



**METHODS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA
FOR DETERMINING DECISION MAKING
ALIGNMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT**

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***Annotation.** This articles proposes an integrated methodology for determining whether strategic and operational decisions in human resource management (HRM) are mutually aligned. The problem is significant because workforce plans may formally reflect organizational strategy while daily recruitment, appraisal, development, reward, and retention decisions follow disconnected priorities. A review of strategic HRM, the Balanced Scorecard, competency assessment, employee engagement, and HR analytics supports a multi-method diagnostic model. The model combines document analysis, employee and manager surveys, structured interviews, competency assessment, KPI and workforce analytics, and GAP analysis. Six criteria are assessed: strategic fit, operational effectiveness, competence alignment, employee engagement, communication quality, and organizational adaptability. The proposed approach converts dispersed HR data into an interpretable diagnosis and links identified gaps to corrective actions. Its principal contribution is the triangulation of formal strategy, observed HR outcomes, and employee perceptions instead of relying on a single performance indicator.*

Keywords: *human resource management, decision alignment, strategic HRM, operational decisions, evaluation criteria, HR analytics, integral index.*

Decision-making in HRM operates at two interconnected levels. Strategic decisions define the workforce architecture required by the organization: future competencies, staffing capacity, leadership succession, reward philosophy, and organizational culture. Operational decisions translate those intentions into everyday choices about hiring, workload allocation, performance feedback, training, promotion, and retention. Alignment exists when operational choices consistently support long-term workforce priorities, use compatible criteria, and produce measurable outcomes. Misalignment appears when, for example, an organization declares innovation as a strategic priority but evaluates employees only for routine output, or announces a retention strategy while managers apply inconsistent promotion and reward practices.

Strategic HRM treats people systems as a source of organizational capability rather than an administrative function (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). The HR Scorecard further argues that HR deliverables should be connected to strategy maps and performance drivers (Becker et al., 2001). Yet these approaches do not, by themselves, provide a complete diagnosis of how individual operational decisions correspond to strategic intentions. Competency models can identify person-role gaps (Bohlouli et al., 2017), while engagement surveys capture employee experience and managerial communication (Gallup, 2023). The research gap is therefore methodological: organizations often measure these domains separately,

which can conceal contradictions between formal policies, operational results, and employee perceptions.

The purpose of this thesis is to develop a compact, evidence-based procedure for identifying HR decision-making alignment and defining practical evaluation criteria. The proposed framework treats alignment as a multidimensional construct rather than as simple target achievement. It asks not only whether an HR KPI was met, but also whether the decision process was strategically relevant, timely, competent, transparent, accepted by employees, and adaptable to change.



Figure 1. Integrated dimensions of HR decision making alignment

The methodology follows a convergent diagnostic design. Quantitative and qualitative evidence is collected during the same assessment period and compared at the interpretation stage. The recommended unit of analysis is an HR decision domain, such as recruitment, performance management, learning and development, compensation, or succession. For each domain, the researcher constructs a strategy-to-action chain: strategic objective, required workforce outcome, operational decision rule, responsible actor, KPI, and observed

result. This chain makes it possible to distinguish a poor outcome caused by execution failure from a well-executed action that supports the wrong strategic priority.

Data should be gathered from at least four sources. First, document analysis examines the organizational strategy, workforce plan, job profiles, HR policies, meeting minutes, and approved KPIs. Second, a 25-30 item questionnaire measures employee and manager perceptions on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Third, semi-structured interviews clarify how decision criteria are applied and where authority, information, or timing problems arise. Fourth, HR analytics provides behavioral and outcome indicators such as time-to-fill, quality-of-hire, internal promotion, training transfer, goal completion, regrettable turnover, absenteeism, grievance resolution time, and engagement. Triangulation is essential because strong KPI performance may coexist with procedural unfairness, and positive perceptions may coexist with weak strategic contribution.

Evaluation Criteria and Measurement Methods

Criterion	Operational definition	Core indicators	Primary method
Strategic fit	HR decisions directly support declared organizational and workforce priorities.	Goal linkage; workforce-plan coverage; policy consistency	Document audit; strategy map
Operational effectiveness	Decisions are timely, accurate, compliant, and resource-efficient.	Cycle time; completion rate; cost; error or appeal rate	KPI dashboard; process analysis
Competence alignment	Decision makers and employees possess competencies required for their roles.	Skill-gap closure; assessment scores; role-person fit	Competency assessment

Criterion	Operational definition	Core indicators	Primary method
Employee engagement	Employees understand, accept, and participate in relevant decisions.	Voice; trust; commitment; intention to stay	Survey; focus group
Communication quality	Decision purposes, criteria, responsibilities, and feedback are clear.	Clarity; feedback speed; information consistency	Survey; interview; network audit
Organizational adaptability	HR decisions respond to external change without losing strategic direction.	Reskilling speed; scenario response; digital use	GAP/SWOT analysis; HR analytics

Table 1. Criteria for assessing HR decision making alignment

Each criterion is scored from 1 to 5 after its indicators have been standardized. A weighted index is calculated as $HDAI = \sum(w_j \times S_j)$, where HDAI is the Human Resource Decision Alignment Index, S_j is the mean score for criterion j , w_j is its agreed weight, and $\sum(w_j) = 1$. Equal weights (0.167 for six criteria) may be used in exploratory studies; however, an expert panel should determine weights when organizational priorities differ. The criterion score should combine evidence sources, for example, 40% analytics, 30% survey, 20% document audit, and 10% interview coding. Missing data must be reported and should not automatically be replaced by a neutral score.

The assessment is implemented as a seven-stage cycle. The diagnostic team first defines the strategic period, HR domains, decision owners, and expected outcomes. It then collects comparable evidence for the same period, tests the measurement instrument, converts indicators to a common scale, calculates criterion and overall scores, interprets gaps, and assigns corrective actions. Reassessment should occur quarterly for

volatile indicators and annually for structural dimensions such as competence architecture or succession capacity.

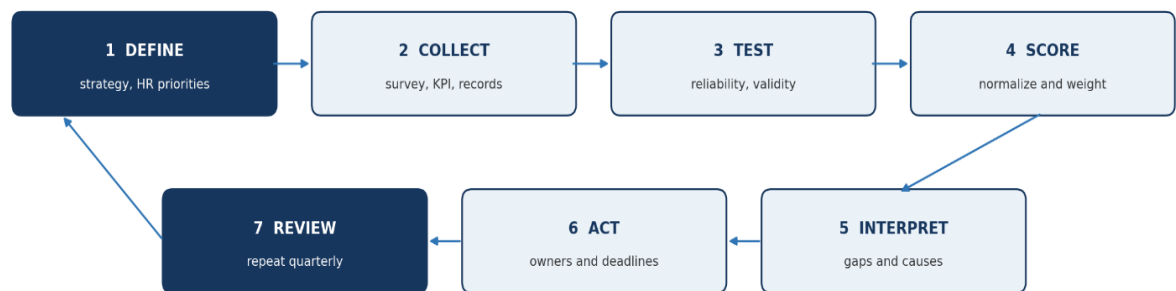


Figure 2. Algorithm for diagnosing and improving HR decision alignment

Interpretation of the Integral Index

Index	Level	Interpretation and required response
4.10-5.00	High	Strategic and operational decisions reinforce one another; maintain controls and monitor emerging risks.
3.10-4.09	Moderate	General alignment exists, but one or more criteria require targeted improvement and named owners.
2.10-3.09	Low	Material gaps exist between strategic priorities, decision rules, and workforce outcomes; redesign is required.
1.00-2.09	Critical	Systemic inconsistency threatens performance, trust, or compliance; immediate governance intervention is required.

Table 2. Suggested interpretation thresholds for the HDAI

The overall index must never be interpreted alone. A high aggregate score can mask a weak dimension if strong criteria compensate mathematically for a serious deficiency. Therefore, two decision rules are recommended: no criterion should fall below 3.00, and the difference between the highest and lowest criterion scores should not exceed 1.50. A larger dispersion signals internal inconsistency even when the overall mean appears acceptable. Results should also be disaggregated by managerial level, department, tenure, and employee category to identify where strategic messages or operating practices diverge.

Measurement quality requires explicit controls. Questionnaire items should undergo expert review for relevance, clarity, and cultural suitability. A pilot study can detect ambiguous wording and extreme ceiling effects. Internal consistency may be examined with Cronbach's alpha, with values around .70 or above commonly treated as adequate for exploratory use, while recognizing that alpha alone does not prove unidimensionality (Cronbach, 1951). Exploratory or confirmatory factor analysis should test the six-dimensional structure. Test-retest reliability, inter-coder agreement for interviews, audit trails for data cleaning, and sensitivity analysis for alternative weights improve reproducibility. Criterion validity can be examined by correlating the index with outcomes such as goal completion, turnover, quality-of-hire, or internal mobility.

Ethical safeguards are equally important. Participation in surveys and interviews must be voluntary; individual responses should be anonymized; access to HR records should be role-limited; and small subgroups should not be reported when re-identification is possible. The diagnostic purpose should be organizational improvement, not automatic punishment. Employee trust is likely to decline if the same data are collected for development but later used for undisclosed disciplinary decisions.

The proposed model extends conventional HR performance measurement in three ways. First, it evaluates the logic connecting strategy to operational decisions, not merely the final KPI. Second, it combines objective records with the perceptions of those who implement and experience decisions. Third, it treats alignment as dynamic: rapid operational action is not automatically effective if it departs from

workforce strategy, while rigid adherence to an outdated plan is not strategic when the external environment has changed. In practice, the diagnostic matrix can reveal four distinct problems: strategy is unclear; operational rules are inconsistent with strategy; execution capacity is insufficient; or feedback fails to trigger adaptation.

GAP analysis should translate each weak criterion into a defined management response. A strategic-fit gap may require revision of HR policies and scorecards; an operational-effectiveness gap may require process redesign or clearer decision rights; a competence gap requires targeted development or role reassignment; an engagement gap requires employee voice and fairness review; a communication gap requires explicit criteria and feedback channels; and an adaptability gap requires scenario planning, reskilling, and better analytics. This mapping prevents the common error of treating every low score as a motivation problem.

For practical implementation, the organization should establish a small cross-functional assessment group that includes HR, line management, analytics, and employee representation. The group should agree on indicator definitions before data collection, because apparently simple measures can be interpreted differently across units. For example, a short time-to-fill may indicate efficient recruitment, but it can also result from weak selection standards; low turnover may demonstrate retention, but it can also coexist with limited mobility or employee silence. Every KPI should therefore be paired with a quality or risk indicator and traced to the strategic outcome it is intended to support.

The model also supports managerial accountability. Each material gap should be recorded with its probable cause, corrective action, decision

owner, deadline, resource requirement, and verification indicator. A subsequent review should determine whether the action improved the weak criterion without creating a new problem elsewhere. This is especially important in compensation, staffing, and performance management, where local optimization can transfer costs or risks to another department. Dashboard reporting should display the total index, all six criterion scores, change over time, and confidence or data-quality warnings rather than presenting a single traffic-light result.

Several limitations must be acknowledged. The proposed thresholds are diagnostic conventions and require empirical validation in the relevant national, sectoral, and organizational context. Survey responses may be influenced by fear, social desirability, or recent events; administrative data may reflect inconsistent definitions; and expert weights may reproduce managerial bias. Cross-sectional assessment cannot establish that alignment causes organizational performance. In addition, strategic disagreement is not always a defect: responsible managers may depart from an obsolete plan when legal, technological, or labor-market conditions change. For this reason, numerical results must be interpreted with qualitative evidence, documented assumptions, and repeated measurement.

Decision-making alignment in HRM can be identified reliably only through a multidimensional and multi-source assessment. The six proposed criteria - strategic fit, operational effectiveness, competence alignment, employee engagement, communication quality, and organizational adaptability - capture both the technical and human sides of HR governance. The HDAI offers a concise summary, while criterion-level scores, dispersion rules, qualitative evidence, and subgroup

comparisons preserve diagnostic depth. The model is suitable for organizational self-assessment, comparative research, and repeated monitoring. Future empirical studies should validate the factor structure, test alternative weights across sectors, and examine whether improvement in alignment predicts retention, productivity, innovation, and organizational resilience over time.

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