

THE EFFECT OF EXECUTIVE'S GENDER AND AGE ON HUMAN RESOURCE RESPONSIBILITY

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Abstract: Nowadays, gender and age are considered as more prominent factor while executing the human resource responsibilities and also an emerging area for the researchers. Thus, the current study aims to examine the influence of gender and age of executives on their practice toward human resource responsibility, including employee's safety policy, benefits, and knowledge/skill development. The panel data of 816 observations from 408 publicly listed companies in Thailand during 2017-2018 are investigated. The pooled OLS regression has been used to test the hypotheses. The results support our hypothesis that companies that invest in employee's safety and welfare, as well as, employee's knowledge development pose higher performances. This study has been found that the age of executives is an essential factor on human resource responsibility of firms. However, our result suggests that the gender of executives has no impact on human resource responsibility.

Key words: gender differences, age differences, human resource responsibility, firm performance.

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Introduction

Executives' characteristics are key factors influencing decision making, which in turn affects the organizations' achievement. Previous studies have focused on executives' characteristics and their various results on the organization, including the effects on the organization's performance, on the supervision of the organization, and the organization's social responsibility. Among these executives' characteristics, kinds of literature show that gender and age are used most to explain a variety of outcomes. (Adams and Ferreira, 2009; Ljas, 2012; Huang and Kisgen, 2013; Low et al., 2015; Lonkani, 2019).

Gender is perhaps the most distinctive characters of the executive that used to study its effect on an organization's operation. This distinctive character leads to different attitudes, perspectives and some skills, which consequently leads to different business practices. For example, Ljas (2012) found that women can utilize resources effectively. This competency increases organizational dynamics, enhance strategic decision-making and improves firms' performance. Or, Lonkani

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(2019) showed that female executive used relatively more comprehensive information on the prediction of earnings and finally led to higher prediction accuracy and higher firms' performance.

Apart from gender, executives' age is also studied its effect on firms' operation achievement. Age indicates one's experience, which reflects more information when one needs to decide to perform the task, including business decision. Wei et al. (2014) explain that age of high-ranking executives, the period of an executive position, and operational experience have a positive effect on an organization's strategic human resource management. The positive effect of executive age on human resource management in firms is explained in research that higher experienced executives place more attention to their employees, especially on improving knowledge of employees. Pieces of evidence on this perspective are on the increasing training budget and providing fair remuneration, including other benefits to their employees (Chen and Wang, 2011; Cugin and Williamson, 2014). From the review of literature, the number of studies on the effects of executives' gender and age on human resource responsibility is limited, especially in Thailand, where gender and ageing are distinctive characters in this culture. The possible reason may due to the difficulty of assessment of practices towards human resource management. Placing questionnaires directly to executives and ask them on how well they did to their employee, which is used mostly in previous research, expose to a higher risk of positive bias and leads to the inaccurate conclusion (Mongkolkachit, 2016; Maqbool and Zameer, 2018).

Using the data from listed companies in Thailand, this research examines the role of gender and age of executive on their practice toward human resource management by assessing from the formal document; - company annual report. This research contributes to the area of management study, especially on human resource management. Using the unbiased data that reflect the practice of human resource management, outcomes from the research emphasize more clearly on the relationship of executives' gender and age on the practices in the area of human resource management.

Literature review

Human resource (HR) responsibility in a firm is shown in many forms. And, different culture emphasizes on different practices toward human resource management. Thai working culture emphasizes taking care of employees like members of the family and executives are well aware that human resource is the resource that brings high-performance organization. Employees' well-being means benefits and health, both physical and mental because employees' well-being significantly results in better performance of the organization (Appelbaum et al., 2000). In addition, effective HR responsibilities have a positive role in the performance of the organization. Thus, if the organization perfectly manages the HR responsibilities, then they can achieve their desired goals related to the

performance of the organization (Ishida, Biznesu, & Górnica, 2018). Moreover, Firm performance is dependent upon the HR responsibilities that has been considered as a vital factor for firm performance (Mohammed, Ibrahim, & Shah, 2017). Furthermore, human capital and their responsibilities have played an essential role in the achieving of high financial goals for the organization (Zainol, Al Mamun, Ahmad, & Simpong, 2018).

Provided safety and benefits to employees are key human resource factors that are studied in this research. Given the impact of the human resources on the performance of firms (Appelbaum et al, 2000; Van De Voorde et al, 2012; Kramar, 2014), we hypothesize that human resource management responsibility associated positively with organization's performance. Thus the alternative hypotheses can be as follows:

H1a: Human resource management responsibility in the aspects of employees' safety and benefits correlates positively with return on assets (ROA).

H1b: Human resource management responsibility in the aspects of employees' training and employees' development correlates positively with return on assets (ROA).

A variation of practices in business derived from different characteristics of executives are possibly due to psychological and social factors such as low risks tolerant of female (Niessen and Ruenzi, 2007; Hibbert, Lawrence, and Prakash, 2013), the higher level of the ethical standard of female (Loe et al., 2000; Valentine and Rittenburg, 2007; Volkema, 2004) or high level of effective leadership styles and have better management skills than male executives (Krishnan and Park, 2005; Conyon, He, and Zhou, 2015). In addition, the gender factor has also been considered as the foremost factor regarding the execution of effective HR responsibilities in the organization that is necessary for high firm performance (Markowska-Przybyła & Ramsey, 2018).

Although there is no direct evidence regarding the effect of female executives on provided training and welfare to employees, the studies above imply that female directors should put more emphasis on training and safety due to their low-risk tolerance (Niessen and Ruenzi, 2007; Hibbert, Lawrence, and Prakash, 2013). Therefore, we hypothesize that

H2a: Female executives have positively associated with human resource responsibility in the aspects of employees' safety policy and benefits.

H2b: Female executives have positively associated with human resource responsibility in the aspects of employees' training and development.

In this study, female executives are proxy by the ratio of female directors to total board members. Age of executives reflects work experience (Herrmann and Datta, 2005). Age is one characteristic of interested in studying its effect on the organizations' operations. Wahid (2012) shows the age of directors in the board of directors is the factor that indicates work experience. Like female executives, older executives are found a relatively higher tendency to avoid risk-taking (Barker and

Mueller, 2002). Marshall et al. (2006) found that older executives show the right attitude towards taking care of employees as they grow older.

Literature also documents the effect of variation of executives' age. A prior study found that more concentrated age group tends to share experiences and mindset to others better than distributed age group (Davidson, Nemec, and Worrell, 2006). From previous studies, it is shown that older executives show a tendency to minimize risks in the organization. Given that policy towards the human resource, responsibility is proxy for risk mitigations, and relatively older age executives should perform in the direction of risk mitigation or show more responsibility for human resource management. However, previous studies on these issues show diverse outcomes (Barker and Mueller, 2002; Herrmann and Datta, 2005). The hypotheses are thus as follows:

H3a: Executives' age correlates positively with human resource responsibility in the aspects of employees' safety policy and benefits.

H3b: Executives' age correlates positively with human resource responsibility in the aspects of employees' training and development.

H3c: More concentrated age of directors in the board of directors correlates positively with safety policy and benefits practice.

H3d: More concentrate age of members in the board of directors correlates positively with the training and development practice.

Methodology

The data for this research was from companies registered with the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) and Market for Alternative Investment (MAI). The study focuses on human resource practice which became indicators for human resource practice in the aspects of employees' safety management, benefits, as well as training. The panel data of 816 observations include 408 firms on the year 2017-2018 collected from the individual company's financial statements and database of stock exchanges of Thailand. During this period, the economy of Thailand was stable, and the companies registered went through normal operation. So, they are well represented in the practice of human resource management. Financial data such as ROA, profit, firm size, debt ratio, and profit fluctuation were from Bloomberg. Data on organizations and executives' characteristics, namely executives' gender and age, were manually collected from SET SMART database provided by the Stock Exchange of Thailand.

Content analysis was used in this research to assess human resource practice from annual reports. Content analysis is a technique that analyzes data systematically by changing writing data into groups of results found (Weber, 1990). This research used OECD criteria in collecting data on human resource practice disclosure to assess human resource practice (OECD, 2015). The 56-1 reports and the annual report which the SET requires listed companies to publish and distribute to the public are used to assess the human resource management. We divided the reported

practices toward human resource management into two-dimension. The first dimension is the availability of employees' safety policy and benefits, which include safety at workplace, safety equipment, and care for employees' health, as well as remuneration and benefits (WEL). The second dimension is the availability of knowledge and skill development for employees, which include an allocation of the company's fund for training and skill development for employees (TRN). In the assessment process; the researcher divided assessors into two groups for rechecking the quality and reliability of the indices. This process can prevent the bias from arising from assessor's opinion.

We measure the characteristics of executives using gender and age of directors in the board of directors. The proportion of female directors on the board (FEMB) is used to capture the female characteristics of executives. The female board is a good representative of gender diversity in the board since it combines the total effects of female characteristics of executives (Adams and Ferreira, 2009; Ljas, 2012; Huang and Kisgen, 2013; Low et al., 2015; Lonkani, 2019).

Age of directors is measured directly as the average age of board members (AGEAVE). We also measure the effect of age diversity using the standard deviation of age. (AGEDIV). To measure the age diversity, we use the modified Herfindahl Index, which the method is used in many papers (Hagendorff and Keasey, 2012; Sitthipongpanich and Polsiri, 2013). Higher age diversity or dispersed age means board contains members of different age group. In the opposite direction, low age diversity or concentrated age board members includes directors who are in the same age group. We control for other effects that might arise from the board using the number of a board member or board size (NBOA) and the number of independent directors in the board of director (INDEP).

Extant literature suggests that firms with weak financial performances have limited resources to set up activities that enhance stakeholders' welfare. In contrast, high-performing profitable firms have more budget slack to increase the stakeholders' welfare ((Campbell & Mínguez-Vera, 2008; Margolis & Walsh, 2001; Orlitzky, Schmidt, & Rynes, 2003). We use the returns on asset (ROA) to capture firm performance and hypothesize that the financial performance of firms is positively related to human resource responsibility of firms.

Larger firms can utilize their resources to maximize the wealth of stakeholders (Artiach, Lee, Nelson, & Walker, 2010). Larger firms are also being a target of scrutinized by outsiders such as analysts, socialist, or environmentalist (Watts & Zimmerman, 1978, 1990). We measure the size (SIZE) using the market capitalization since it captures the current size of firms.

In a similar argument to the size factor, age of firms (AGEF) represents the degree to which the company is exposed to the market. According to Watts and Zimmerman (1990) argument of the size factors, older companies are better known to the public. Therefore, they have a stake in protecting more than younger firms. It can be predicted that older companies have higher performance.

Operation risk of the firm is the degree of variation in the profitability of firms which can be measured by the standard deviation of profitability ratios such as Return on Assets (ROA) or Earnings per share (EPS). Market risk of the firm can be tracked by the covariance of ROA with the returns of market standardized by the variance of returns on the market, which is known as 'Beta'. In the high-risk situation, firms have to reserve their financial resources to cope with the loss from an operation or market value reduction. Therefore, the high-risk firm is not in the position of engagement in high practices of human resource management which the practices require much financial resource. Scholtens (2008) captures the firm's risk by the standard deviation of earnings. In our regression analysis, we use the three years standard deviation of ROA (SDROA) to proxy the operation risk of firms.

Leverage (LEV) is used as a control variable since higher debt ration reflects more powerful of debt holders in firms. And, such firms are relatively difficult to divert resources to other stakeholder groups besides themselves (Artiach et al., 2010). A study by Purushothaman et al. (2000) shows that low leverage firms have less relationship with creditors. High debt firms are also found to have smaller sustainability performances (Cornell & Shapiro, 1987). In the case of human resource practice, it is predicted that higher debt firms have low practices in human resource management. In this case,

Fixed effect panel data are used to test the above relationship and hypotheses. The regression equations are as follows;

$$ROA_{i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 WEL_{i,t} + \beta_2 NBOA_{i,t} + \beta_3 DUAL_{i,t} + \beta_4 LEV_{i,t} + \beta_5 SIZE_{i,t} + \beta_6 SDROA_{i,t} + \beta_7 AGEF_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad (1)$$

$$ROA_{i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 TRN_{i,t} + \beta_2 NBOA_{i,t} + \beta_3 DUAL_{i,t} + \beta_4 LEV_{i,t} + \beta_5 SIZE_{i,t} + \beta_6 SDROA_{i,t} + \beta_7 AGEF_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad (2)$$

$$WEL_{i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 FEMB_{i,t} + \beta_2 AGEAVG_{i,t} + \beta_3 INDEP_{i,t} + \beta_4 NBOA_{i,t} + \beta_5 DUAL_{i,t} + \beta_6 SIZE_{i,t} + \beta_7 AGEF_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad (3)$$

$$TRN_{i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 FEMB_{i,t} + \beta_2 AGEAVG_{i,t} + \beta_3 INDEP_{i,t} + \beta_4 NBOA_{i,t} + \beta_5 DUAL_{i,t} + \beta_6 SIZE_{i,t} + \beta_7 AGEF_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad (4)$$

$$WEL_{i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 AGEDIV_{i,t} + \beta_2 AGEAVG_{i,t} + \beta_3 INDEP_{i,t} + \beta_4 NBOA_{i,t} + \beta_5 DUAL_{i,t} + \beta_6 SIZE_{i,t} + \beta_7 AGEF_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad (5)$$

$$TRN_{i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 AGEDIV_{i,t} + \beta_2 AGEAVG_{i,t} + \beta_3 INDEP_{i,t} + \beta_4 NBOA_{i,t} + \beta_5 DUAL_{i,t} + \beta_6 SIZE_{i,t} + \beta_7 AGEF_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad (6)$$

Results

Table 1 displays descriptive statistics from the sample. The mean and median of ROA is 4.8% and 4.6% respectively. The finding indicates that, on average, the

mean age of directors is 59 years old with the maximum of average within board age is 73.8 years old. The lowest average age is 40.4 years. This information reveals that the average age on every board is in the rank of high age group (beyond 40). With regard to gender, the average proportion of female directors on the board is 16.8%, with a maximum of 66.7% and a minimum of 0%. Notice that Table 1 shows interesting findings that there are companies that do not pay attention to safety and welfare of employees and employee's knowledge development as shown in the zero the minimum score of WEL and TRN.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

Variables	Min	Max	Mean	Median	SD
ROA	0.000	0.458	0.048	0.046	0.088
SIZE	18.695	28.666	22.454	22.164	1.798
AGEF	2.000	138.000	31.468	28.500	16.381
LEV	1.024	375.387	4.145	2.250	13.940
SDROA	0.009	2533.439	17.491	3.220	130.255
AGEAVG	40.364	73.818	59.020	58.714	5.218
AGEDIV	0.000	0.765	0.538	0.568	0.135
AGEF	2.000	138.000	31.468	28.500	16.381
FEMB	0.000	0.667	0.168	0.125	0.145
INDEP	0.100	0.818	0.399	0.375	0.089
NBOA	5	21	10.24	9	2.570
WEL	0.000	10.000	7.408	7.500	2.599
TRN	0.000	10.000	6.602	7.500	2.788

†816 Observations

Table 2 shows the result when ROA is regressed against the safety and welfare of employees (model 1) and employee's knowledge development (model 2). The result reveals a positive relationship between firm performance and employee's welfare ($p < 0.01$) and knowledge development ($p < 0.05$). Thus, Hypothesis 1a and Hypothesis 1b are supported. Table 2 indicates that firm size is positively related to ROA ($p < 0.01$), while leverage is negatively related to ROA ($p < 0.01$).

Table 2: Human resource responsibility and performance

	ROA					
	Model 1			Model 2		
	Coeff.	t-Stat	p-Value	Coeff.	t-Stat	p-Value
Intercept	-0.078	-1.616	0.107	-0.067	-1.398	0.163
WEL	0.003	2.671	0.008***			
TRN				0.002	2.337	0.020**
NBOA	-0.003	-1.643	0.101	-0.003	-1.622	0.105
DUAL	-0.007	-0.862	0.389	-0.007	-0.841	0.401
LEV	-0.001	-4.095	0.000***	-0.001	-3.991	0.000***
SIZE	0.006	2.786	0.006***	0.006	2.647	0.008***
SDROA	0.000	-1.936	0.053	0.000	-1.979	0.048**
AGEF	0.000	-0.478	0.633	0.000	-0.427	0.669
	Adjusted R ²		0.041	Adjusted R ²		0.039
	F-Statistic		5.943***	F-Statistic		5.707***
	Observations		816	Observations		816

† ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.01

Table 3 shows the effect of gender of the board (proportion of female directors on board) on company's safety and welfare of employees (model 3), an employee's knowledge development (model 4). In both models tested, the result suggests that gender has no impact on human resource responsibility. Therefore, Hypothesis 2a and Hypothesis 2b are not supported. For other independent variables, the result reveals a positive relationship between the average age of the board and human resource responsibility ($p < 0.05$) in both models. In addition, the proportion of independent directors on board is positively related to employee's knowledge development ($p < 0.05$). The only control variable that is statistically significant is a firm size which is positively associated with human resource responsibility ($p < 0.01$) in both aspects.

Table 3. Gender board and human resource responsibility

	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	WEL	TRN	WEL	TRN
Constant	-0.824 (-0.566)	-0.695 (-1.090)	-3.072 (-1.592)	-2.962*** (-8.592)
FEMB	-0.080 (-0.131)	0.021 (1.141)		
AGEAVG	0.037** (2.100)	2.397** (2.255)	0.061*** (2.703)	0.002*** (1.674)
AGEDIV			1.402 (1.677)	-1.238 (-3.005)
INDEP	0.674 (0.660)	0.086** (2.072)	0.852 (0.833)	2.314*** (4.887)
NBOA	0.047	-0.008	0.037	0.099***

	(1.185)	(-0.033)	(0.930)	(22.368)
DUAL	0.228 (1.015)	-0.695 (-1.090)	0.228 (1.018)	-0.008 (-0.260)
SIZE	0.238*** (4.406)	0.376*** (6.684)	0.243*** (4.519)	0.377*** (25.170)
AGEF	-0.003 (-0.576)	-0.009 (-1.480)	-0.004 (-0.653)	-0.009*** (-4.650)
Adjusted R²	0.092	0.145	0.095	0.155
F-Statistic	11.298***	18.319***	11.687***	18.441***
Observations	816	816	816	816

† ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.01.

Absolute values of t-statistics are shown in parentheses

Table 3 reveals the effect of age directors in the board (age diversity and the average age of board) on company's safety and welfare practices toward employees (model 5), and towards employee's knowledge development (model 6). As shown in Model 5, the average age of directors is positively associated with employee's welfare ($p < 0.01$). The negative association between diversity age of directors and employee's knowledge development ($p < 0.01$). These results reveal that older board members are more likely to promote safety and welfare to their employees. These older board members also support the development of knowledge to employees. However, on the board that have more diversity of age of directors, the practices to the development of knowledge to employees are not supported. The result further reveals the positive effect of the proportion of independent directors, as well as, number of directors on board on employee's knowledge development ($p < 0.01$). Results show that firm size is positively related to human resource responsibility in both aspects ($p < 0.01$). Conversely, firm age is negatively associated with the employee's knowledge development ($p < 0.01$).

Discussions

In this research, we answer to two main research questions. Firstly, the effect of human resource responsibility on firm performance. Secondly, the impact of executives' gender and age on human resource responsibility. Results support our hypothesis that companies that invest in employee's safety and welfare, as well as, employee's knowledge development pose higher performances. These results are matched with the findings of Rothenberg, Hull, and Tang (2017) who also found positive nexus among the HR responsibilities and high firm performance. In addition, the results of the current study are also similar to the output of Medina-Garrido, Biedma-Ferrer, and Ramos-Rodríguez (2019). They also examined that if effective HR responsibilities are managed in the organization, then it can achieve the desired goal of high financial performance. Moreover, the findings of the existing study are also same as the findings of Zehir, Gurol, Karaboga, and Kole (2016) who also examined the positive association among the HR responsibilities and firm performance. This study shows that age of executives is an essential factor on human resource responsibility of firms. Senior board of directors are more incline to pay attention to employee's safety and welfare. These findings are

similar to the output of Warren, Mason-Apps, Hoskins, Azmi, and Boyce (2018) who also found positive association among the gender, age and performance of the organization. Findings from this study reflect that junior and senior directors share different perceptions towards human resource responsibility in the aspects of employee's safety, welfare, and knowledge development. Our findings reveal that senior directors perceive that invest in human capital contribute to firms' performance. Thus, they show more responsibility in human capital. These findings give the guidelines to the management that they should put their focus on the human resource responsibilities with respect to gender and age in the organization that enhance the positive impact on the performance.

Conclusion

Finally, this study has concluded that the organization of Thailand has implemented the effective HR responsibilities within the organization that is the reason for high firm performance in Thailand. In addition, this study also reaches to the conclusion that gender and age are also effective predictors to predict the HR responsibilities implementation in the organization and firm performance. Thus, this study recommended to the policymakers that they should enhance their focus on the HR responsibilities along with gender and age aspects that enhance the firm performance. This study also recommended that the management should take reasonable measure about the HR responsibilities because it effects the overall performance of the organization. This study has some limitations it takes only age, gender and HR responsibilities to predict the performance and ignore other factors and suggested that future studies should add more factor in their analysis. In addition, this study takes only 2017-18 under investigation, and future studies should take more time periods in their evaluations. This study also recommended that the future studies should increase the scope by adding the more business and countries that ignored by the present study.

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WPLYW PŁCI I WIEKU WYKONAWCY, ODPOWIEDZIALNOŚĆ ZA ZASOBY LUDZKIE

Streszczenie: Płeć i wiek są obecnie uważane za bardziej znaczący czynnik przy wykonywaniu obowiązków związanych z zasobami ludzkimi, a także nowy obszar dla badaczy. Dlatego obecne badanie ma na celu zbadanie wpływu płci i wieku kadry kierowniczej na ich praktykę w zakresie odpowiedzialności za zasoby ludzkie, w tym polityki bezpieczeństwa pracowników, korzyści oraz rozwoju wiedzy / umiejętności. Zbadano dane panelowe z 816 obserwacji z 408 spółek notowanych na giełdzie w Tajlandii w latach 2017–2018. Do przetestowania hipotez wykorzystano zbiórczą regresję OLS. Wyniki potwierdzają naszą hipotezę, że firmy inwestujące w bezpieczeństwo i dobrostan pracowników, a także w rozwój wiedzy pracowników mają lepsze wyniki. Badanie to wykazało, że wiek kadry kierowniczej jest istotnym czynnikiem odpowiedzialnym za zasoby ludzkie firm. Nasz wynik sugeruje jednak, że płeć kadry kierowniczej nie ma wpływu na odpowiedzialność za zasoby ludzkie.

Słowa kluczowe: różnice płci, różnice wieku, odpowiedzialność za zasoby ludzkie, wyniki firmy.

行政人员的性别和年龄对人力资源责任

摘要:如今, 性别和年龄已被认为是履行人力资源职责时更重要的因素, 也是研究人员的新兴领域。因此, 本研究旨在调查高管人员的性别和年龄对他们的实践对人力资源责任的影响, 包括员工的安全政策, 福利和知识/技能发展。调查了2017-2018年泰国408家上市公司的816项意见的面板数据。汇总的OLS回归已用于检验假设。结果支持了我们的假设, 即投资于员工的安全和福利以及员工的知识发展的公司的绩效更高。这项研究发现, 高管人员的年龄是影响企业人力资源责任的重要因素。但是, 我们的结果表明, 高管人员的性别对人力资源责任没有影响。

关键词:性别差异, 年龄差异, 人力资源责任, 企业绩效。