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Linking Brand Relationship between Human Resource Management: The Mediating Effect of Positioning and Leadership Management

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Abstract--The current study examined the relationship between human resource management (HRM), brand positioning, leadership management and brand performance. This relationship is examined in relation to the textile industry of Thailand. The mediating role of brand positioning and leadership management is also considered between HRM and brand performance. To address this relationship, the current study collected data from textile companies of Thailand. The managerial employees working in textile companies were considered as the respondents. A questionnaire was designed by using previous studies and primary data is collected. Data analysis is managed by using statistical tool. It is found that; HRM has influential role to enhance brand performance. The implementation of HRM practices in textile companies can enhance brand performance through brand positioning. HRM has positive role to effect brand positioning which further lead to the brand performance. Additionally, HRM effect positively on leadership management which causes to increase brand performance. Finally, this study recommended the textile companies to promote HRM practices to enhance brand performance.

Keywords---brand performance, brand positioning, human resource management (HRM), leadership management, textile industry Thailand.

Introduction

In the current business environment, the focus on brand is increasing significantly (Ben Youssef, Leicht, Pellicelli, & Kitchen, 2018). Most of the businesses are trying to introduce new brands in the market because branding is considered as one of the important tools to get success in business activities. The introduction of new brands in the market has the potential to capture the market share. It also has the ability to compete with the existing competitors in the market. Because in this environment the businesses are increasing and survival is most tough for the businesses. The businesses are trying to introduce new brands in the market which help to capture the market share and lead towards the higher performance (Carlini & Grace, 2021). Furthermore, it also led to the survival with the help of sustainable growth in the competitive environment.

On the other hand, branding is not an easy task for the business activities (Lai, Khoo-Lattimore, & Wang, 2018). It is one of the challenges for business companies to introduce new brands. Because the introduction of new brand in the market requires lot of efforts from the company. Most importantly it requires significant cost for the companies, therefore, all companies cannot introduce new brands continuously. For example, new brand introduction in the market requires marketing activities and sufficient amount of finance to promote new brands with the help of marketing activities. Furthermore, it also requires significant time which is not easy for the companies. Therefore, it is important to highlight various factors which has important role to the promotion of brands and lead towards the brand performance.

Similarly, the textile industry also facing the similar issues related to the branding. To compete in a competitive environment, the textile companies are also required to introduce new brands in the market. Furthermore, the companies already working in the market must ensure the higher performance of brands. Most importantly, the textile industry of Thailand required focus on branding. Although, this industry is one of the leading industries globally and it has major contribution nationally as well as internationally. However, still it is needed to promote branding performance. This industry has vital contribution to Thailand (SAWATENARAKUL & ROOPSING, 2021) because it is one of the important industry because it has contribution to the economy of Thailand. The contribution of this industry is increasing as shown in Figure 1. The textile companies working in Thailand exporting several products related to the textile which contributes to the economy of Thailand. Although this industry of Thailand is based on various brands to promote the performance of this industry. It is also needed to introduce new brands and it is needed to ensure the higher performance of existing brands. The issues related to the branding such as financing, sufficient period of time and various other operational issues are required to minimize to promote branding performance in Thailand.

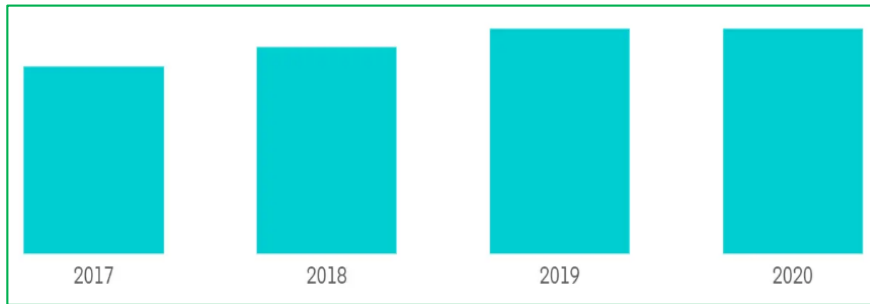


Figure 1. Textile Industry Growth in Thailand
Source: Mordor Intelligence

The current study introduced those human resources has vital importance to promote branding performance. The capability as well as skills of the humans working in any company can play significant contribution to the branding. The employees working in Thai textile companies required to use their skills for branding performance. According to this study brand positioning can be promoted with the help of HRM activities. The human resource practices among the textile companies can promote branding performance for brand positioning. Furthermore, according to the current study leadership management can also promote brand performance. However, the management of leadership required human resources. Therefore, human resources can promote leadership management and it has positive effect on brand performance. Therefore, the present study is an attempt to examine the relationship between HRM, brand positioning, leadership management and brand performance.

Literature review

The textile industry of Thailand is one of the most prominent industries globally however this industry is facing various issues related to the brand performance. This industry is contributing globally because this industry exporting several textile products to different countries and fulfill the needs of various markets. Number of brands are associated with this industry of Thailand; however, it is needed to promote brand performance. In this way this study highlighted several factors influencing brand performance. Framework of the study given in Figure 2 shows various relationships between variables and all these relationships are considered by considering the ignored part of literature. First of all, this framework shows the association between HRM and brand performance. The combined effect of HRM, brand positioning and leadership management is considered in relation to the brand performance.

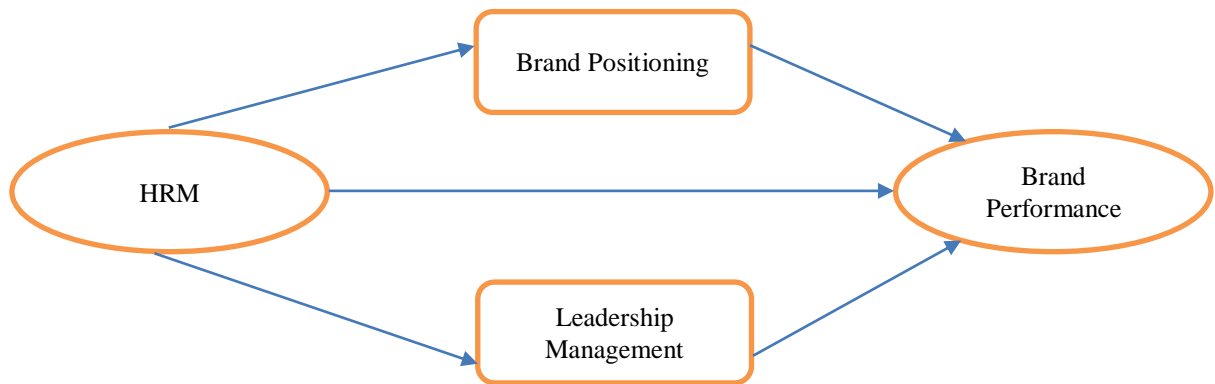


Figure 2. Framework of the study showing the relationship between HRM, brand positioning, leadership management and brand performance

Human resource management (HRM), brand positioning and brand performance

HRM practices are based on the effective practices to manage the people efficiently (Kloutsiniotis, Mihail, Mylonas, & Pateli, 2022) in the company and various business operations for skilled workers. The management of human resources is important to allocate various duties to the skilled workers according to the requirement. It can be explained as a strategic approach by the business organization to manage various operations for the people. Each individual has their own capability and skills to manage various operations. Therefore, it is needed to allocate the various activities or operations of the company according to the skills of the employees. Therefore, the management of human resources among the business organizations are most important (Chakraborty & Biswas, 2020).

Brand positioning is based on that how the brand vision, product and identity are strategically position in the comparative market to complete with the competitors. It is strategy for positioning of the brand in the market. The strategies are important because number of brands are already existing in the business market by several other companies. Therefore, in number of brands in the market, it is important to position the specific brand to capture the market share. Therefore, brand positioning has central importance among the businesses to gain higher performance in business activities, the brand performance is most important (Kirca, Randhawa, Talay, & Akdeniz, 2020).

This study shows that there is a significant relationship between the HRM and brand performance directly. More the human resources utilized to promote brand will have positive influence on businesses (Chiang, Han, & McConville, 2018; Lee, Wang, Wu, & Yen, 2021). Upgrade performance always require resources to promote brand through different ways. Therefore, human resource handling is to promote various activities related to the branding can help to promote brand performance. Similarly, human resources are also required to position a brand in the market (Ariq, Muna, & Syumantra, 2022). Various managers working in the business organizations require skills for branding. Therefore, it is important for

the company is to promote various human resources to enhance brand positioning in the market which may further lead to the brand performance. As given in previous studies that HRM and brand positioning (Love & Singh, 2011) has significant relationship with brand performance. Finally, the current study proposed the following hypotheses;

Hypothesis 1. HRM has positive relationship with brand performance.

Hypothesis 2. HRM has positive relationship with brand positioning.

Hypothesis 3. Brand positioning has positive relationship with brand performance.

Human resource management (HRM), leadership management and brand performance

HRM practices also has significant relationship on brand performance with the help of leadership management activities. A better leadership at workplace also required good human resources having significant capabilities and skills to manage the people. Because leadership is the management of the group of people or teams at workplace without conflicts. A leader having skills always manage the people with the help of right strategies and motivate them to perform better. Therefore, management of leadership always required human resources. As given in previous studies that leadership has strong association with HRM practices (Kloutsiniotis et al., 2022; Martinez, 2005; Oubrich, Hakmaoui, Benhayoun, Söilen, & Abdulkader, 2021; Salas-Vallina, Alegre, & López-Cabrales, 2021). In this way, the textile companies also required good human capabilities to promote leadership management. The promotion of leadership management among textile companies can promote brand performance. It is also given in previous studies that leadership and branding has relationship with each other (Garza-Carranza, Guzmán-Soria, López-Lemus, & Atlatenco-Ibarra, 2021; Walton, 2020) which always contribute to the business activities. Therefore, the current study proposed that a significant influence on leadership management and leadership management has positive role to promote brand performance. Therefore, following hypotheses are proposed;

Hypothesis 4. HRM has positive relationship with leadership management.

Hypothesis 5. Leadership management has positive relationship with brand performance.

The above section shows the direct effect of variables on mediating variable and dependent variable. The indirect effect is considered in the current section which shows the mediation effect of brand positioning and leadership management. The aforementioned sections highlighted that HRM has significant influence on brand positioning. It also has a significant influence on brand performance. Furthermore, it is observed in the literature that HRM has positive influence on leadership management. The leadership management also has positive influence on brand performance. In this way, all the three direct paths are significant which were recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986) to support mediation effect. The current situation is supportive to use brand positioning and leadership management as mediating variable between HRM and brand performance. Finally, it led to the following indirect effects hypotheses;

Hypothesis 6. Brand positioning mediates the relationship between HRM and brand performance.

Hypothesis 7. Leadership management mediates the relationship between HRM and brand performance.

Research Methodology

Number of previous studies carried out on branding performance along with various other variables including HRM (Chang, Chiang, & Han, 2012; Chiang et al., 2018; WARA, 2022). It is observed that most of the studies measured branding performance with the help of primary data. The primary data is also collected with the help of questionnaire survey. In addition to this it is also observed that HRM is also measured by using questionnaire survey. Therefore, by considering the trend in the literature, the current study also measured the relationship between HRM, brand positioning, leadership management and brand performance by using quantitative research approach.

The design of survey questionnaire is based on scale items available in previous studies. The first section of the questionnaire is based on to examine the general information of respondents. The second section of the question is based on the scale items related to the key study variables, namely; HRM, brand positioning, leadership management and brand performance. In this section, HRM is measured with the help of skills as well as capabilities of the employees working in textile companies. The skills and capabilities of the employees are considered in a relation to the branding. Furthermore, brand performance is measured with the help of popularity of the brand in relation to the brand of various competing companies in the same field. Furthermore, brand positioning is measured by considering the brand vision and identity as well as strategy in the market. Furthermore, the current study measured leadership management with the help of various practices carried out in the company to deal with employees. In this way the management of the company including the managers are considered as leaders and their activities to lead the group as well as team is considered to measure leadership management.

Population of the study is the textile companies working in Thailand. The managerial employees working in these companies are selected as the respondents. Only managers were selected because managers can correctly explain brand performance and leadership management. 500 questionnaires used in survey for data collection. 260 questionnaires were returned and 258 questionnaires were used in data analysis. The data collection is carried out with the help of simple random sampling.

Data analysis

Before to start data analysis, the current study checked the missing value in the data. It is found that HRM has five missing values, brand positioning has four missing values, leadership management has three missing values and brand performance has one missing value. All these missing values are removed from the data. Furthermore, this study checked the outlier in the data. It is found that brand positioning has five outliers, brand performance has two outliers and HRM

has one outlier. All these outliers are also treated effectively and after data cleaning the data statistics are given in Table 1.

Table 1
Data statistics

	No.	Missing	Mean	Median	Min	Max	SD	Excess Kurtosis	Skewness
HRM1	1	0	2.991	3	1	7	0.92	-0.168	0.965
HRM2	2	0	3.181	3	1	7	1.763	-0.482	0.476
HRM3	3	0	2.947	3	1	7	1.842	-1.029	0.378
HRM4	4	0	3.4	3	1	7	2.032	-0.55	0.465
HRM5	5	0	3.447	3	1	7	1.653	-0.194	0.366
HRM6	6	0	2.995	3	1	7	2.038	-1.052	0.271
HRM7	7	0	3.391	3	1	7	1.762	-0.725	0.167
HRM8	8	0	2.905	3	1	7	1.842	-0.655	0.289
HRM9	9	0	3.656	3	1	7	2.041	-1.051	0.367
HRM10	10	0	3.6	3	1	7	1.931	-0.68	0.438
BPO1	11	0	3.502	3	1	7	1.852	-0.582	0.443
BPO2	12	0	3.553	3	1	7	1.842	-0.563	0.409
BPO3	13	0	3.567	3	1	7	2.01	-0.658	0.359
BPO4	14	0	3.474	3	1	7	1.786	-0.381	0.501
LM1	15	0	3.46	3	1	7	1.887	-0.798	0.271
LM2	16	0	3.391	3	1	7	1.798	-0.466	0.406
LM3	17	0	3.567	3	1	7	1.74	-0.392	0.364
LM4	18	0	2.958	3	1	7	1.409	0.191	0.678
BP1	19	0	3.023	3	1	7	1.348	1.015	0.92
BP2	20	0	3.093	3	1	7	1.247	1.573	0.968
BP3	21	0	3.005	3	1	7	1.324	0.856	0.778
BP4	22	0	2.986	3	1	7	1.267	0.549	0.552
BP5	23	0	3.037	3	1	7	1.339	0.443	0.563

Figure 3 shows the measurement model of data analysis in which partial least square (PLS). Measurement model is a first step of PLS. In this process, factor loading is considered and all the scale items with factor loadings below 0.5 should be deleted from the current study. HRM is measured by using ten items and it is found that all the items have factor loading about 0.8. Leadership management is examined with the help of four items and none of the scale item is below 0.7. Furthermore, brand positioning is measured by using four items and all the scale items have factor loading above 0.8. Finally, the dependent variable and brand performance is measured by using five items and it is evident from Figure 3 and Table 2 that none of the scale item is below 0.8. Therefore, in this study none of the item is deleted and all the items are retained.

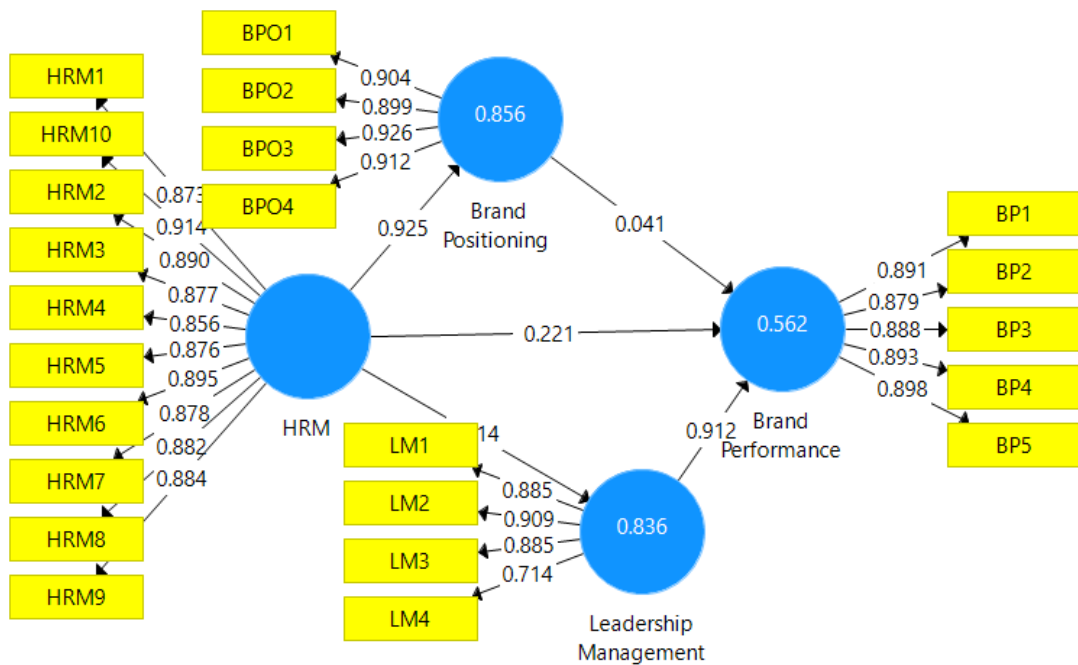


Figure 3. PLS Measurement model

Table 2
Factor loadings

Variables	Items	Loadings	Alpha	CR	AVE
Brand Performance	BP1	0.891	0.934	0.95	0.792
	BP2	0.879			
	BP3	0.888			
	BP4	0.893			
	BP5	0.898			
Brand Positioning	BPO1	0.904	0.931	0.951	0.829
	BPO2	0.899			
	BPO3	0.926			
	BPO4	0.912			
HRM	HRM1	0.873	0.968	0.972	0.779
	HRM10	0.914			
	HRM2	0.89			
	HRM3	0.877			
	HRM4	0.856			
	HRM5	0.876			
	HRM6	0.895			
	HRM7	0.878			
	HRM8	0.882			
	HRM9	0.884			
Leadership Management	LM1	0.885	0.87	0.913	0.726
	LM2	0.909			

LM3	0.885
LM4	0.714

The factor loading about 0.5 confirmed the inter item reliability. Furthermore, to check the reliability of the variable in this study considered composite liability which must be above 0.7. It is given in Table 2 that all the variables namely; HRM, brand positioning, leadership management and brand performance has composite liability above 0.7. Additionally, average variance extracted (AVE) is also about 0.5, for all these variables which confirmed the convergent validity. Finally, in this step, the current study examined discriminant validity by using cross-loadings as given in Table 3.

Table 3
Cross-Loadings

	Brand Performance	Brand Positioning	HRM	Leadership Management
BP1	0.891	0.575	0.595	0.691
BP2	0.879	0.534	0.545	0.64
BP3	0.888	0.532	0.568	0.662
BP4	0.893	0.566	0.598	0.665
BP5	0.898	0.571	0.588	0.656
BPO1	0.593	0.904	0.864	0.801
BPO2	0.603	0.899	0.823	0.758
BPO3	0.538	0.926	0.836	0.781
BPO4	0.538	0.912	0.846	0.805
HRM1	0.644	0.798	0.873	0.816
HRM10	0.589	0.874	0.914	0.84
HRM2	0.535	0.807	0.89	0.797
HRM3	0.532	0.818	0.877	0.779
HRM4	0.592	0.82	0.856	0.785
HRM5	0.583	0.801	0.876	0.82
HRM6	0.561	0.785	0.895	0.792
HRM7	0.543	0.764	0.878	0.796
HRM8	0.555	0.826	0.882	0.808
HRM9	0.601	0.866	0.884	0.832
LM1	0.575	0.825	0.786	0.885
LM2	0.592	0.798	0.841	0.909
LM3	0.567	0.78	0.812	0.885
LM4	0.617	0.52	0.554	0.714

The second part of data analysis in which structural model (Hair, Hult, Ringle, Sarstedt, & Thiele, 2017) is used to examine the relationship between variables. In this part of data analysis t-value 1.96 and beta value is considered. Structural model is given in Figure 4 and results are given in Table 4. Results given in Table 4 shows the relationship between HRM with brand positioning and brand performance. It is found that HRM has significant relationship with brand positioning and brand performance because the t-value is above 1.96 and p-value is below 0.05. Furthermore, the effect of HRM is examined in relation to the leadership management and brand performance. Results given in Table 4 shows

that HRM has significant relationship with leadership management and brand performance. There is a direct effect of HRM is considered in relation to the brand performance. The direct relationship between HRM and brand performance is also significant.

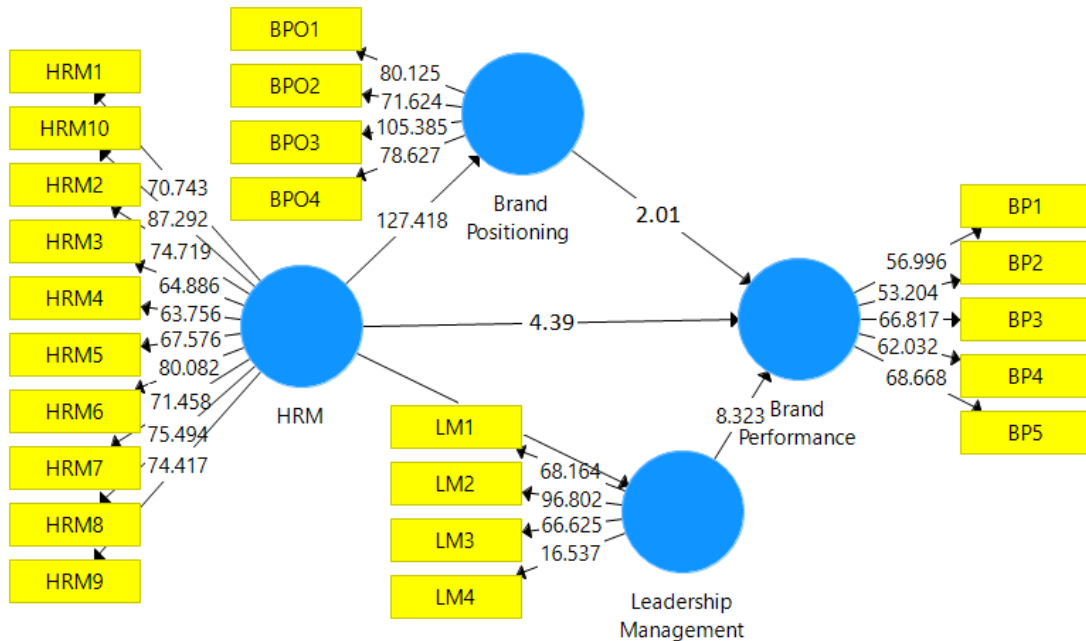


Figure 4. PLS Structural Model

Table 4
Results of direct effect

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Brand Positioning -> Brand Performance	0.041	0.05	0.02	2.01	0.04
HRM -> Brand Performance	0.221	0.228	0.05	4.39	0
HRM -> Brand Positioning	0.925	0.925	0.007	127.418	0
HRM -> Leadership Management	0.914	0.915	0.011	83.226	0
Leadership Management -> Brand Performance	0.912	0.911	0.11	8.323	0

Finally, the current study considered the mediating effect. The mediating effect of brand positioning and leadership management is considered between HRM and brand performance. The results of mediation effect are given in Table 5 in which t-value 1.96 is considered to check the significance. The mediation effect of brand positioning between HRM and brand performance is not significant because the t-value is below 1.96. Furthermore, the mediation effect of leadership management is considered between HRM and brand performance which is significant.

Table 5
Results of In-Direct Effect

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
HRM -> Brand Positioning -> Brand Performance	0.038	0.046	0.113	0.339	0.734
HRM -> Leadership Management -> Brand Performance	0.834	0.834	0.104	8.046	0

Finally, this study checked the variance explain in brand performance. The variances explained in brand performance is 0.562 which indicates that all the variables are expected to bring 56.2% change in brand performance which is moderate.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study attempted to examine the relationship between HRM, brand positioning, leadership management and brand performance in textile industry of Thailand. The mediating role of brand positioning and leadership management is also considered between HRM and brand performance. To test the direct and indirect effect various direct as well as indirect hypotheses are proposed by the current study with the help of literature. Data analysis of the study shows that direct effect of HRM on brand performance is significant and positive. It shows that increase in HRM activities among the textile companies can promote brand performance. These results are consistent with other studies because literature shows the significant positive role of HRM in branding (Küpper, Klein, & Völckner, 2021). The direct effect of brand positioning shows that it has positive effect on brand positioning. These results are in line with other studies because HRM and brand positioning has significant positive relationship in the literature. Nevertheless, the current study checked the effect of brand positioning on brand performance which is also positive and significant. Therefore, this study shows that increase in HRM activities in textile companies can increase brand performance and brand positioning. To increase brand positioning among these companies can also increase the brand performance. Similarly, HRM also has positive effect on leadership management. It is proved that increase in HRM practices and proper implementation of HRM practices among the companies can increase leadership management capabilities. Furthermore, the leadership management can also increase brand performance directly. It is also in line with other studies because previous studies also shows that leadership has strong relationship with branding (Fadilah, Afita, & Prinduri, 2021). Thus, HRM has a potential to enhance leadership management which further increases the brand performance. Finally, the indirect effect also shows that HRM has influence on brand performance. As it is found that leadership management transfer the positive effect of HRM on brand performance. Hence, it is concluded that HRM has influential role to promote brand performance with the help of promoting brand positioning and leadership management among the textile companies of Thailand.

Implications

The relationship tested in the current study was not considered by the previous studies. As this study examined the relationship between HRM, brand positioning, leadership management and brand performance which is ignored in the textile sector of Thailand. This unique relationship tested in this study has vital implications for the practice in relation to the management of textile companies in Thailand. As this study proved that HRM has the potential to promote branding, thus, management of textile companies should promote HRM practices. In addition, from these results of this study also recommended to the management of the companies to enhance brand positioning and leadership management with the help of HRM.

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