

PHONGTHEP SRISOPACHIT: INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY, HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES, AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE: A CASE STUDY OF ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY IN THAILAND. THESIS ADVISOR: PROF. DR. UTHAI TANLAMAI, Ph.D., THESIS CO-ADVISOR: ASSOC. PROF. DR. SUNUNTA SIENGTHAI, Ph.D., 148 pp. ISBN 974-333-953-1

To date, Thailand is the destination of foreign direct investment of multinational corporations (MNCs). MNCs need to create and to sustain competitive advantage in order to survive and to attain profits. Sources of competitive advantage are from external and internal factors. For companies to compete in the same industry, internal factors such as strategy, management practices, research and development, etc. play a major role in the companies' success. Thus, this research investigates internal factors, namely, international strategy and human resource management practices, which are critical in research area. In the field of strategic management, there has been no empirical study on the impact of international strategy and human resource management practices on competitive advantage. This present research, therefore, attempts to integrate these three concepts and empirically investigates the proposed framework in the Thai electronics industry by selecting only international companies. Expert interview is used as an instrument to pretest and to check any flaws of the questionnaire, and mail survey is employed to collect data. Hypotheses of this study have been developed to test the relationship of international strategy and human resource management practices with competitive advantage and to investigate the link between international strategy and human resource management practices. Competitive advantage is categorized into process innovation, product innovation, and productivity.

This study finds that standardization strategy has a significantly negative relationship with process innovation, product innovation, and productivity. National responsiveness strategy has a significantly negative relationship with product innovation but no significant relationship with process innovation and productivity. Global integration with local responsiveness strategy has a significantly positive relationship with product innovation, but no significant relationship with process innovation and productivity. For human resource management practices, this study empirically finds that employee contribution has a significantly positive relationship with process innovation. Selection by job competence has a significantly positive relationship with product innovation. Finally, reward system at management level and employment security have a significantly positive relationship with productivity. For the link between international strategy and human resource management practices, the finding suggests that firms with different international strategies have significantly different human resource management practices of employee participation, clarity of work direction, employee contribution, reward system at management level, employment security, and selection by job competence. Finally, this study empirically finds that international companies with different international strategies have no significantly different control.

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