

What about HRM in SMEs: An Analysis from the Strategic Vision of the Owner-Managers of SMEs in Cameroon

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Abstract: The objective of this paper is to analyse the role of HRM in the SME from the strategic vision of the owner-managers of SMEs in Cameroon. Using the method of cognitive mapping, it appears from this study that human resource management plays an important role in the strategic vision of the owner-managers of these companies. In effect the most important concept central to their cognitive map refers to a paternalistic human resources management as a sine qua non for achieving the growth targets of these owner-managers.

Keywords: SME owner-manager; strategic vision; HRM

JEL Classification: M54

1. Introduction

HRM is considered since the early 80's as a management priority in any business, large or small. Its importance continues also to increase in an increasingly competitive environment the core competitive advantage lies in the quality and productivity of HR. Research practices and HRM policies are well developed (Hornsby & Kuratko, 1990; Huselid and al, 1997; Ulrich, 1997).

However, HRM is a research field that has long been explored primarily in large companies. This is particularly surprising given the huge importance of SMEs in the global economy (Heneman et al., 2000). The practice models developed and conducted in large companies were subsequently transposed in SMEs (Welsh and White 1981). But researchers are almost unanimous as to recognize and admit that

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SMEs have significantly particularities that distinguish them from large companies and they are not models or miniature of large companies (Torres, 1999; Lavigne & St-Pierre, 2002). They have characteristics that give them their size, organization and diversity.

Because of this specificity, templates have been created by and for large firms to measure the reality of SMEs management practices (Bayad & Nebenhaus, 1993; Wager, 1998; Kaman et al., 2001). The findings of the studies done in and for large companies enable to understand how this business category, or in some cases even beneficial for SMEs, they need to be reconsidered (Torres, 1997). So many researchers had to rethink the context of SME research topics already covered in large companies. HRM, this specificity, is justifies the particular approach considered for its study in the context SMEs (Garand, 1993; D'Amboise & Garand, 1995). SMEs are different from large corporations regarding their HRM practices (Pearson et al., 2006). Hornsby and Kuratko (1990) note that the classic HRM textbooks do not reflect the reality of HRM practices in SMEs. The theoretical and empirical knowledge in this area can still be considered developing and insufficiently studied.

Indeed, the opposite of big business and there is a clear division of tasks between the leaders of the HR function and those in charge of the overall strategy of the company, in SMEs, it is not.

In general, SMEs are characterized by the key role of the leader and his relative solitude facing the strategic decisions, and a low degree of explanation of HR and strategy process (Torres, 1997). Here the leader is both subject and object of the decision (Mahé Boislandelle, 1990). He is responsible both for the design of the implementation of HRM. In addition, its ubiquity coupled with the lack of union personnel grouping does not contribute to the development of HRM practices developed and formalized (Bayad & Hermann, 1991; Fabi et al, 1993). The lack of formalisation does not mean absence of HRM practice, instead it reflects the intuitive nature of HRM in SMEs.

Indeed, the autonomy of the SME manager in the conduct of his business involves personal values and his vision better profiled are determining factors in decisions generally adopted, especially in HRM (Bayad, 1995).

From there, questioning the human resource management in SMEs, is to question the content and mechanisms of thought leader of HRM has to say about the place of HRM in its strategic vision (Cossette, 1994; Amboise & Nkongolo, 1993, Filion, 1994).

2. Literature Review

2.1. HRM in SMEs: what is it?

Until late 1990s, few work have studied the HRM object in SMEs. HRM context SMEs often gave rise based on partial observations and impressions as advanced analysis and relevant (Mahé Boislande, 1988). Many authors emphasise the theoretical problem of shortage in the field of HRM in SMEs, although this particular knowledge is supposed to be exceptionally useful for SMEs (Heneman et al., 2000). This explains the increased attention of both researchers and managers of SMEs to HRM in recent years (Purcell, 1993; Edwards et al., 2005).

Indeed, since the early 2000s, this thematic concern has been raised in a good numbers of scientific works (Torres, 1999; Barrett & Mayson, 2007; Kotey & Folker, 2007; Kotey & Slade, 2005).

Cardona and Stevens (2004) presented a comprehensive literature review of HRM in small businesses. The authors identified and analyzed twenty-three articles published in several journals of general management, entrepreneurship and HRM, and several book chapters. They came to the following conclusions:

1. It is difficult to identify the totality of HRM practices.
2. Empirical research and theoretical proposals relate to the standards/best practice standards.
3. The formal and informal, structured and unstructured, are mixed in small businesses; However, the activities and the level of formalization of decisions is lower than in large companies.
4. The influence of the vision of the owner-managers of these companies on the policies and practices of HRM is considerable.

Several of these studies indicate that in SMEs, there are really, though limited, a range of HRM practices, although they generally remain somewhat formalized (Barrett & Mayson, 2007). In doing so, all forms of generalization on this are avoided.

However, previous research synthesis, reveal that SMEs generally do not have formal HR department do not adopt traditional HRM practices (Hornsby & Kuratko, 1990; Heneman & Berkley, 1999; De Kok & Uhlaner, 2001; De Kok, 2003).

The concept of formalization used to describe HRM practices appears a reduced reality, the lack of formalisation does not reflect a lack of practice or lack of interest of the leaders of HRM in their businesses. Thus limited then to raise that there is HRM in SME, but intuitive, certainly brings elements of understanding of the specificity of HRM practices in these companies but does not contribute significantly to the advancement of knowledge in this area. For this reason, it appears necessary

to build a reflection on HRM in SMEs with the assumption that it is intuitive given up the strategic vision of the leader in the management of this company.

2.2. HRM and Strategic Vision of Owner-Managers: Two Inseparable Concepts in SMEs

Most authors who study finds SMEs unable to discuss the management of them by evading the question of leaders weight (Bayad & Nebenhaus, 1998). Current strategic and organizational decisions are considered correlated to cognitive schema leader (Julien, 1993; Marchesnay, 1991).

The importance of cognitive patterns in the study of individuals is revealed as a result of the work of Dearborn and Simon (1958). This is a kind of reality reading grids allowing decryption of a situation, through the collection of a set of cause and effect (Wirtz, 2002). Cossette (2004) defines a schema from an organizational perspective, as an epistemological structure that serves as a repository system to the individual and the group in the observation or perception of these events, in the interpretation of future events. The cognitive schemas allow the individual to bring order into this reality that otherwise would only be misleading (Mulaik 1995). So they are belief systems and each concept is supposed to be an explanation or a consequence of one or several others. They allow the individual to give meaning to everything that surrounds it.

However, the schemes should not be confused with reality, since they allow for a fairly subjective representation, a specific shaping of reality. There is a sense of creative process that allows somehow simplifying realities by translating what is happening in and around the organization, giving it meaning. These meanings result from subjective and interpretative processes that are rooted in cognitive logic of the leader (Saporta, 1989). The cognitive schemes in the field of management allows the officer or owner-manager to understand the management of its business in some way. This way of understanding the business management is the manager's vision of development and the conduct of its business,

During the last decade the concept of strategic vision has taken over an important role in the developments of strategic thinking (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985; Schwenk, 1984; Laroche & Nioche, 1994). The use of the concept of strategic vision in SME context is much more recent (Cossette, 1994; Amboise & Nkongolo, 1987; Filion, 1994; Amboise & Bouchard, 1990). In SMEs, the strategic process is based on the thinking of owner-managers, who very often, can not count on the help of others in management. Management is primarily focused on these players and that is one of the reasons for the importance of the strategic vision for SMEs. Another reason stems from the fact that in SMEs, the strategic process appears relatively developed in the use of administrative techniques and analytical methods. The understanding of things, the ability of judgment, intuition and the personal aspirations of owner-managers better their cognitive schemes and then become critical in the management

of the company, all of which are closely related to the strategic vision. In doing so, many studies consider the strategic vision of fundamental importance for SMEs and, therefore, emphasise the need to give priority to understanding the strategic management of such organisations (Allali, 2003; Bayad & Garand, 1998; Filion, 1988; Wyer & Mason, 1998).

There are various definitions of the concept of strategic vision. For Allali (2005, p. 89), the strategic vision is “a thread that gives meaning and makes consistent decisions and actions of the leader-entrepreneur. It makes it possible to direct it in the proper direction and fixed in advance guidance as well as his thoughts of his actions”. Cossette (2002, p. 5) considers that “the strategic vision is a cognitive product consisting of a network of concepts deemed important for the future of the company. It highlights an explanation system (causes or means) and consequences (effects or purposes) that guides the individuals involved in the interpretation of events and actions to be taken.”

These definitions are considerably closer to that of Filion (1991). Indeed, having been instrumental in popularizing the concept of strategic vision in the areas of entrepreneurship and SMEs, Filion (1991, pp. 109-110) sets the strategic vision as “a projected image in the future that we want to see eventually occupied by its products on the market and the type of organization needed to achieve it.”

Filion (1991) distinguishes three categories of vision: emerging, central and secondary visions:

- Emerging visions revolve around ideas and product concepts or services a leader wants to bring to market;
- Central vision by aggregating and sorting performance among emerging visions, to give it shape;
- Side visions include all management activities (marketing, finance, accounting, HRM), defined to support the achievement of central vision.

The definition of Filion (1991) brings up the concept in its fullness, that is, a goal and the means to achieve it. The desired future state of the products or services appears to be central to the vision of HRM as a secondary vision in the strategic vision of SME manager, is a means for the realization or implementation of central vision. Thus, there is an overlap of HRM to the strategic vision of the leader of the SME. The low degree of explicitness of HRM and strategy that characterizes SMEs implies that the practices are built over the circumstances and from the managerial unstated conceptions underlying (Mahé Boislandelle, 1990).

Furthermore, a systematic analysis of HRM reveals interdependent activities whose effects combine with each other in achieving the business goals (Bélanger, 1988).

This systemic approach reflects a strategic vision of human resource that links between business strategies and HRM.

So through the strategic vision of owner-managers of SMEs it is possible to grasp the mental representations of owner-managers and the meaning of their actions on HRM (Louart & Beaucourt, 1995).

3. Methodological Approach and Results

3.1. Methodological Approach

This research is based on qualitative research protocol, based on multiple case studies. The cases covered by the study are SME owner-managers. Data collection was done on the basis of a sample of 3 owner-managers of SMEs who should be considered three cases to study.

In Cameroon, the law N. 2010/001 of 13 April 2010 on the promotion of SMEs, states that SMEs refer to any permanent company employees whose workforce which does not exceed 100 persons and whose turnover does not exceed not one billion CFA francs.

Table 1. Sample of our Small business owner-managers

Owner-manager	Sex	Age	level of studies	Activity of SMEs	CA SME	Number of SMEs
AT	male	67 years	+5 (mechanical engineer)	Boilerwork	150 million FCFA	45
B	female	56 years	+5 (in Chemical Engineer)	poultry farm	80 million FCFA	56
C	male	39 years	+4 (in Management License)	Hotel	240 million FCFA	80

Unlike observable behaviors, cognitive schemata individuals are not directly accessible to the researcher who must mobilize different techniques to approach the thinking of the actor. Issues of work in cognitive psychology (Tolman, 1948) and then integrated in a cognitive approach to organizations, cognitive mapping we emerged as an important tool to describe and analyse the strategic vision of SME owner-managers. This is a heuristic method whose use is suitable for the treatment of such data (Hindle, 2004).

Applying the method of cognitive maps in formulating the strategic vision in the context of entrepreneurship has been advocated by Cossette (2003), Verstraete and Saporta (2006). A cognitive map is an image representing the ideas of an individual. "This is a graphical representation of the mental representation that the researcher (or consultant) is a set of discursive representations set by a subject (or group of

subjects) from its own cognitive representations about a particular object.” Cossette and Audet (1994, p. 15).

For the construction and analysis of these cognitive maps, we followed the approach advocated by (Cossette, 2003). Thus, we proceeded as follows:

Table 2. Approach to developing cognitive maps

phases	Description
Phase I: Exploration	This phase involved the collection of data from SME owner-managers. Data collection was done by individual interviews semi-structured type using a service guide. Each interview was recorded and transcribed in full
Phase II: Coding	The coding is done on the basis of interview transcripts. This is to identify and list the concepts and influential links between concepts to create a cognitive map still not validated for each officer. During the coding phase one of the original language holding force of each subject was performed. A non-validated card is then outlined with the Decision Explorer software.
Phase III: Validation	this phase was to strengthen the validity of the study in order to avoid misinterpretation of the speeches of the leaders owners. The validation was done under as a second individual interview during which each owner-manager is aware of its cognitive map and it gave its approval. In case some links between concepts did not have the consent of the latter, we must make certain adjustments they consider necessary.
Phase IV: Analysis	Following any changes to the previous phase, a new cognitive map is created if necessary. After this second interview we conducted with the software Decision Explorer, an analysis of each validated cognitive map.

The data were analysed using the Decision Explorer software specialised in the analysis of cognitive maps.

3.2. Results

This is firstly to present the cognitive maps of owner-managers and also to carry out the analysis of said cards.

3.2.1. Cognitive Maps

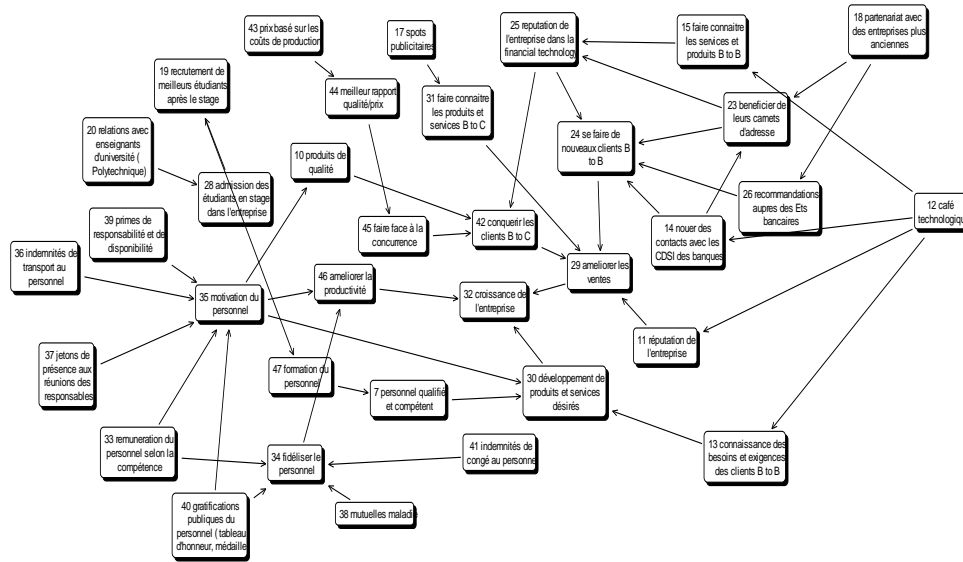


Figure 1. Cognitive map of the owner-manager A

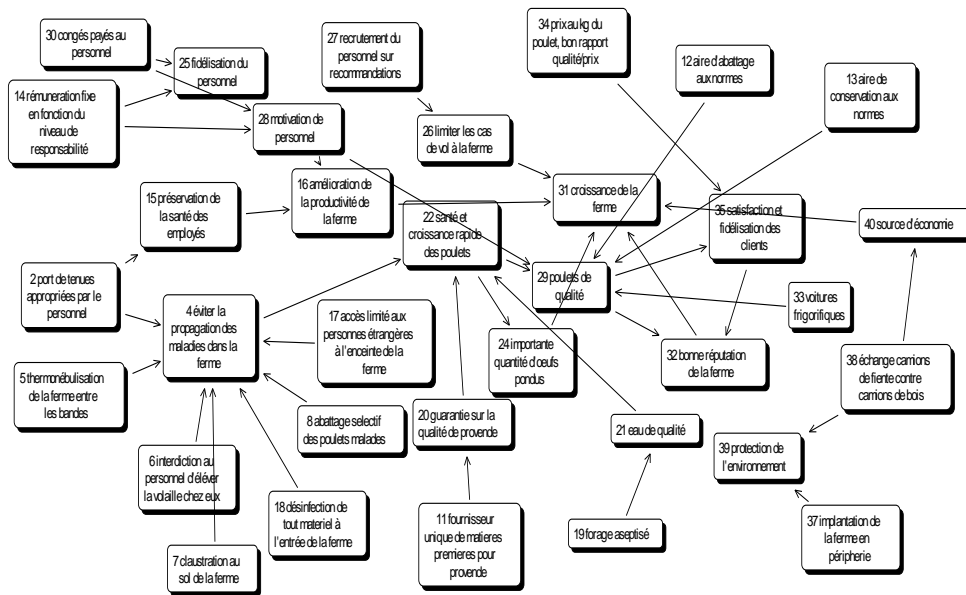


Figure 2. Cognitive map of the owner-manager B

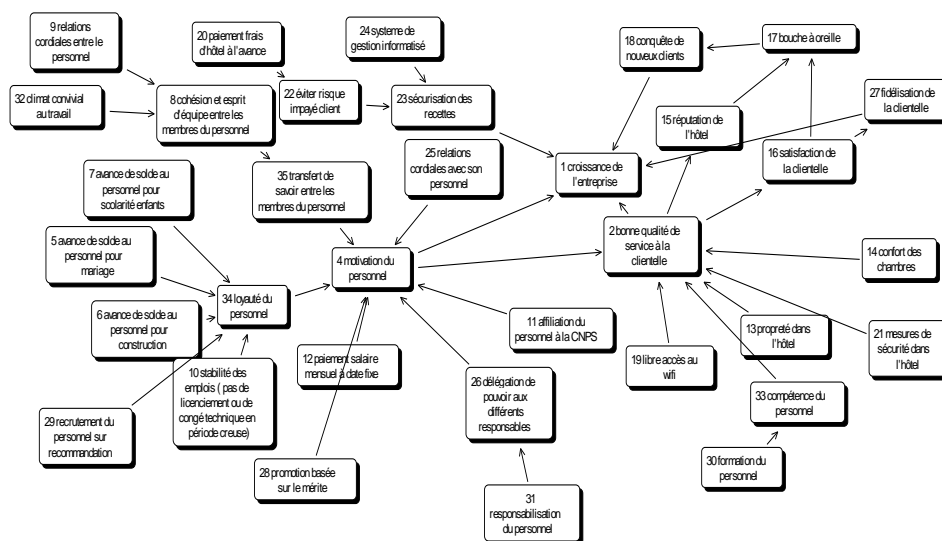


Figure 3. Cognitive map of the owner-manager C

3.2.2. Analysis of Cognitive Maps

This analysis is centered on three aspects: the relative importance of concepts, the groups of concepts emerging and finally the influencing and influenced concepts of the cognitive map (Gervais & Cossette, 2007).

3.2.2.1. The relative Concepts

The analysis and study of a cognitive map are supported fundamentally by the assessment of the relative importance of each of the concepts of the card. This consists in determining the central concepts of cognitive schemata of owner-managers for the management of their business. The relative importance of a concept is defined in relation to the number of factors (concepts) to which it is connected, directly or indirectly (Cossette, 1994).

Table 3. The fifteen most important concepts in cognitive maps

Owner Managed A		
concept number	concept	score
10	staff motivation at work	13
2	manufacture quality products	11
19	profitability	10
18	good business productivity	9

Owner-manager B		
concept number	concept	score
29	Quality of chickens	15
22	health and rapid growth of chickens	15
4	prevent the spread of disease in the farm	13
31	growth of the farm	11
24	significant amount of eggs	11
32	reputable firm	10

14	professional realization staff	9
5	customer loyalty	9
4	client satisfaction	9
36	minimize production costs	8
31	win new customers	8
16	development of staff skills	8
22	business innovation	7
8	Nearby Staff	7
7	team spirit	7
3	produce in line with standards	7
1	production in line with customer expectations	7

28	staff motivation	10
16	improving farm productivity	10
35	Customer satisfaction and loyalty	9
21	water quality	9
20	guarantee the quality of feed	9
2	wear appropriate clothing by staff	8
33	refrigerated cars	7
15	preserving employee's health	7
13	conservation area standards	7

Owner Managed C		
concept number	concept	score
4	staff motivation	10
2	good customer service quality	10
34	staff loyalty	9
1	business growth	9
35	knowledge transfer between staff	8
26	delegation of authority to managers	7
23	securing revenue	7
16	customer satisfaction	7
15	reputation of the hotel	7
33	staff competence	6
28	promotion based on merit	6
27	loyalty of the clientele	6
25	cordial relations with staff	6
18	win new customers	6
17	word of mouth	6

In view of the fifteen most important concepts of the cognitive map of the owner-manager A, it appears he has a strategic vision geared towards the growth of his business. Related concepts such as concepts No 19 = profitability, No. 18 = good business productivity, and No. 36 = minimize production costs, have the highest centrality scores. This translates an expansion pursuit of the company.

This growth happens partly due to a quality human resources management (see the concepts # 10 = staff motivation at work, No. 14 = professional realization staff, No. 16 = development of staff skills, No. 8 = near the staff and 7 = teamwork) and secondly by the client's satisfaction through quality products (see the concepts 2 =

manufacture quality products, # 4 = customer satisfaction, # 3 = produce in line with the standards and 1 = produce in line with expectations of the customer).

From the fifteen most important concepts of the cognitive map of the owner-manager B (Poultry Farm), his vision is focused on the development of its business. Concepts No.31 = farm growth, No.22 = healthy and rapid growth of chickens, No.24 = significant amount of eggs laid and No.16 = improving farm productivity are directly referred. It also appears that this development requires above all quality production of chickens (imparts concepts 29 = quality chickens, No.21 = water quality, No.20 = guarantee of the quality of Feed No.33 = refrigerated cars and No.13 = conservation area standards) and appropriate health measures (grants concepts No.4 = avoid the spread of disease in the farm, No. 2 = port appropriate clothing by staff).

Concerning the owner-manager C (Hotel), the fifteen most important concepts of the cognitive map revealed as the other two leaders have a strong interest in the growth of its business (see concept No.1 = business growth). Furthermore, this growth relies on a two-dimensional base, one internal and one external to the company.

Indeed, the analysis of these five concepts captures the importance the owner-manager C correlated with one hand to the internal dimension of the company that is human resource management and furthermore the external dimension of the business is the customer. Regarding human resource management, seven of the fifteen most important concepts in this table are explicitly referred (see the concepts No.4 = staff motivation, No. 34 = staff loyalty, No. 35 = knowledge transfer between staff, No. 26 = delegation of authority to managers, 33 = competence of staff, n = 28 promotion based on merit, No. 25 = cordial relations with staff). As for the external dimension, customers.

3.2.2.2. Grouping of Concepts

The cluster analysis can account for how the individual organises his ideas about a given topic in a map identifying the different groups of thought that emerged there. Tables 4,5 and 6 respectively show groups of concepts cognitive maps of owners-A, B and C.

Table 4. Concepts Group cognitive maps of the owner-manager A (Boiler)

GROUP 1		GROUP 2	
concept number	concept	concept number	concept
1	production in line with customer expectations	6	Mutual staff
2	manufacture quality products	7	team spirit
3	produce in line with standards	8	Nearby Staff
4	client satisfaction	9	Solidarity staff
5	customer loyalty	10	staff motivation at work
19	profitability	11	health insurance for staff
20	meet delivery deadlines	12	Good working conditions
22	business innovation	13	Affiliate personnel to the CNPS
23	improvement of existing products	14	professional realization staff
24	business growth	15	capacity building seminar
27	academic courses to students	16	development of staff skills
28	detection of potential employees	18	good business productivity
29	youth training	21	staff creativity
30	recruitment of qualified and competent staff	36	minimize production costs
37	credits tontine		
38	minimize financing costs		

GROUP 3	
26	new product development
31	win new customers
32	sponsorship of cultural and sporting events
33	promotion of cultural values
34	promotion of sports values
35	reputation of the company

Group 1 includes 16 concepts and reflects the interest taken by the owner-manager A to the satisfaction of customers with quality products and growth of its business. Group 2 includes 14 concepts revolving around the management of human resources. Group 3 includes 6 concepts that translate CSR dimension of the owner-manager.

In view of these three groups of concepts, it is clear that this owner-manager, growth through management of appropriate human resources and a permanent quest for customer satisfaction through quality products and CSR practices to improve the reputation of the company.

Table 5. Concepts Group Cognitive map of owner-manager B

GROUP 1		GROUP 2	
concept number	concept	concept number	concept
2	wear appropriate clothing by staff	11	sole supplier of raw materials for provender
4	prevent the spread of disease in the farm	12	area slaughter standards
5	thermonebulization farm between bands	13	conservation area standards
6	ban staff to raise poultry at home	14	fixed remuneration depending on the level of responsibility
7	confined to the ground of the farm	19	drilling sanitized
8	cull sick chickens	20	guarantee the quality of feed
15	preserving employee health	21	water quality
17	limited access to persons outside the farm enclosure	22	health and rapid growth of chickens
18	disinfection of all materials to the entrance to the farm	25	staff retention
		28	staff motivation
		29	Quality of chickens
		30	paid leave to staff
		33	refrigerated cars

GROUP 3	
concept number	concept
16	improving farm productivity
24	significant amount of eggs
26	reduce theft farm
27	recommendations on staff recruitment
31	growth of the farm
32	reputable firm
34	price per kg chicken, good price / quality ratio
35	Customer satisfaction and loyalty
37	implantation of the farm periphery
38	exchange Truck droppings against timber trucks
39	Environmental Protection
40	source of savings

From the above table, it is noted that Group 1 includes 9 concepts and reflects the importance the owner-manager B has towards to sanitation and disease prevention in the poultry farm. Group 2 consists of 13 concepts rotating about the quality management in the farm. Group 3 includes 12 concepts related mainly to the profitability and growth of the Farm. It is clear from this analysis that sanitation and health protection, quality management and the profitability and growth of the poultry farm are the three major dimensions that make up the cognitive schemata of owner-manager B.

Table 6. Concepts Group Cognitive map Owner Managed C

GROUP 1		GROUP 2	
concept number	concept	concept number	concept
4	staff motivation	1	business growth
5	to marriage for personal advance of pay	2	good customer service quality
6	advance of pay to the building for staff	13	cleanliness in the hotel
7	advance of pay for staff in child education	14	room comfort
8	cohesion and team spirit among staff	15	reputation of the hotel
9	cordial relations between staff	16	customer satisfaction
10	job stability (no redundancy or technical off-peak)	17	word of mouth
11	Staff affiliation to the CNPS	18	win new customers
12	payment monthly salary fixed date	19	free wifi
25	cordial relations with staff	20	pay hotel bills in advance
26	delegation of authority to managers	21	security measures in the hotel
28	promotion based on merit	22	avoid risk outstanding customer
31	staff accountability	23	securing revenue
32	climate friendly work	24	computerized management system
34	staff loyalty	27	loyalty of the clientele
35	knowledge transfer between staff	30	staff training
36	recommendations on staff recruitment	33	staff competence

Table 6 includes two groups of concepts. Group 1 includes 17 concepts revolving around financial and nonfinancial aspects on which the owner-manager C uses to boost staff motivation and ensure their loyalty to the company. This reflects the interest taken by the owner-manager C (HOTEL) on human resources management. Group 2 also includes 17 concepts revolving around the customer management and quality of service offered to it in order to win new customers and improve their company's reputation.

Therefore, the strategic vision of the owner-manager C is structured around the binomial paternalistic management and human resources management customer oriented service quality.

3.2.2.3. Analysis of Influencing Concepts and Influenced Concepts

Analysis of influencing concepts and influenced concepts seek to highlight the concepts considered as inputs (or explanation), that is to say those which have a direct influence on several other concepts and concepts considered output (consequences) on which several other concepts directly influence. According Cossette to (2001), influencing factors are the explanatory variables, that is to say, that represent potential actions or arguments that could lead to desirable result (or undesirable).

Tables 7, 8 and 9 show the factors directly influenced by two other factors and the factors influencing directly at least two other factors cognitive maps respectively of owner-A, B and C.

Table 7. influencing concepts and concepts influenced the cognitive map of the owner-manager A

concept number	influencants concepts	number	concept number	influenced concepts	number
6	Mutual staff	3	10	staff motivation	6
16	development of staff skills	3	4	profitability	4
10	staff motivation	2	2	manufacture quality products	3
30	recruitment of qualified and competent staff		22	business innovation	2
32	sponsorship of cultural and sporting events	2	5	customer loyalty	2
27	academic courses to students	2	4	client satisfaction	2
			31	win new customers	2
			35	reputation of the company	2

From this table, it should first be noted that, of the concepts influenced, three of them are related to at least three concepts (13 direct links in total) whereas only two of the influencing concepts are (6 direct links to the total). These three influencing concepts favored by the owner-manager A, the concepts # 10 = motivation of the staff, # 4 = profitability of the company and # 2 = manufacturing quality products, clearly reveal that the owner-manager B is more concerned about the growth of his business.

Moreover, it should be noted that a concept, No. 10 = staff motivation is influenced both as a concept and as a influencing concept. This concept is considered as a key concept of the strategic vision of the owner-manager B as being regarded by him as an explanation and a fundamental consequence for the future of his business.

Table 8. Concepts influencing and influenced concepts of the cognitive map of the owner-manager B

concept number	influencing concepts	number	concept number	influenced concepts	number
14	fixed remuneration depending on the level of responsibility	2	4	prevent the spread of disease in the farm	7
22	health and rapid growth of chickens	2	31	growth of the farm	5
29	Quality of chickens	2	29	Quality of chickens	5
28	staff motivation	2	22	health and rapid growth of chickens	3
30	paid leave to staff	2	16	improving farm productivity	2
			32	reputable firm	2
			35	Customer satisfaction and loyalty	2
			39	Environmental Protection	2
			28	staff motivation	2

On reading this table, it appears that influenced concepts, four of them are connected to at least three concepts (direct links 20 in total) while none of the concepts is influencing (0 Total direct link).

These three influenced concepts privileged by the owner-manager B that are the concepts # 4 = avoid the spread of disease in the farm, No. 31 = growth of the firm and # 29 = quality chickens, No. 22 = Health and rapid growth of chickens clearly reveal that the owner-manager B is also concerned about the growth of his business, growth which he said is based on sanitation and disease prevention on the one hand and quality high secondly chickens .

In addition, it should be noted that two concepts, No. 29 = quality chickens and No. 22 = healthy and rapid growth of chickens, are both influenced and as such are influencing concepts. These two concepts are regarded as central concepts of the strategic vision of the owner-manager B, and thus show the importance that the owner-manager has for the growth of his business.

Table 9. concepts influencing and influenced concepts of the cognitive map of the owner-manager C

concept number	influencing concepts	number	concept number	influenced concepts	number
4	staff motivation	2	4	staff motivation	7
2	good customer service quality	2	2	good customer service quality	6
16	customer satisfaction	2	34	staff loyalty	5
			1	business growth	5
			8	cohesion and team spirit among staff	2
			23	securing revenue	2
			17	word of mouth	2

From the above table, it appears that influenced concepts, four of them are connected to at least five concepts (direct links 23 in total) while none of the concepts is influencing (0 direct link in total).

These four influenced concepts that are very important for the owner-manager C are concepts # 4 = staff motivation, 2 = Good customer service and No. 34 = staff loyalty, # 1 = business growth. Through these concepts, it is clear from the main objectives of the owner-manager C.

In addition, two concepts, # 4 = staff motivation, 2 = good quality of customer service, are present as well as affected as influencing concepts. These two concepts are regarded as central concepts of the strategic vision of the owner-manager C.

4. Conclusion

This article aimed at analysing of human resource management in SMEs from the strategic vision of the owner-managers of SMEs in Cameroon. In this perspective, it was to undertake a mapping of their mental representations about their business management to identify their objectives on the one hand and the provisions they consider fundamental to the achievement of the said objectives on the other.

Results of the study shows that owner-managers of SMEs Cameroonian strongly resemble the type of owner-manager CAP (growth, autonomy and sustainability) as described by Marchesnay (1996). They have a stronger interest in the results for the means; this is a generally accepted characteristic SME owner-managers (Gasse, 1982).

Furthermore these results contradict those of Julien (2008) that reveal that SME owner-managers are not looking primarily growth but rather the sustainability of their business. The owner-managers of Cameroonian SMEs have as main objective the growth of their business. They consider the quality of products (owner-A and C) or services (Owner-manager B) offered to customers as a prerequisite for achieving

their growth objectives. This confirms the conclusions of Brockman et al. (2012) in which the owner-managers of SMEs is a great customer oriented strategies in the sense of the quality of products offered to them. In addition, human resource management plays a central role in the strategic vision of the owner-managers of SMEs in Cameroon. For them, achieving their growth objectives requires a paternity in human resource management.

It should however be noted that the results of this study should be analyzed very carefully as some point limit its scope. Including the fact that the study sample was a purposive sample and the sample size is small.

Nevertheless, this study provides some answers to the problem of human resource management in SMEs in general and in Cameroon in particular.

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