, not authority, and it drove successful paternalistic adaptation, challenging universalist critiques of the style. For Leaders, keeping balance transformational vision with localized paternalistic benevolence to mitigate sectoral transition anxieties. Limitations are manifested in the Single-Case Generalizability. Findings reflect the dynamics of state-owned enterprises in China's mining industry, and the replication in private is needed.

Based on these findings, future research can further develop a model that brings together multiple case studies so to investigate how universal and our findings and what contingencies can change their relative importance. Multiple case studies within the same industry (e.g. mining) as well as multiple cases studies across industries will be helpful to conclude about its universally. Judging from the evolution of idea in strategic HRM, a contextual approach

indicates that there will be important contingencies that require empirical research and evidence. Additionally, quantitative research can be developed in the context of transformation-and-upgrading under a process of changing business form one industry to another, thus allowing testing hypotheses and what exact flows of causality occur in W. W. Burke and Litwin (1992) model, as apparently it all starts in the market and trickles down to the organisation from strategic to operational levels, but many of the arrows used in their own depiction of the model are two-way, indicating mutual influence. The circular causality is an obvious dynamic in managing organisations (as the effect of a policy or action will determine outcomes that are used by decision makers to change the policies or action themselves) but for clear decision making one needs to determine the most important triggers in the process. As against the conventional linear causality models commonly observed in quantitative data analysis (e.g. regression models) this sort of organisational transformation processes may require more complex data modelling that accommodates the circular causality and the complexity of factors co-occurring in the organisation and its external environment.

Bibliography

- Adams, W. C. (2015). Conducting semi-structured interviews. In K. E. Newcomer, H. P. Hatry, & J. S. Wholey (Eds.), *Handbook of practical program evaluation* (pp. 492-505). Wiley.
- Aguilera, R. V., & Dencker, J. C. (2004). The role of human resource management in cross-border mergers and acquisitions. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 15(8), 1355-1370.
- Aguinis, H., Werner, S., Lanza Abbott, J., Angert, C., Park, J. H., & Kohlhausen, D. (2010). Customer-centric science: Reporting significant research results with rigor, relevance, and practical impact in mind. *Organizational Research Methods*, 13(3), 515-539.
- Alikaj, A., Ning, W., & Wu, B. (2021). Proactive personality and creative behavior: Examining the role of thriving and high-engagement HR practices at work. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 5, 36.
- Ang, S. H., Bartram, T., McNeil, N., Leggat, S. G., & Stanton, P. (2013). The effects of high-performance work systems on hospital employees' work attitudes and intention to leave: A multi-level and occupational group analysis. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(16), 3086-3114.
- Antila, E. M. (2006). The role of HR managers in international mergers and acquisitions: A multiple case study. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 17(6), 999-1020.
- Appelbaum, E. (2013). The impact of new forms of work organization on workers. In G. Anthony, J. Belanger, P. A. Lapointe, & G. Murray (Eds.), *Work and employment in the high performance workplace* (pp. 120-149). Routledge.
- Armenakis, A. A., Harris, S. G., & Mossholder, K. W. (1993). Creating readiness for organizational change. *Human Relations*, 46(6), 681-703.
- Armenakis, A. A., & Bedeian, A. G. (1999). Organizational change: A review of theory and research in the 1990s. *Journal of Management*, 25(3), 293-315.
- Ashforth, B. E., & Mael, F. (1989). Social identity theory and the organization. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(1), 20-39.
- Bagdadli, S., Hayton, J. C., & Perfido, O. (2014). Reconsidering the role of HR in M&As: What can be learned from practice. *Human Resource Management*, 53(6), 1005-1025.
- Barling, J., Weber, T., & Kelloway, E. K. (1996). Effects of transformational leadership training on attitudinal and financial outcomes: A field experiment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81(6), 827.
- Bartram, T., Karimi, L., Leggat, S. G., & Stanton, P. (2014). Social identification: Linking high performance work systems, psychological empowerment and patient care. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 25(17), 2401-2419.
- Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. Free Press.
- Bass, B. M. (1999). Two decades of research and development in transformational leadership. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 8(1), 9-32.
- Bass, B. M., & Stogdill, R. M. (2010). *Bass & Stogdill's handbook of leadership: Theory, research, and managerial applications*. Simon and Schuster.
- Bedi, A. (2020). A meta-analytic review of paternalistic leadership. *Applied Psychology*, 69(3), 960-1008.
- Beer, M., & Nohria, N. (2000). Cracking the code of change. *Harvard Business Review*, 78(3),

133-141.

- Beltrán-Martín, I., Roca-Puig, V., Escrig-Tena, A., & Bou-Llusar, J. C. (2008). Human resource flexibility as a mediating variable between high performance work systems and performance. *Journal of Management*, 34(5), 1009-1044.
- Bernardin, H. J. (1984). *An analysis of black-white differences in job performance*. Academy of Management, 1, 265-268.
- Bhattacharya, M., Gibson, D. E., & Doty, D. H. (2005). The effects of flexibility in employee skills, employee behaviors, and human resource practices on firm performance. *Journal of Management*, 31(4), 622-640.
- Birkinshaw, J., Bresman, H., & Håkanson, L. (2000). Managing the post-acquisition integration process: How the human integration and task integration processes interact to foster value creation. *Journal of Management Studies*, 37(3), 395-425.
- Blumenthal, B., & Haspeslagh, P. (1994). Toward a definition of corporate transformation. *Mit Sloan Management Review*, 35(3), 101.
- Boselie, P. (2010). High performance work practices in the health care sector: A Dutch case study. *International Journal of Manpower*, 31(1), 42-58.
- Boudreau, J. W., & Jesuthasan, R. (2011). *Transformative HR: How great companies use evidence-based change for sustainable advantage*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Boyce, C., & Neale, P. (2006). *Conducting in-depth interviews: A guide for designing and conducting in-depth interviews for evaluation input*. Pathfinder international Watertown.
- Burke, R. (2013). *Project management: planning and control techniques*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Burke, W. W. (2023). *Organization change: Theory and practice*. Sage.
- Burke, W. W., & Litwin, G. H. (1992). A causal model of organizational performance and change. *Journal of Management*, 18(3), 523-545.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row.
- Burt, R. S. (1992). *The social structure of competition*. Harvard University Press.
- Cameron, E., & Green, M. (2009). *Making sense of common sense for change management*. Kogan Page.
- Cameron, K. S., & Quinn, R. E. (2011). An Introduction to changing organisational culture: Based on the competing values framework. *Diagnosing and Chaning Organisational Culture*, 4, 1-12.
- Cao, X., Furuoka, F., & Rasiah, R. (2023). Knowledge mapping of industrial upgrading research: A visual analysis using citespace. *Sustainability*, 15(24), 16547.
- Carless, S. A. (1998). Assessing the discriminant validity of transformational leader behaviour as measured by the MLQ 1. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 71(4), 353-358.
- Carroll, N., & Conboy, K. (2020). Normalising the "new normal": Changing tech-driven work practices under pandemic time pressure. *International Journal of Information Management*, 55, 102186.
- Carter, M. Z., Armenakis, A. A., Feild, H. S., & Mossholder, K. W. (2013). Transformational leadership, relationship quality, and employee performance during continuous incremental organizational change. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 34(7), 942-958.
- Cartwright, S., & Cooper, C. L. (2024). The psychological impact of merger and acquisition on the individual: A study of building society managers. In C. L. Cooper (Ed.), *Managerial, occupational and organizational stress research* (pp. 429-450). Routledge.
- Castanheira, F., & Story, J. (2016). Making good things last longer: The role of savoring on the relationship between HRM and positive employee outcomes. *Human Resource Management*, 55(6), 985-1000.
- Chang, S., Gong, Y., Way, S. A., & Jia, L. (2013). Flexibility-oriented HRM systems, absorptive capacity, and market responsiveness and firm innovativeness. *Journal of*

- Management*, 39(7), 1924-1951.
- Chen, D. S. (2011). 国际化背景下中国企业的人力资源动态性和人才配置策略 [Human resource dynamics and talent allocation strategies of Chinese enterprises in the context of internationalization]. *China Human Resources Development*, (11), 22-26.
- Cheng, D., & Wang, B. (2011). 高绩效工作系统、人际信任与组织公民行为的关系——分配公平的调节作用 [The relationship between high-performance work systems, interpersonal trust and organizational citizenship behavior: The moderating role of distributive justice]. *Journal of Management Studies*, 8(05), 727-733.
- Cheng, K. (2017). 勒文民主领导风格理论对企业人力资源管理的现实意义 [The practical significance of Lewin's democratic leadership style theory to enterprise human resource management]. *Enterprise Reform and Management*, (2), 93.
- Chiang, Y., Hsu, C., & Shih, H. (2015). Experienced high performance work system, extroversion personality, and creativity performance. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 32, 531-549.
- Child, J. (2009). Context, comparison, and methodology in Chinese management research. *Management and Organization Review*, 5(1), 57-73.
- Cho, Y., & Hwang, H. (2007). The effects of transformational leadership on subordinate's self-efficacy and subordinate's acceptance degree of leader as moderator. *Korea Journal of Hospital Management*, 12(3), 68-95.
- Choi, J. N. (2007). Change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior: Effects of work environment characteristics and intervening psychological processes. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 28(4), 467-484.
- Choi, M. (2011). Employees' attitudes toward organizational change: A literature review. *Human Resource Management*, 50(4), 479-500.
- Colbert, A. E., Kristof-Brown, A. L., Bradley, B. H., & Barrick, M. R. (2008). CEO transformational leadership: The role of goal importance congruence in top management teams. *Academy of Management Journal*, 51(1), 81-96.
- Conway, E., & Monks, K. (2008). HR practices and commitment to change: an employee-level analysis. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 18(1), 72-89.
- Cooke, F. L. (2012). The globalization of Chinese telecom corporations: Strategy, challenges and HR implications for the MNCs and host countries. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 23(9), 1832-1852.
- Crant, J. M. (2000). Proactive behavior in organizations. *Journal of Management*, 26(3), 435-462.
- Cui, F., Lim, H., & Song, J. (2022). 中国中小企业领导风格对企业创新绩效的影响：组织学习的中介作用 [The impact of leadership style on enterprise innovation performance in Chinese SMEs: The mediating role of organizational learning]. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, (6), 14.
- Dai, Q. (2016). 绩效考核定量与定性指标的适用性分析 [Analysis on the applicability of quantitative and qualitative indicators of performance appraisal]. *Human Resource Management*, (5), 68-69.
- Den Hartog, D. N., Van Muijen, J. J., & Koopman, P. L. (1997). Transactional versus transformational leadership: An analysis of the MLQ. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 70(1), 19-34.
- Deng, S. J. (2010). *Top managers' cognition and the evolution of firm's dynamic capabilities* [Doctoral dissertation]. Fudan University.
- Dhar, R. L. (2015). The effects of high performance human resource practices on service innovative behaviour. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 51, 67-75.
- Doorewaard, H., & Benschop, Y. (2003). HRM and organizational change: An emotional

- endeavor. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 16(3), 272-286.
- Downton, J. V. (1973). *Rebel leadership: Commitment and charisma in the revolutionary process*. Free Press.
- Ellinger, A. D., Watkins, K. E., & Marsick, V. J. (2005). Case study research methods. In R. A. Swanson & E. F. Holton (Eds.), *Research in organizations: Foundations and methods in inquiry* (pp. 327-350). Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Fan, D., Cui, L., Zhang, M. M., Zhu, C. J., Härtel, C. E., & Nyland, C. (2014). Influence of high performance work systems on employee subjective well-being and job burnout: Empirical evidence from the Chinese healthcare sector. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 25(7), 931-950.
- Fields, D. L., & Herold, D. M. (1997). Using the leadership practices inventory to measure transformational and transactional leadership. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 57(4), 569-579.
- Ford, J. D., & Schellenberg, D. A. (1982). Conceptual issues of linkage in the assessment of organizational performance. *Academy of Management Review*, 7(1), 49-58.
- French, W. L., Bell, C., & Zawacki, R. A. (2000). *Organization development and transformation: Managing effective change*. Irwin.
- Frese, M., Kring, W., Soose, A., & Zempel, J. (1996). Personal initiative at work: Differences between East and West Germany. *Academy of Management Journal*, 39(1), 37-63.
- Fu, N., Flood, P. C., Bosak, J., Morris, T., & O'Regan, P. (2015). How do high performance work systems influence organizational innovation in professional service firms? *Employee Relations*, 37(2), 209-231.
- Fuchs, S., & Edwards, M. R. (2012). Predicting pro-change behaviour: The role of perceived organisational justice and organisational identification. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 22(1), 39-59.
- Fugate, M. (2012). The impact of leadership, management, and HRM on employee reactions to organizational change. In J. J. Martocchio (Ed.), *Research in personnel and human resources management* (pp. 177-208). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Fugate, M., Kinicki, A. J., & Prussia, G. E. (2008). Employee coping with organizational change: An examination of alternative theoretical perspectives and models. *Personnel Psychology*, 61(1), 1-36.
- Gereffi, G. (1999). International trade and industrial upgrading in the apparel commodity chain. *Journal of International Economics*, 48(1), 37-70.
- Ghitulescu, B. E. (2013). Making change happen: The impact of work context on adaptive and proactive behaviors. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 49(2), 206-245.
- Giannikis, S., & Nikandrou, I. (2013). The impact of corporate entrepreneurship and high-performance work systems on employees' job attitudes: Empirical evidence from Greece during the economic downturn. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(19), 3644-3666.
- Girod, S. J., & Whittington, R. (2015). Change escalation processes and complex adaptive systems: From incremental reconfigurations to discontinuous restructuring. *Organization Science*, 26(5), 1520-1535.
- Grant, A. M., & Parker, S. K. (2009). 7 redesigning work design theories: The rise of relational and proactive perspectives. *Academy of Management Annals*, 3(1), 317-375.
- Greenwood, R., & Hinings, C. R. (1996). Understanding radical organizational change: Bringing together the old and the new institutionalism. *Academy of Management Review*, 21(4), 1022-1054.
- Griffin, M. A., Parker, S. K., & Mason, C. M. (2010). Leader vision and the development of adaptive and proactive performance: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 95(1), 174.

- Gu, B., Chen, F., & Zhang, K. (2021). The policy effect of green finance in promoting industrial transformation and upgrading efficiency in China: Analysis from the perspective of government regulation and public environmental demands. *Environmental Science and Pollution Research*, 28(34), 47474-47491.
- Guidice, R. M., Mero, N. P., Matthews, L. M., & Greene, J. V. (2016). The influence of individual regulatory focus and accountability form in a high performance work system. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(9), 3332-3340.
- Guo, J. (2012). *The impact of internationalized enterprise marketing dynamic capabilities on competitive strategy and performance* [Doctoral dissertation]. Nankai University.
- Hackman, J. R. (1980). Work redesign and motivation. *Professional Psychology*, 11(3), 445.
- Hatch, N. W., & Dyer, J. H. (2004). Human capital and learning as a source of sustainable competitive advantage. *Strategic Management Journal*, 25(12), 1155-1178.
- Hauff, S. (2021). Analytical strategies in HRM systems research: A comparative analysis and some recommendations. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 32(9), 1923-1952.
- Heffernan, M., Harney, B., Cafferkey, K., & Dundon, T. (2016). Exploring the HRM-performance relationship: The role of creativity climate and strategy. *Employee Relations*, 38(3), 438-462.
- Herold, D. M., Fedor, D. B., Caldwell, S., & Liu, Y. (2008). The effects of transformational and change leadership on employees' commitment to a change: A multilevel study. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(2), 346.
- Hipp, K. A., & Bredeson, P. V. (1995). Exploring connections between teacher efficacy and principals' leadership behaviors. *Journal of School Leadership*, 5(2), 136-150.
- Hou, Y. (2018). *Research on the cross-level impact mechanism of efficient human resource practices on individual creativity* [Doctoral dissertation]. Huazhong University of Science and Technology.
- Howell, J. P., & Dorfman, P. W. (1981). Substitutes for leadership: Test of a construct. *Academy of Management Journal*, 24(4), 714-728.
- Hu, S., & Wang, X. (2020). "Liberating the productive forces": Understanding China's ascent through its labor market evolution from the 1970s to the early 2000s. *Science & Society*, 84(2), 204-231.
- Huselid, M. A. (1995). The impact of human resource management practices on turnover, productivity, and corporate financial performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(3), 635-672.
- Ilgen, D. R., & Pulakos, E. D. (1999). The changing nature of performance: Implications for staffing, motivation, and development. *Personnel Psychology*, 53(1), 49-54.
- Innocenti, L., Profili, S., & Sammarra, A. (2024). Engaging chronically ill employees at work: The relationship between bundles of HR practices, perceived illness discrimination and work engagement. *Employee Relations*, 46(3), 550-565.
- Jia, D., & Fang, Y. C. (2017). 包容性人才发展模式对组织创新绩效的影响 [The impact of inclusive talent development model on organizational innovation performance]. *Science and Technology Management*, 38(S1), 14-19.
- Jiang, K., Lepak, D. P., Hu, J., & Baer, J. C. (2012). How does human resource management influence organizational outcomes? A meta-analytic investigation of mediating mechanisms. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(6), 1264-1294.
- Jiang, X. W. (2009). 国有企业领导人员综合考核评价指标体系研究 [Research on the comprehensive assessment and evaluation index system for state-owned enterprise leaders]. *Research On Financial and Economic Issues*, (07), 49-55.
- Johnson, J. W. (2001). The relative importance of task and contextual performance dimensions to supervisor judgments of overall performance. *Journal of Applied*

- Psychology*, 86(5), 984.
- Judge, T. A., Thoresen, C. J., Pucik, V., & Welbourne, T. M. (1999). Managerial coping with organizational change: A dispositional perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 84(1), 107.
- Kaya, N. (2006). The impact of human resource management practices and corporate entrepreneurship on firm performance: Evidence from Turkish firms. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 17(12), 2074-2090.
- Keane, M. (2006). From made in China to created in China. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 9(3), 285-296.
- Kehoe, R. R. (2021). Revisiting the concepts of vertical and horizontal fit in HRM: What we know, what we don't know, and where we might go. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 35(2), 175-180.
- Kehoe, R. R., & Wright, P. M. (2013). The impact of high-performance human resource practices on employees' attitudes and behaviors. *Journal of Management*, 39(2), 366-391.
- Kim, H., Lee, M., Lee, H., & Kim, N. (2010). Corporate Social Responsibility and Employee-Company Identification. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 95(4), 557-569.
- Kim, T. G., Hornung, S., & Rousseau, D. M. (2011). Change-supportive employee behavior: Antecedents and the moderating role of time. *Journal of Management*, 37(6), 1664-1693.
- Klein, S. M. (1996). A management communication strategy for change. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 9(2), 32-46.
- Krippendorff, K. (2019). The changing landscape of content analysis: Reflections on social construction of reality and beyond. *Communication & Society*, 47(1), 1-27.
- Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (1990). Transformational leadership: How principals can help reform school cultures. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 1(4), 249-280.
- Lengnick-Hall, C. A., Beck, T. E., & Lengnick-Hall, M. L. (2011). Developing a capacity for organizational resilience through strategic human resource management. *Human Resource Management Review*, 21(3), 243-255.
- LePine, J. A., & Van Dyne, L. (1998). Predicting voice behavior in work groups. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 83(6), 853.
- Levy, D. L., & Kolk, A. (2002). Strategic responses to global climate change: Conflicting pressures on multinationals in the oil industry. *Business and Politics*, 4(3), 275-300.
- Li, C. P., Tian, B., & Shi, K. (2006). 变革型领导与员工工作态度：心理授权的中介作用 [Transformational leadership and employee work attitude: The mediating role of psychological empowerment]. *Acta Psychologica Sinica*, 38(02), 297-307.
- Li, C. Q., & Shi, K. (2005). The structure and measurement of transformational leadership in China. *Acta Psychologica Sinica*, 37(06), 803.
- Liang, T. P., Wu, J. C., Jiang, J. J., & Klein, G. (2012). The impact of value diversity on information system development projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 30(6), 731-739.
- Liao, H., Toya, K., Lepak, D. P., & Hong, Y. (2009). Do they see eye to eye? Management and employee perspectives of high-performance work systems and influence processes on service quality. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94(2), 371.
- Lin, C., Yu-Ping Wang, C., Wang, C., & Jaw, B. (2017). The role of human capital management in organizational competitiveness. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 45(1), 81-92.
- Ling, Y., Simsek, Z., Lubatkin, M. H., & Veiga, J. F. (2008). 变革型首席执行官对中小型企业业绩的影响：组织背景重要吗？ [The impact of transformational CEOs on small and medium-sized firm performance: Does organizational context matter?]. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(4), 12-17.
- Liu, G. (2012). 组织变革与人力资源管理实践：基于中国创业企业管理实践的实证研究

- [Organizational change and human resource management practices: An empirical study based on the management practices of Chinese entrepreneurial enterprises]. Tsinghua University Press.
- Liu, X. (2020). Structural changes and economic growth in China over the past 40 years of reform and opening-up. *China Political Economy*, 3(1), 19-38.
- Liu, Y. Q., & Wang, H. L. (2013). Transformation and upgrading: A necessary choice for non-governmental enterprises in the new development stage. *China Finance and Economic Review*, 2(2), 5-30.
- Mao, Y. Q., & Liu, M. L. (2015). "互联网+"时代的管理会计信息化探讨——第十四届全国会计信息化学术年会主要观点综述 [Discussion on Management Accounting Informatization in 'Internet+' Times-- Major Points Review in the 14th Academic Annual Conference of National Accounting Informatization]. *Accounting Research*, (11), 3.
- Mao, Y. S., Zhang, W. T., & Wei, S. Y. (2015). 企业升级与转型：中国管理研究的前沿领域——基于SSCI与CSSCI的文献综述（2002—2013） [Enterprise upgrading and transformation: the frontier of Chinese management research: A literature review based on SSCI and CSSCI (2002-2013)]. *Academic Research*, (01), 72-82.
- Martins, N., & Coetsee, M. (2009). Applying the Burke-Litwin model as a diagnostic framework for assessing organisational effectiveness. *Journal of Human Resource Management*, 7(1), 1-13.
- Matthews, G., Campbell, S. E., Falconer, S., Joyner, L. A., Huggins, J., Gilliland, K., Grier, R., & Warm, J. S. (2002). Fundamental dimensions of subjective state in performance settings: Task engagement, distress, and worry. *Emotion*, 2(4), 315.
- McCloy, R. A., Campbell, J. P., & Cudeck, R. (1994). A confirmatory test of a model of performance determinants. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79(4), 493.
- Meaney, M., & Pung, C. (2008). McKinsey global results: Creating organizational transformations. *The McKinsey Quarterly*, 7(3), 1-7.
- Messersmith, J. G., Patel, P. C., Lepak, D. P., & Gould-Williams, J. S. (2011). Unlocking the black box: Exploring the link between high-performance work systems and performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(6), 1105.
- Miao, R., Zhou, W., Liu, L., Pan, J., & Liu, J. (2015). 高绩效工作系统是否有助于员工表达意见？一个有调节的中介模型 [Do high-performance work systems help employees express their opinions? A moderated mediation model]. *Management Review*, 27(07), 105-115.
- Miao, R., Zhou, W., & Li, T. (2013). 高绩效工作系统与员工态度：社会交换视角 [High-performance work systems and employee attitudes: A social exchange perspective]. *Management Science*, 26(05), 39-49.
- Miller, D. (2001). Successful change leaders: what makes them? What do they do that is different? *Journal of Change Management*, 2(4), 359-368.
- Molineux, J. (2013). Enabling organizational cultural change using systemic strategic human resource management—a longitudinal case study. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(8), 1588-1612.
- Morris, S. S., & Calamai, R. (2009). Dynamic HR: Global applications from IBM. *Human Resource Management*, 48(4), 641-648.
- Morrison, E. W., & Phelps, C. C. (1999). Taking charge at work: Extrarole efforts to initiate workplace change. *Academy of Management Journal*, 42(4), 403-419.
- Mostafa, A. M. S. (2016). High-performance HR practices, work stress and quit intentions in the public health sector: does person–organization fit matter? *Public Management Review*, 18(8), 1218-1237.
- Murphy, G. B., Traylor, J. W., & Hill, R. C. (1996). Measuring research performance in

- entrepreneurship. *Journal of Business Research*, 36(1), 15-23.
- Neuendorf, K. A. (2018). Content analysis and thematic analysis. In D. Giles (Ed.), *Advanced research methods for applied psychology* (pp. 211-223). Routledge.
- Newman, A., Round, H., Bhattacharya, S., & Roy, A. (2017). Ethical Climates in Organizations: A Review and Research Agenda. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 27(4), 475-512.
- Ni, Q., Wu, C. S., Xu, H., & Ye, J. F. (2017). 谦卑型文化与知识型员工创新绩效关系: 风险承担意愿与情感信任的链式中介模型 [The relationship between humble culture and knowledge workers' innovation performance: A chain mediation model of risk-taking willingness and emotional trust]. *Scientific and Technological Progress and Countermeasures*, 34(11), 132-139.
- Nie, Z. L. (2017). *Optimization design of performance management scheme for middle managers in AX Company* [Master's thesis]. Shandong University.
- Nohe, C., Michaelis, B., Menges, J. I., Zhang, Z., & Sonntag, K. (2013). Charisma and organizational change: A multilevel study of perceived charisma, commitment to change, and team performance. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 24(2), 378-389.
- Oreg, S., Vakola, M., & Armenakis, A. (2011). Change recipients' reactions to organizational change: A 60-year review of quantitative studies. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 47(4), 461-524.
- Orlikowski, W. J. (1993). CASE tools as organizational change: Investigating incremental and radical changes in systems development. *MIS Quarterly*, 7, 309-340.
- Parker, S. K., Williams, H. M., & Turner, N. (2006). Modeling the antecedents of proactive behavior at work. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(3), 636.
- Pettigrew, A. M., Woodman, R. W., & Cameron, K. S. (2001). Studying organizational change and development: Challenges for future research. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(4), 697-713.
- Pichler, S., Varma, A., Yu, A., Beenen, G., & Davoudpour, S. (2014). High performance work systems, cultures and gender demography. *Employee Relations*, 36(6), 693-707.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Paine, J. B., & Bachrach, D. G. (2000). Organizational citizenship behaviors: A critical review of the theoretical and empirical literature and suggestions for future research. *Journal of Management*, 26(3), 513-563.
- Porras, J. I., & Silvers, R. C. (1991). Organization development and transformation. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 42(1), 51-78.
- Pulakos, E. D., Arad, S., Donovan, M. A., & Plamondon, K. E. (2000). Adaptability in the workplace: Development of a taxonomy of adaptive performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85(4), 612.
- Qi, Z. J., & Wang, C. M. (2010). 企业创业战略、人力资源结构与人力资源战略研究 [Research on enterprise entrepreneurship strategy, human resource structure and human resource strategy]. *Science and Technology Management*, 31(04), 146-155.
- Qian, Y. (2001). Government control in corporate governance as a transitional institution: Lessons from China. In J. E. Stiglitz & S. Yusuf (Eds.), *Rethinking the east Asian miracle* (pp. 295-322). World Bank Publications.
- Quinn, R. E., & Rohrbaugh, J. (1981). A competing values approach to organizational effectiveness. *Public Productivity Review*, 8, 122-140.
- Rafferty, A. E., & Griffin, M. A. (2006). Perceptions of organizational change: A stress and coping perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(5), 1154.
- Ramdani, B., Mellahi, K., Guermat, C., & Kechad, R. (2014). The efficacy of high performance work practices in the Middle East: Evidence from Algerian firms. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 25(2), 252-275.
- Reza, M. H. (2019). Components of transformational leadership behaviour. *International*

- Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 5(3), 119-124.
- Robertson, P. J., Roberts, D. R., & Porras, J. I. (1993). Dynamics of planned organizational change: Assessing empirical support for a theoretical model. *Academy of Management Journal*, 36(3), 619-634.
- Rowley, J. (2002). Using case studies in research. *Management Research News*, 25(1), 16-27.
- Sanchez, R. (1995). Strategic flexibility in product competition. *Strategic Management Journal*, 16(S1), 135-159.
- Schein, E. P. (2016). *Organizational culture and leadership*. Wiley.
- Schuler, R., & Jackson, S. (2017). HR issues and activities in mergers and acquisitions. In R. S. Schuler, P. S. Budhwar, & G. W. Florkowski (Eds.), *International human resource management* (pp. 445-458). Routledge.
- Scott, S. G., & Bruce, R. A. (1994). Determinants of innovative behavior: A path model of individual innovation in the workplace. *Academy of Management Journal*, 37(3), 580-607.
- Seashore, S. E., & Yuchtman, E. (1967). Factorial analysis of organizational performance. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 12(3), 377-395.
- Seo, M., & Hill, N. S. (2005). Understanding the human side of merger and acquisition: An integrative framework. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 41(4), 422-443.
- Shen, J., Benson, J., & Huang, B. (2014). High-performance work systems and teachers' work performance: The mediating role of quality of working life. *Human Resource Management*, 53(5), 817-833.
- Shen, L., Fan, R., Wang, Y., Yu, Z., & Tang, R. (2020). Impacts of environmental regulation on the green transformation and upgrading of manufacturing enterprises. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(20), 7680.
- Shih, H., Chiang, Y., & Hsu, C. (2013). High performance work system and HCN performance. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(4), 540-546.
- Sikora, D. M., Ferris, G. R., & Van Iddekinge, C. H. (2015). Line manager implementation perceptions as a mediator of relations between high-performance work practices and employee outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100(6), 1908.
- Stone, D. L., Deadrick, D. L., Lukaszewski, K. M., & Johnson, R. (2015). The influence of technology on the future of human resource management. *Human Resource Management Review*, 25(2), 216-231.
- Subramanian, G. H., Jiang, J. J., & Klein, G. (2007). Software quality and IS project performance improvements from software development process maturity and IS implementation strategies. *Journal of Systems and Software*, 80(4), 616-627.
- Sun, L. Y., Aryee, S., & Law, K. S. (2007). High-performance human resource practices, citizenship behavior, and organizational performance: A relational perspective. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(3), 558-577.
- Takeuchi, R., Lepak, D. P., Wang, H., & Takeuchi, K. (2007). An empirical examination of the mechanisms mediating between high-performance work systems and the performance of Japanese organizations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(4), 1069.
- Tan, B. Y., & Zhao, X. F. (2009). 组织变革新常态下的人力资源管理策略 [Human resource management strategy under the new situation of organizational change]. *China Human Resources Development*, (9), 100-102.
- Teece, D. J., Pisano, G., & Shuen, A. (1997). Dynamic capabilities and strategic management. *Strategic Management Journal*, 18(7), 509-533.
- Toms, W. M., Kovacs, E. B., & Immordino, K. M. (2011). Planned radical change in organizations: Unintended consequences on roles and continuity. *Journal of Enterprise Transformation*, 1(2), 98-118.
- Tosi, H. L., Misangyi, V. F., Fanelli, A., Waldman, D. A., & Yammarino, F. J. (2004). CEO

- charisma, compensation, and firm performance. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 15(3), 405-420.
- Van de Ven, A. H., & Jing, R. (2012). Indigenous management research in China from an engaged scholarship perspective. *Management and Organization Review*, 8(1), 123-137.
- Van de Voorde, K., & Beijer, S. (2015). The role of employee HR attributions in the relationship between high-performance work systems and employee outcomes. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 25(1), 62-78.
- Van den Heuvel, M., Demerouti, E., & Bakker, A. B. (2014). How psychological resources facilitate adaptation to organizational change. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 23(6), 847-858.
- Van Iddekinge, C. H., Aguinis, H., Mackey, J. D., & DeOrtentiis, P. S. (2018). A meta-analysis of the interactive, additive, and relative effects of cognitive ability and motivation on performance. *Journal of Management*, 44(1), 249-279.
- Van Knippenberg, B., Martin, L., & Tyler, T. (2006). Process-orientation versus outcome-orientation during organizational change: The role of organizational identification. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 27(6), 685-704.
- Waldman, D. A., Ramirez, G. G., House, R. J., & Puranam, P. (2001). Does leadership matter? CEO leadership attributes and profitability under conditions of perceived environmental uncertainty. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(1), 134-143.
- Wanberg, C. R., & Banas, J. T. (2000). Predictors and outcomes of openness to changes in a reorganizing workplace. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85(1), 132.
- Wang, C. M., & Li, K. (2011). 组织变革特征、人力资源战略与变革应对行为的实验研究：组织学习的视角 [An experimental study on organizational change characteristics, human resource strategies and change response behaviors: An organizational learning perspective]. *Applied Psychology*, 17(02), 99-107.
- Wang, W. (2015). *Research on optimization of internal rating indicators for Ping An Bank's corporate business* [Master's thesis]. Lanzhou University.
- Weber, I. (2020). Origins of China's contested relation with neoliberalism: Economics, the World Bank, and Milton Friedman at the dawn of reform. *Global Perspectives*, 1(1), 12271.
- Weber, Y., & Tarba, S. Y. (2010). Human resource practices and performance of mergers and acquisitions in Israel. *Human Resource Management Review*, 20(3), 203-211.
- Weckenmann, A., Akkasoglu, G., & Werner, T. (2015). Quality management—history and trends. *The TQM Journal*, 27(3), 281-293.
- Wei, C. Z. (2012). 变革型领导对员工心理授权的影响研究 [A study on the impact of transformational leadership on employee psychological empowerment]. *Manage Comments*, 24(5), 89.
- Wei, Y., Han, T., & Hsu, I. (2010). High-performance HR practices and OCB: A cross-level investigation of a causal path. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 21(10), 1631-1648.
- Weick, K. E., & Quinn, R. E. (1999). Organizational change and development. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 50(1), 361-386.
- Whelan-Berry, K. S., & Somerville, K. A. (2010). Linking change drivers and the organizational change process: A review and synthesis. *Journal of Change Management*, 10(2), 175-193.
- Wright, P. M., & Snell, S. A. (1998). Toward a unifying framework for exploring fit and flexibility in strategic human resource management. *Academy of Management Review*, 23(4), 756-772.
- Wu, J. X., & Li, H. S. (2009). 浙江省中小企业升级转型调研报告 [Research report on upgrading and transformation of small and medium-sized enterprises in Zhejiang]

- Province]. *Management World*, (08), 1-5.
- Wu, P. C., & Chaturvedi, S. (2009). The role of procedural justice and power distance in the relationship between high performance work systems and employee attitudes: A multilevel perspective. *Journal of Management*, 35(5), 1228-1247.
- Xie, F. Z. (2019). China's economic development and development economics innovation. *Social Sciences in China*, 40(2), 100-110.
- Yan, S. M., & Wang, C. M. (2005). 并购式内创业中人力资源整合水平的选择:一个实证研究 [The choice of human resource integration level in intrapreneurship through mergers and acquisitions: An empirical study]. *Managing the World*, (09), 107-118.
- Yang, C., Chen, Y., Zhao, X. R., & Hua, N. (2020). 变革型领导力、主动性人格与服务绩效 [Transformational leadership, proactive personality and service performance]. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, (1), 32.
- Yang, X. Q. (2017). *Optimization design of performance management scheme in H Company* [Master's thesis]. Shandong University.
- Yauch, C. A., & Steudel, H. J. (2003). Complementary use of qualitative and quantitative cultural assessment methods. *Organizational Research Methods*, 6(4), 465-481.
- Ybema, J. F., van Vuuren, T., & van Dam, K. (2020). HR practices for enhancing sustainable employability: implementation, use, and outcomes. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 31(7), 886-907.
- You, L. J. (2020). *The impact of performance pressure on job vitality and employee innovation behavior* [Master's thesis]. Nanjing University of Finance and Economics.
- Yu, D., & Zhang, Y. (2018). China's industrial transformation and the "new normal". In J. N. Pieterse (Ed.), *China's contingencies and globalization* (pp. 91-113). Routledge.
- Zhang, B., & Morris, J. L. (2014). High-performance work systems and organizational performance: Testing the mediation role of employee outcomes using evidence from PR China. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 25(1), 68-90.
- Zhang, J. Y. (1995). 民主领导风格的建设性要素 [Constructive elements of democratic leadership style]. *Leadership Science*, (03), 38.
- Zhang, M., Zhu, C. J., Dowling, P. J., & Bartram, T. (2013). Exploring the effects of high-performance work systems (HPWS) on the work-related well-being of Chinese hospital employees. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(16), 3196-3212.
- Zhang, Z. G., Cao, D. T., & Xiang, S. R. (2017). 制度背景、董事长任期与企业技术创新绩效 [Institutional background, chairman tenure and corporate technological innovation performance]. *China Soft Science*, (10), 114-127.
- Zhao, W., & Huang, L. (2022). 绿色变革型领导、绿色人力资源管理、绿色创新和组织支持对可持续企业绩效的影响: 来自中国的证据 [The impact of green transformational leadership, green human resource management, green innovation and organizational support on sustainable enterprise performance: Evidence from China]. *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istrazivanja*, (1), 35.
- Zhong, J., & Chen, S. (2007). 外部环境、创新平衡与组织绩效的实证研究 [An empirical study on external environment, innovation balance and organizational performance]. *Science of Science and Management*, (05), 67-71.
- Zhong, L., Wayne, S. J., & Liden, R. C. (2016). Job engagement, perceived organizational support, high-performance human resource practices, and cultural value orientations: A cross-level investigation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 37(6), 823-844.

[This page is deliberately left blank.]

Annex A: Other Tables

Table A.1 Frequencies for external environment (period 2)

Category	Subcategory	Period 2 External environment (N Max=12)	Frequency (how many times)	Number (how many individuals mentioned it)
		Excerpt		
Market dynamism	competitive fierce	“At the same time, however, the market is becoming increasingly competitive. With the gradual decline of global gold resources, gold mining companies need to face fierce competition from their peers.”(I12-P2)	2	2
	the surged demand	“For the gold minerals sector, market demand remains solid. As a safe-haven asset, the investment value of gold has become more and more prominent against the backdrop of increased global economic uncertainty. ”(I21-P2)	7	6
	technological innovation and digitalisation trends	“it is under such an environment that digital transformation has become an inevitable trend for business development, and it also provides a brand new development idea for our gold minerals business.” (I21-P2)	4	3
	great volatility	“The years 2020-2021 will undoubtedly be a period full of challenges and opportunities for the Company. Fluctuations in the global economic situation, increasing scarcity of mineral resources and rising environmental protection requirements have put the Company through great trials in these two years.” (I14-P2)	9	7
Market prosperity	rising sustainable development	“countries' focus on sustainable development is also on the rise, which has put forward new requirements for the mining and utilisation of gold minerals. ”(I20-P2)	3	2
	the policy's support	“the monetary policies of major central banks around the world also pushed up the price of gold. In response to the recession brought about by the epidemic, central banks adopted loose monetary policies, and a large amount of money flooded into the market, driving up the price of gold. This trend was particularly	5	5

uncertainty and riskiness of the market	evident in 2020-2021. "(I14-P2) "uncertainty and volatility in the global economy remained (...) These factors have brought certain pressure and challenges to the global gold market." (I16-P2)	5	4
---	---	---	---

Table A.2 Frequencies for leadership (period 2)

		Period 2 Leadership (N Max=23)			
Category	Subcategory	Excerpt		Freq.	N.
Transformation leadership	inspirational motivation	“whether top management would give people inspiration about the future was also certain. In the gold mining industry, companies need to keep exploring new mining areas and developing new technologies and management models to maintain a competitive edge. Top management, as the leaders of the organisation, need to be forward-looking and innovative in their thinking to provide inspiration and direction to their subordinates about the future. By sharing information on industry trends, market opportunities and challenges, they inspired their subordinates to innovate and drive their organisations to grow and develop.”(I22-P2)		17	10
	idealized influence	“I remember before the company took over a large amount of gold trading project, the department manager personally take command, leading the team to fight in the front line. In the process of project implementation, the department manager strictly control every link to ensure that the transaction is safe and smooth. At the same time, he is very concerned about the life and work status of team members, often encouraging everyone to stick to the end, do not give up.” (I5-P2)		13	9
	individualized consideration	“I know first-hand that managers often provided specific work instructions for us front-line staff. I remember that once, when I was handling a large gold transaction, I was confused about certain details of the contract terms. When my supervisor learnt about it, he took the initiative to talk to me, explained the meaning of these terms one by one, and taught me how to better protect the company's interests in the transaction.”(I7-P2)		45	12
	intellectual stimulation	“Managers were not only the ones who directed their employees to complete tasks, they were also the ones who inspired their employees to step up to the plate with initiatives, ideas and risks. They inspired their employees to be motivated and innovative by leading by example and demonstrating their leadership skills and creative thinking.”(I12-P2)		39	12
Transactional leadership	management by exception	passive	-	0	0
		active	-	0	0

Paternalistic leadership	contingent rewards	“...we evaluate and rewarded employees primarily based on their performance and performance.”(I8-P2)	13	7
	ethical leadership	“It seems to me that my leaders did strive to be models of moral superiority. They have earned the respect and praise of their colleagues by being fair and leading by example in the conduct of their affairs.”(I6-P2)	4	4
	compassionate leadership	“managers paid close attention to communication and feedback with frontline staff. They had regular one-on-one conversations with employees to find out how they were doing, what difficulties they were encountering and where they needed support. This kind of interaction not only made frontline employees feel the company's care and support, but also gave them more motivation to improve their work.”(I6-P2)	1	1
	authoritative leadership	“In some cases, leaders may have required absolute obedience from subordinates to ensure the smooth running of the work, such as in emergency situations or jobs that require a high degree of discipline.”(I22-P2)	10	8

Table A.3 Frequencies for mission, strategy, culture (period 2)

Period 2 Mission, Strategy, Culture (N Max=23)				
Subcategory	Excerpt	Freq.	N.	
the pursuit of excellence growth-oriented	“Gold Minerals Company took ‘pursuing excellence, innovation and enterprise’ as its enterprise spirit, and paid attention to the personal growth and ability enhancement of its employees.” (I12-P2)	8	5	
	“Our company advocated a "people-centred, mutual growth" style of leadership. This style emphasises respect for every employee, believes in their potential and creativity, and encourages them to take the initiative in their work and come up with innovative ideas and solutions. At the same time, the leadership also paid great attention to communication and exchange with employees, listening to their opinions and suggestions, and timely adjusting the management strategy and direction, in order to achieve the common development of the company and employees.”(I8-P2)	8	6	
sustainable development and environmental protection	“Environmental protection and sustainable development: With the increase of global environmental protection awareness, gold mining companies have also begun to pay attention to the construction of green mines, environmental protection and sustainable development. The company was committed to building safe and green mines, caring for its employees, and at the same time, actively taking social responsibility and enthusiastically participating in public welfare undertakings.” (I16-P2)	9	6	
emphasises social responsibility	“...The company cared for its employees, was committed to the construction of a harmonious community, actively undertook social responsibility, and enthusiastically participated in public welfare undertakings. These initiatives not only reflected the company's sense of social responsibility, but also enhanced the company's brand image, laying a solid foundation for the company's long-term development.”(I14-P2)	8	7	
team orientation	"Gold Minerals Company advocated the enterprise spirit of unity, innovation, pragmatism and efficiency, and	9	7	

	focused on the growth and development of employees. Under such a cultural atmosphere, I deeply feel that I was a member of the company's big family and contributed to the company's development together with everyone." (I18-P2)		
innovation	"Gold Minerals Company advocated the enterprise spirit of unity, innovation, pragmatism and efficiency, and focused on the growth and development of employees. Under such a cultural atmosphere, I deeply feel that I was a member of the company's big family and contributed to the company's development together with everyone." (I18-P2)	10	6
profit oriented	"The culture of gold mining, as a resource-intensive industry, typically emphasised safety, efficiency, sustainability and a focus on environmental and social responsibility. These values were not only reflected in the company's day-to-day operations and strategic decisions, but were also embedded in the code of conduct of each and every employee." (I14-P2)	3	3
guided by ideals	"The top management of gold mining companies emphasised not only short-term profit growth, but also the long-term sustainability of the company. They realised that in order to remain competitive, they must continue to innovate technology and improve mining efficiency, while focusing on environmental protection and sustainability." (I22-P2)	8	6
enhancing brand presence	"... company's overarching objectives may cover a number of areas, such as increasing market share, optimising supply chain management, enhancing brand presence, improving customer satisfaction, and so on. " (I8-P2)	1	1
increasing market share	"our short-term goals included increasing market share, improving customer satisfaction and operational efficiency." (I6-P2)	3	2
technological innovation	"A simple description: to be a global leader in the gold mining industry through continuous innovation and technology leadership, and to achieve sustainable development and social responsibility." (I14-P2)	6	5
setting a benchmark	"Our vision was to be a leader in the gold trading sector, setting a benchmark in the industry through efficient, transparent and accountable operations." (I6-P2)	1	1
customer satisfaction enhancement	"... company's overarching objectives may cover a number of areas, such as increasing market share, optimising supply chain management, enhancing brand presence, improving customer satisfaction, and so on. " (I8-P2)	4	4
become a leader in the gold industry	"Our company's strategy and vision, "to become a global leader in the gold industry through sustainable mining and technological innovation", succinctly summarised the company's goals and direction." (I16-P2)	5	5
sustainable social and environmental responsibility	"Gold Minerals also focused on sustainable development, was committed to building a safe green mine, and constantly consolidated the achievements of green mine construction. The company cared for its employees, was committed to the construction of a harmonious community, actively undertook social responsibility, and enthusiastically participates in public welfare undertakings. These initiatives not only reflected the company's sense of social responsibility, but also enhanced the company's brand image, laying a solid foundation for the company's long-term development. " (I14-P2)	8	8

Table A.4 Frequency descriptives for management & HRM (period 2)

		Period 2 Management & HRM (N Max=11)		
Category	Subcategory	Excerpt	Freq.	N.
Monitor, control, correct	Monitor, control, correct	-	0	0
	information sharing and performance feedback	“Supervisors and managers placed great emphasis on communication with their employees. They maintained close contact with their employees through a variety of channels, such as regular team meetings, one-on-one conversations, and internal newsletters. At Gold Trading, employees were encouraged to put forward their ideas and suggestions, and the company's decisions took into account their opinions....Gold Trading Company placed great emphasis on performance feedback. Employees received regular feedback from their direct supervisors and other colleagues about their performance at work.”(I7-P2)	3	3
	compensation and incentives	“Compensation and incentives at gold trading companies were often generous compared to industry averages. This is not only because companies need to attract and retain good people, but also because they realise that reasonable remuneration and incentives can motivate their employees and increase their productivity. ”(I5-P2)	3	3
	training and development	“The company invested heavily in training. When new employees joined the company, they received a series of basic training to help them adapt quickly to their jobs. In addition, the company regularly provided advanced training for employees to enhance their professional skills and knowledge. These trainings were not only for frontline staff, but also for management.”(I7-P2)	8	4
	team autonomy and self-management	“The company had a strong focus on fostering team autonomy. They believed that employees were more engaged and productive when they were trusted and empowered to self-manage and make decisions. ”(I7-P2)	4	4
	recruitment & selection	“When it comes to recruitment, investing a lot of effort in quality selection testing is key to ensuring that the right people are recruited. This testing may include skills assessments, personality tests, background checks and many other aspects to ensure that new hires were able to quickly integrate into the team and contribute to the organisation.” (I1-P2)	4	4
	job stability and shift systems	“When considering work stability and shifts, the Company usually adjusted to business needs. Whilst we endeavour to ensure that employees work relatively stable hours, there were certain circumstances, such as responding to unforeseen events or peaks in business demand, where shift work was necessary. ”(I8-P2)	2	2
	employment stability and work contracts	“The company focused on providing long-term, stable employment opportunities for its employees. This is reflected in the duration of contracts, where we preferred to offer long-term contracts to our employees to reduce their job insecurity.” (I8-P2)	4	4

Plan, budgeting, goal setting	training programme	“The company invested heavily in staff training. We offered our employees a wide range of training programmes designed to help them develop their skills and do their jobs better. These include skills training, leadership training and career development programmes.”(I8-P2)	2	2
----------------------------------	-----------------------	--	---	---

Table A.5 Frequency descriptives for behavioural outcomes (period 2)

Category	Subcategory	Period 2 Behavioural outcomes		
		Excerpt	Freq.	N.
Ability enhancement	Recruitment (Comprehensive)	“When it comes to recruiting new people, gold trading companies usually put a lot of effort and resources into making quality screenings. This is because frontline staff are directly related to gold trading and their skills and experience are crucial to the company's operations.”(I5-P2)	2	2/16
	Selection (Rigorous)	“When it comes to recruitment, investing a lot of effort in quality selection testing is key to ensuring that the right people were recruited. This testing may include skills assessments, personality tests, background checks and many other aspects to ensure that new hires were able to quickly integrate into the team and contribute to the organisation.” (I1-P2)	2	2/16
	Training (Extensive)	“The company invested heavily in training. When new employees joined the company, they received a series of basic training to help them adapt quickly to their jobs. In addition, the company regularly provided advanced training for employees to enhance their professional skills and knowledge. These trainings were not only for frontline staff, but also for management.”(I7-P2)	8	5/16
Motivation enhancement	Recognition	“In such projects, I could make full use of my strengths to provide accurate data analyses and innovative solutions that could bring tangible performance improvement and profit growth to the company. Such work made me feel my value and importance, and gave me more motivation to continuously improve my ability and skills.”(I22-P2)	5	5/23
	Job security	“The company focused on providing long-term, stable employment opportunities for its employees. This is reflected in the duration of contracts, where we preferred to offer long-term contracts to our employees to reduce their job insecurity.” (I8-P2)	1	1/23
	Promotion and career development	“The company offered a wealth of promotion opportunities for its employees. In promotion decisions, we evaluated employees primarily based on their performance and performance. This means that as long as an employee excels in his or her job, he or she had the opportunity to be promoted. In addition, we also considered other criteria such as an employee's potential, teamwork and leadership skills.”(I8-P2)	6	5/23
	Extensive benefits	“the incentives given to me by the company were also an important source of motivation for my work. The company not only had a perfect salary system, but also a variety of training opportunities and promotion opportunities, which all let me see my future and hope in the company. At the same time, the company also attached great importance to staff welfare, such	6	3/23

Opportunity enhancement	Competitive compensation, incentives and rewards	as providing health insurance, regular medical check-ups, etc. All these made me feel that the company cared about and supports its employees. "(I16-P2) "Compared with its peers, Gold Trading Company's salaries and incentives were relatively generous. Not only did the company set reasonable salaries based on the position, work experience and skill level of its employees, but it had also established a series of incentive systems such as bonuses and commissions to recognise the contributions and efforts of its employees. "(I7-P2)	10	7/23
	Developmental performance management	"the incentives given to me by the company were also an important source of motivation for my work. The company not only had a perfect salary system, but also a variety of training opportunities and promotion opportunities, which all let me see my future and hope in the company. At the same time, the company also attached great importance to staff welfare, such as providing health insurance, regular medical check-ups, etc. All these made me feel that the company cared about and supports its employees. "(I16-P2)	7	6/23
	Flexible work design	-	0	0/16
	Work teams	-	0	0/16
	Employee involvement	-	0	0/16
	Information sharing	"Supervisors and managers placed great emphasis on communication with their employees. They maintained close contact with their employees through a variety of channels, such as regular team meetings, one-on-one conversations, and internal newsletters. At Gold Trading, employees were encouraged to put forward their ideas and suggestions, and the company's decisions took into account their opinions..."(I7-P2)	3	3/16

Table A.6 Frequency descriptives for performance (period 2)

		Period 2 Performance (N Max=20)		
Category	Subcategory	Excerpt	Freq.	N.
Organisational performance	good cooperative relationships	“I would like to say that our company was a very teamwork and culture orientated company. Here, you could feel a warm, harmonious and positive atmosphere. Everyone was working hard for a common goal, supporting and encouraging each other.”(I8-P2)	2	1
	high market share	“Market share growth: compared with other companies in the same industry, our company's market share has increased during 2020-2021. This indicates that our company's market strategy and product positioning have been recognised by the market and our company's influence in the industry is gradually expanding.”(I12-P2)	7	6
	innovation	“Technological innovation: Our company has continuously carried out technological innovation in gold mineral mining and refining, which has improved production efficiency and product quality.	3	3

Individual performance	strong competitiveness high visibility and reputation	This not only helped to enhance our core competitiveness, but also contributed to the sustainable development of the industry.” (I12-P2)		
		“...Gold Minerals has demonstrated its outstanding corporate strength and unique competitive advantages.” (I18-P2)	6	5
		“our company has also done very well in marketing and brand building. In the complex and changing internal and external environment of the industry, our company still managed to keep the sales channels open and the brand image stable, winning the trust and loyalty of our customers.” (I18-P2)	3	2
	profitability stability	“Improved profitability: Our profitability has been significantly improved while maintaining gold production. This is attributable to our effective cost control, optimised operational management and improved market competitiveness.” (I12-P2)	4	4
	rich technical experience and expertise	“our top management has done a remarkable job in this regard. Not only did we have a wealth of industry experience and deep expertise, but we also had a forward-looking strategic vision that enabled us to accurately judge market trends and formulate long-term development plans for the company. This leadership has undoubtedly laid a solid foundation for the company's performance.” (I20-P2)	3	3
	leading position	“In the process of exploration, mining and refining of mineral resources, the Company has always insisted on being led by scientific and technological innovation, and has continuously improved its production efficiency and product quality through the introduction and independent research and development of advanced technology and equipment. This has enabled the Company to maintain its leading position in the fierce market competition.” (I18-P2)	3	3
	duty and contribution	“I would like to say that, although I am not a manager, and there are not too many magnificent figures and achievements to support, but I can proudly say that I have done my duty, with practical action for the company's gold minerals business to contribute their own strength.” (I7-P2)	1	1
	teamwork skills	“The importance of teamwork in gold minerals work cannot be overstated. I always believe that one person's power is limited, but a united team can create miracles. Once, we encountered a technical problem in ore mining, which could not be solved by me alone. So I took the initiative to communicate with my team members, and we all worked together, and finally succeeded in overcoming the technical difficulties.” (I5-P2)	2	2
	professional knowledge and practical experience	“front-line employees need to have rich professional knowledge and practical experience. In the gold mining industry, every link involves complex geological, chemical and physical knowledge....once we encountered a rare type of ore during exploration. In order to accurately judge its value and the difficulty of mining, I consulted a large amount of information and a number of experts, and finally formulated a scientific and reasonable mining plan.” (I8-P2)	2	2

Table A.7 Frequency descriptives for external environment (period 3)

Period 3 External environment (N Max=13)				
Category	Subcategory	Excerpt	Freq	N.
Market dynamism	the strengthened state's supervision of the gold industry	“the impact of policy regulation on the gold industry should not be ignored. During the time I have been working, I have personally experienced a series of national policy adjustments on the gold industry.”(I23-P3)	3	3
	uncertainty of the market	“As for the external environment, the global economy is in a period of complexity and change, with the far-reaching impact of the new crown epidemic, slowing world economic growth, rising trade protectionism and increasing uncertainty.” (I17-P3)	2	2
	the surged demand	“with the increase in consumer demand for gold investment, the consumer demand for gold is also growing steadily. ”(I21-P3)	7	7
	Fierce competition	“the intensity of competition in the market is also a point that I deeply feel. As one of the traditional industries, the gold industry has a relatively mature market with many competitors. ”(I23-P3)	8	8
	technological innovation and digitalisation trends	“the global economy is undergoing a transformation driven by digital transformation. In this change, the application of new technologies such as big data, cloud computing and artificial intelligence is reshaping the competitive landscape of various industries. We in the gold industry are not immune to this. On the one hand, these new technologies bring great convenience and efficiency improvements to our production, sales and supply chain management... ”(I24-P3)	7	7
	Increased volatility	“Increased volatility in the gold market: Volatility in the gold market has increased due to global economic and geopolitical uncertainty. Investor demand for gold is volatile, driven by risk aversion and inflationary expectations. ”(I14-P3)	4	4
Market prosperity	the policy's support	“With the national policy adjustment of the gold industry, the industry has ushered in a more relaxed development environment. Such as the introduction of tax incentives, financial support and other policies, for enterprises to provide a broader space for development. ”(I25-P3)	6	6
	demand steady growth	“Starting in 2021, with the advancement of vaccinations and economic stimulus policies by governments, the global economy is gradually recovering, although the recovery process is still unbalanced and uncertain. The global economy is expected to grow steadily against the backdrop of increased volatility and uncertainty in the global economy. Demand for gold, as a safe-haven asset, is expected to maintain steady growth against the backdrop of increased volatility and uncertainty in the global economy.” (I16-P3)	3	3
	sustainable development and environmental protection pressure	“Sustainable development and environmental protection pressure: Globally, the concern for sustainable development is rising, and companies and governments are facing increasing environmental protection pressure. For the gold industry, how to ensure production while reducing environmental pollution and carbon emissions is an important topic. ”(I14-P3)	4	4

increased geopolitical risks

“International political and economic environment
Under the current complex international political and economic situation, the value of gold as a safe-haven asset is becoming increasingly prominent. Factors such as the intensification of geopolitical risks and the adjustment of the monetary policies of major economies may have a far-reaching impact on the price of gold.”(I15-P3)

4

4

Table A.8 Leadership (period 3)

		Period 3 Leadership (N Max=26)			
Category	Subcategory		Excerpt	Freq.	N.
Transformation leadership	inspirational motivation		"Yes, managers usually give people inspiration about the future. They usually have a long-term vision and strategic thinking, and are able to see the future direction and opportunities of the company. By communicating with their subordinates and sharing the company's strategy and vision, managers are able to inspire their subordinates to be enthusiastic and expectant about the future and motivate them to work hard to achieve the company's long-term goals. "(I16-P3)	25	18
	idealized influence		"The company's strategy and vision builds a style of leadership that I would describe as "leading by silence, leading by example". In this style, the typical manager doesn't talk too much, but rather influences and motivates the team through his or her actions. They are down-to-earth, demonstrating their ideas and commitments with real actions, not just verbal promises." (I14-P3)	30	21
	individualized consideration		"...he(leader) not only cared about our work progress, but also frequently enquired about our health conditions. When he learnt that an employee was sick, he would take the initiative to provide medical help and adjust the work schedule to alleviate the employee's burden. " (I14-P3)	76	23
	intellectual stimulation		“We encourage our employees to put forward their opinions and suggestions, and we believe that the company can only continue to improve if the voices of our employees are heard. ”(I1-P3)	66	22
Transactional leadership	management by exception	passive	-	0	0
		active	-	0	0
	contingent rewards		“the company to set up clear promotion channels and attractive salary system, so that employees understand that as long as they work hard, they will be able to get better career development and higher income; or through the establishment of the "best employee", "best team" and other awards, regular recognition of outstanding Or by setting up awards such as "Best Employee" and "Best Team" to regularly recognise outstanding employees and teams, in order to set an example and motivate all employees.”(I9-P3)	9	8
Paternalistic leadership	ethical leadership		“Some leaders do pay great attention to their own moral cultivation. Not only do they show a high degree of integrity and responsibility in their work, they also set a good example for their employees by setting a good example in their daily life. Such leaders, in my opinion, can achieve a score of 10 on their moral index.” (I1-P3)	15	14

compassionate leadership	"I once met a leader who very much encouraged us to come up with our own ideas and suggestions. Even if sometimes our ideas were different from his, he would still listen carefully and consider our views, such a leader is very open and tolerant. "(I10-P3)	3	3
authoritative leadership	"The top management of the company will show absolute authority in strategic planning and major decision-making to ensure that the company's development direction is clear and stable. "(I3-P3)	6	6

Table A.9 Mission, strategy, culture (period 3)

		Period 3 Mission, Strategy, Culture (N Max=26)		
Category	Subcategory	Excerpt	Freq.	N.
Culture	rule-orientation	"the organisational culture may place more emphasis on norms and processes,... "(I19-P3)	1	1
	growth-oriented	"The company encourages its employees to keep learning and growing, and provides abundant training and learning resources. Working here, I can continuously improve my skills and abilities and lay a solid foundation for my career development." (I19-P3)	3	3
	sustainable development	"we also attach great importance to social responsibility and sustainable development, and endeavour to contribute to the protection of the environment and the promotion of social progress. "(I25-P3)	4	4
	social responsibility	"we also attach great importance to social responsibility and sustainable development, and endeavour to contribute to the protection of the environment and the promotion of social progress." (I25-P3)	6	6
	efficiency	"the pursuit of efficiency and innovation, the importance of teamwork and communication, the emphasis on responsibility and accountability, and the pursuit of sustainable development. "(I2-P3)	5	4
	team orientation	"The values of teamwork, innovation, accountability, integrity and continuous learning are at the heart of the organisation's culture. In such a culture, every member is encouraged to realise his/her potential, actively participate in teamwork, take responsibility, and continue to learn and improve. Such an organisational culture not only provides strong competitiveness for the organisation, but also provides room for each member to grow and develop. "(I5-P3)	28	18
	innovation	"we also encourage innovation and exploration, and provide our employees with broad space and opportunities for development. This cultural atmosphere leads to trust and respect among team members, who are willing to collaborate and make progress together. "(I25-P3)	20	15
	pursuing excellence	"the pursuit of excellence is another important value in the organisational culture of my company. I believe that only through the constant pursuit of excellence can we stand invincible in the fierce market competition. Therefore, I focus on continuous learning and improvement of my own business ability and management level in my work, encourage team members to be proactive and innovative, and strive to pursue excellence in sales performance and service quality. "(I18-P3)	9	7
Strategy	expand market share	"This company, acquired by state-owned capital and focusing on gold production and trading since 2021, has a clear and determined strategy and vision: driven by innovation, we continue to optimise our production processes, upgrade our gold mining and refining technologies, broaden our international markets, and seek to achieve steady growth in company performance while maintaining environmental	2	2

Mission	the development and trading of gold minerals	sustainability."(I23-P3) "The company's strategy is to focus on the development and trading of gold minerals and its vision is to become a leading gold supplier in the industry. "(I18-P3)	3	3
	harmonious staff development	"The vision that frontline managers adhere to in the field of gold mining and trading is to build a corporate empire with sustainable resource utilisation, market dominance and harmonious staff development." (I16-P3)	1	1
	innovation-driven development	"the company invested a lot of R&D resources in a mining technology upgrade project at a mine, which not only greatly improved the efficiency of gold mining, but also paid attention to environmental protection and ensured that the ecological environment around the mine was properly protected. Such a project is a vivid embodiment of the company's strategic vision of 'scientific and technological innovation and sustainable development'". (I25-P3)	13	9
	the prosperity and development of the gold trade	"The golden rule for first-line managers: dig deep into minerals, expand trade, and forge industry benchmarks. This statement not only captures the company's strategic vision to explore gold mineral resources and expand gold trading business extensively, but also reflects the company's pursuit of industry leadership."(I19-P3)	14	11
	become a leader in the gold industry	"The strategy and vision of the gold producing and trading company, acquired by state-owned capital, for the period from 2021 to date can be summarised as 'deepening domestic resource integration, innovation-driven development, and striving to become a leader in the global gold industry.'" (I2-P3)	13	13
	resource integration	"the strategy and vision: 'deepening domestic resource integration, innovation-driven development, and striving to become a leader in the global gold industry.'" (I2-P3)	4	4
	sustainable social and environmental responsibility	"we also attach great importance to social responsibility and sustainable development, and endeavour to contribute to the protection of the environment and the promotion of social progress." (I25-P3)	13	10

Table A.10 Frequency descriptives for management & HRM (period 3)

Period 3 Management & HRM (N Max=13)					Freq.	N.
Category	Subcategory		Excerpt			
Monitor, control, correct	monitor		"the company continuously monitor and optimise the operation of the new equipment to ensure its long-term stability. "(I6-P3)		2	2
	control	cost control	"When it comes to controlling costs, managers work with employees to discuss and identify more effective ways to control costs, thereby increasing overall profits. "(I21-P3)		2	2
	correct	improve work	"the company continuously monitor and optimise the operation of the new equipment. "(I6-P3)		5	5
		feedback	"The company also does a great job regarding performance feedback. Not only do we		5	5

Structuring work & allocating resources	Structuring work & allocating resources		get timely feedback from multiple sources, but we also receive specific suggestions for improvement. "(I2-P3)		
		personnel adjustment	"the company's senior management decided to carry out a large-scale personnel adjustment to optimise the organisational structure and improve operational efficiency. "(I1-P3)	1	1
		stability and flexibility	"Stability and flexibility go hand in hand at Gold Trading. The company will provide long-serving employees with stable work contracts to ensure their sense of career security. For some temporary or project work, the company will adopt flexible work contracts to adapt to the rapid changes in the market."(I6-P3)	10	10
		job stability and shift systems	"in practice, a shift system is also essential to ensure efficient and continuous production. "(I3-P3)	1	1
		recruitment & selection	"When it comes to recruiting, companies usually invest a lot of effort in ensuring that high-quality selection tests are conducted to ensure that the talent recruited is a good match for the company's needs and culture. This includes not only skills assessments, but may also include personality tests, teamwork skills, and other areas to look at. "(I10-P3)	9	9
		team autonomy and self-management	"At Gold Trading, team autonomy is highly valued. Each team has its own management style and decision-making process. But that doesn't mean that the company is completely hands-off. Regular reporting and review mechanisms ensure that the company is in control of its teams, while giving them the freedom to be as creative as they want to be. "(I6-P2)	9	9
		compensation and incentives	"Compensation and incentives are very crucial aspects of human resource management. A company reward its employees for their efforts and performance through a proper compensation system to motivate them to work better. The generosity of a company's compensation and incentives compared to similar companies depends largely on the company's financial position and market competitiveness. "(I11-P3)	9	9
		employee training and development	"When it comes to training, companies usually invest heavily in providing extensive training opportunities for their employees. These trainings not only include skills training, but may also cover leadership development, communication skills, etc., aiming at helping employees to improve themselves in all aspects and better fulfil their work tasks. "(I10-P3)	14	9
		information sharing and	"they organise regular team meetings to have face-to-face communication with their staff to share information, feedback and suggestions. This type of communication not	17	10

Plan, budgeting, goal setting	goal settings	performance feedback	only improves the efficiency of the team, but also enhances the cohesion and centripetal force of the team. "(I9-P3)		
		improve production efficiency and product quality	"the company's overall goal is to increase production and quality while reducing costs. In order to achieve this, the company train its frontline staff in more efficient mining and refining techniques. At the same time, the company adopt advanced production equipment and processes to improve production efficiency and product quality. "(I9-P3)	2	1
		expanding markets	"the company strengthen internal management and marketing to ensure stable growth in product quality and market share." (I9-P3)	2	1
		reducing costs	"the company's overall goal is to increase production and quality while reducing costs. In order to achieve this, the company will train its frontline staff in more efficient mining and refining techniques. At the same time, the company will adopt advanced production equipment and processes to improve production efficiency and product quality. (I9-P3)	2	1
	Plan	budgeting	"First, the costs and benefits of training need to be balanced. If the cost of training is too high and the benefits are not obvious, then it may not make much sense to do so. Secondly, the content and mode of training also need to be considered. If the content of the training does not meet my actual needs, or if the training is conducted in an inappropriate manner, then such training may not be of much help. "(I9-P3)	1	1
			"In order to achieve this goal, the company first conduct a technical study and design a programme to ensure that the introduction of the new equipment would actually improve production efficiency. "(I6-P3)	1	1
		introduce automated mining equipment plan			
		training plan	"In the same year, we also conducted a major staff training programme. In order to enhance the skills and qualities of our staff, we organised a month-long training course and invited experts in the industry to give lectures. "(I3-P3)	3	3

Table A.11 Frequency descriptives for behavioural outcomes (period 3)

		Period 3 Behavioural outcomes		
Category	Subcategory	Excerpt	Freq.	N.
Ability enhancement	Recruitment (Comprehensive)	"When it comes to recruiting, companies usually invest a lot of effort in ensuring that high-quality selection tests are conducted to ensure that the talent recruited is a good match for the company's needs and culture. This includes not only skills assessments, but may also include personality tests, teamwork skills, and other areas to look at. "(I10-P3)	8	8/19
	Selection (Rigorous)	"We do not only value the candidates' academic qualifications and experience, but also focus on their abilities and potentials. "(I1-P3)	6	6/19
	Training (Extensive)	"When it comes to training, companies usually invest heavily in providing extensive training opportunities for their employees. These trainings not only include skills training, but also cover leadership development, communication skills, etc., aiming at helping employees to improve themselves in all aspects and better fulfil their work tasks. "(I10-P3)	24	14/19
Motivation enhancement	Recognition	-	0	0/26
	Job security	"this company values not only the provision of stable employment, but also the safety and security of its employees. Every operation in the mine and every equipment inspection is the company's deep care for its employees. Here, the work contract is not just a piece of paper, but also the company's commitment and guarantee to its employees." (I1-P3)	4	3/26
	Promotion and career development	"incentives are also an important factor in keeping me motivated. As a frontline manager, my salary and promotion opportunities are linked to performance. This mechanism makes me clearer about my work goals and gives me more motivation to push my team forward. "(I16)	20	15/26
	Extensive benefits	"the company has set up a number of incentives, such as excellent staff awards, project completion awards, etc., in order to motivate employees to actively pursue, ..." (I14-P3)	12	11/26
	Competitive compensation, incentives and rewards	"company has set up an innovative reward mechanism in order to motivate their employees. They set monthly, quarterly and annual individual and team goals for each employee, and those who complete these goals will receive generous bonuses and extra days off. In this way, employees not only have a clear direction for their work, but also have the motivation to strive for it."(I23-P3)	22	15/26
	Developmental performance management	"the company set up a clear incentive mechanism: to complete the task, improve the efficiency of the staff can not only get a generous bonus, but also have the opportunity to get promoted and better career development opportunities. "(I1-P3)	16	14/26
Opportunity enhancement	Flexible work design	"The company also does a great job regarding performance feedback. Not only do we get timely feedback from multiple sources, but we also receive specific suggestions for improvement. "(I2-P3)	4	3/19

Work teams	-	0	0/19
Employee involvement	“The leaders at that time did not choose to make a final decision, but adopted an open discussion approach, encouraging everyone to express their own views and ideas. They were not only listeners, but also feedbackers, who would listen carefully to each member's views and then give their own suggestions and opinions. ”(I1-P3)	1	1/19
Information sharing	"they organise regular team meetings to have face-to-face communication with their staff to share information, feedback and suggestions. This type of communication not only improves the efficiency of the team, but also enhances the cohesion and centripetal force of the team. "(I9-P3)	2	2/19

Table A.12 Frequency descriptives for performance (period 3)

Category	Subcategory	Period 3 Performance (N Max=23)	F	N
		Excerpt		
Organisational performance	innovation	“We focus on scientific and technological innovation and investment in research and development, and constantly introduce advanced technology and equipment to improve production efficiency and resource utilisation. ”(I23-P3)	2	2
	excels in team building and management	“our company also excels in team building and management. We have a professional and efficient sales team, with team members having rich industry experience and professional skills. ”(I20-P3)	4	4
	high level customer satisfaction	“we have a high level of customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction. In this context, we can consider our company to be a strong performer in the goldware sales industry. ”(I18-P3)	9	8
	high market share	“Our company has a market share in this segment and has experienced significant sales growth over the past year. ”(I18-P3)	3	3
	the highly quality of products	“By optimising the production process and improving the quality of our products, our gold was highly rated in the market, and the company's performance has increased significantly as a result. ”(I15-P3)	6	6
	leading position	“our company has maintained an industry-leading position in the exploration, mining and production of gold mineral resources. ”(I23-P3)	6	6
	robustness and sustainability	“From the acquisition by state-owned capital, our company has established a solid position in the gold industry. From the early stage of the acquisition, the company has been focusing on efficient operation, sound strategy and continuous innovation as its core competitiveness to gradually expand its market share and enhance its brand value. ”(I22-P3)	4	4
Individual performance	quickly adapt to changes work	“I can quickly adapt to changes, including adjustments in job content and task requirements. This resilience enables me to adapt to new work requirements in a short period of time for public.”(I11-P3)	1	1
		"In terms of experience, I probably have a richer and wider range of knowledge and skills compared to	3	3

efficiency and quality	the average employee in the company. This is due to the fact that I have learnt from a large amount of training data and cases, and have accumulated a wealth of experience through continuous self-optimisation and iteration. This enables me to be more comfortable with a wide range of tasks and to make judgements and decisions more quickly and accurately. "(I8-P3)		
learn new knowledge and skills quickly	"In terms of experience, I probably have a richer and wider range of knowledge and skills compared to the average employee in the company. "(I8-P3)	4	4
work experience	"I have already accumulated a wealth of work experience by learning a great deal of data and knowledge. I am able to quickly adapt to different working environments and task requirements to provide efficient and accurate services to the company. "(I5-P3)	2	2
growth	"Growth is the biggest feeling I have had here. I have been fortunate enough to be involved in a number of important projects, which has given me a lot of opportunities to exercise and grow. The company also provides a wealth of internal training and external learning opportunities, allowing me to continuously improve my skills. "(I17-P3)	5	5