

**Talent Management in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry:
The Role of Societal and Organisational Culture**

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this research is to examine the role of societal and organisational culture on talent management (TM) within the Greek hospitality and tourism (H&T) industry. Specifically, we test societal culture’s effect on TM approaches and the mediating role of organisational culture.

Design/methodology/approach – In our quantitative study, the questionnaire sample included employees of all hierarchical levels from three hotels located in northern, central, and southern Greece (n = 188). Data analyses were carried out by using the PROCESS Version 4 macro in SPSS.

Findings – Our results show that neither societal nor organisational culture are decisive factors in impacting the perceived TM approach. This might be due to the organisations imitating other firms without pre-establishment of societal and organisational fit.

Practical implications – This study emphasises TM’s alignment with both societal and organisational culture. Given the context-specific nature of TM, achieving culture fit can enhance talent acquisition, retention, and engagement, ultimately leading to improved talent and overall organisational performance.

Originality/value – Our study integrates more centrally a cultural lens into the TM discourse. It provides empirical evidence of TM approaches in the Greek H&T industry, drawing on a multi-stakeholder sample including managers and talents.

Keywords – talent management; hospitality and tourism; societal culture; organisational culture; hotel management

Introduction

Talent management (TM) remains a critical strategy for hospitality and tourism (H&T) organisations to address persistent talent shortages (Jooss *et al.*, 2023; Kravariti *et al.*, 2023b), even as the effects of global crises like the recent pandemic wane (Liu-Lastres *et al.*, 2024). TM can broadly be defined as “an integrated set of processes, programs, and cultural norms in an organization designed and implemented to attract, develop, deploy, and retain talent to achieve strategic objectives and meet future business needs” (Silzer and Dowell, 2009, p. 18). In the service-oriented H&T industry, perhaps more than in other industries, talented employees remain a key differentiator among organisations (Bharwani and Talib, 2017).

H&T TM scholarship has primarily focused on the operational aspects of TM, such as talent acquisition, development, and retention across various H&T sectors (Jooss *et al.*, 2021a; Kravariti *et al.*, 2022). Although these studies offer valuable insights, they fall short in explaining TM’s strategic alignment, both internally and externally. A better understanding of TM’s strategic alignment could reveal its practical value and implementation within specific contexts; in other words, examining this alignment could enhance our comprehension of why and how TM is applied, complementing existing studies that predominantly address espoused TM approaches without delving into their practical translation (Thunnissen and Gallardo-Gallardo, 2017). Consequently, there has been a scholarly call for more empirical research on TM’s alignment with its internal and external contexts (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2020). Such studies

are also essential for advancing TM research into a more mature stage, which is particularly urgent for H&T TM scholarship that is still in the early stages of development (Kravariti *et al.*, 2022).

Recent research in general TM literature (e.g., Kravariti *et al.*, 2023a) recognises that TM should align not only with organisational contexts but also with the broader societal context. This is because TM is developed and implemented within specific organisational settings that are part of a larger societal context characterised by distinct cultures and norms (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2020). A society's culture can exert specific pressures on organisations operating within it, influencing the design and implementation of talent practices (Pauuwe and Farndale, 2017). Similarly, societal characteristics are often reflected in an organisation's culture, leading to particular TM approaches (Sidani and Al Ariss, 2014). To date, studies have indicated that societal culture may explain why TM takes specific forms in particular countries and organisations. For instance, in the UAE, the career progression of female talent is often influenced by Islamic cultural norms, which are also mirrored in the internal cultures of the organisations in the region (Marmenout and Lirio, 2014). In Scandinavian countries (Björkman *et al.*, 2017) and in China and India (Cooke *et al.*, 2014), where egalitarian societal values are dominant, organisational cultures tend to be more inclusive and TM practices that emphasise fairness and equity are highlighted (Swaab and Galinsky, 2015). Therefore, it is important for empirical studies on TM to simultaneously consider societal and organisational cultural dynamics. This, in turn, can enhance our knowledge of TM's implementation, clarify boundary conditions, and help bridge the gap between academia and practice (Teagarden *et al.*, 2018).

In H&T TM literature there is a scarcity of research that emphasises the role of societal and organisational culture, and little is known beyond a general acknowledgement of the

industry's customer-focused cultures (Kravariti *et al.*, 2022). This gap makes it challenging for H&T to understand the conditions under which scholarly recommendations for TM are applicable to their organisations (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2020), thereby widening the gap between academia and practice. To address these shortcomings, we adopt a cultural lens and incorporate societal and organisational culture into our quantitative research design to examine their effects on TM within the Greek H&T industry. Specifically, we ask: *To what extent does societal culture drive or restrain the adoption of TM approaches? And, to what extent does organisational culture serve as a mediating mechanism through which societal culture impacts the adoption of TM approaches?*

We investigate the aforementioned relationships within the Greek hotel industry for various reasons. First, the hotel industry is considered key to Greece's financial recovery and decline of unemployment (Metaxas *et al.*, 2017). However, a plethora of external forces including globalisation, technological advancements, and sociocultural changes have created a growing pressure to the Greek hotel industry to more effectively navigate talent shortages (Pappas, 2015; Tsiotras *et al.*, 2016). Second, TM studies in the Greek context showed that Greece's institutional context brought about important challenges to organisations operating in the country and called for further investigation of this issue (Kravariti *et al.*, 2021). Third, current H&T studies explore TM predominantly in Europe and the USA (Kravariti *et al.*, 2022), whereas the Greek H&T context is mainly considered in comparative studies, alongside North American, British, and Australian contexts and which predominantly explore talent's conceptualisation as well as matters related to talent retention (e.g., Marinakou, 2019). Thus, the impact of Greece's societal culture on the adoption of inclusive/exclusive TM via organisational cultures has been largely neglected.

This study makes the following key contributions. First, we contribute to the general TM literature by addressing the often-overlooked simultaneous consideration of both external and internal work environments in TM. In doing so, we provide more nuanced insights into which TM approaches are adopted under specific contextual conditions (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2020; Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen, 2016). We thus illustrate the cultural impact on TM (e.g., Bhatia and Baruah, 2020) by testing the mediating effect of organisational culture on the relationship between TM and societal culture. We argue that this is extremely important because organisational culture facilitates external adaptation and internal integration. Second, we extend the growing body of literature on H&T TM (Jooss *et al.*, 2021b; Kravariti *et al.*, 2022) by providing empirical evidence from the Greek hotel industry. Our results suggest that context is often neglected in TM within this industry, highlighting the need for strategic internal and external alignment to more effectively address ongoing talent shortages.

In the following sections, we first critically discuss TM within the H&T industry, as well as the role of societal and organisational culture. We then describe our research design, sample, and measures. Next, we detail and interpret the statistical analyses. We conclude by discussing our study's key findings, highlighting theoretical contributions and practical implications, acknowledging the study's limitations, and suggesting directions for future research.

Literature review

TM in the H&T industry

Over the last decade, TM has evolved as a core people management strategy in organisations (Collings *et al.*, 2022) with many firms underscoring the need for assisting their workforce in developing critical skills and competencies so that to strengthen their current and future

leadership bench (Gartner, 2021). Reviewing extant literature, Sparrow *et al.* (2014) identified four approaches to TM generally adopted in organisations: first, TM can be enacted in organisations as the presence of key HR practices such as recruitment and selection, learning and development, and performance and rewards management; second, a focus can be placed on the categorisation of the workforce into A, B, and C players based on employee performance; third, organisations can adopt a strategic pool approach, emphasising succession through talent pools and supply chain planning; finally, organisations might adopt a position approach, identifying key positions relevant to a firm's strategic objectives (Sparrow *et al.*, 2014).

In the H&T industry, research has shown somewhat limited application of strategic TM, adopting a more reactive, ad hoc, informal approach, with only few changes to their *modus operandi* when it comes to managing people (e.g., Garavan *et al.*, 2021; Jooss *et al.*, 2023). Studies in the H&T context have predominantly explored practices related to talent acquisition, learning and development, and retention (Kravariti *et al.*, 2022). Regarding retention in particular, literature has proposed several practices that could strengthen current TM approaches such as compensation, flexibility, and career development (DiPietro *et al.*, 2019; Marinakou, 2019).

What 'talent' constitutes continues to be a key point of debate among scholars, with some referring to high performers and high potentials, i.e. a subset of the workforce (e.g., Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Jooss *et al.*, 2019) while others refer to all employees, i.e. the entirety of the workforce (Kaliannan *et al.*, 2022). Consequently, several scholars have adopted the language of inclusive and exclusive perspective to managing talent – inclusive referring to everyone having a particular talent or everyone being able to become a talent through development; exclusive indicating that there is a need to identify, develop, and retain particular individuals, namely those

who are designated as talent (Meyers and van Woerkom, 2014). Ultimately, how talent is defined and the degree of inclusivity/exclusivity that may be impacted by societal and organisational culture we unpack in the next sections.

TM and societal culture

In recent years, TM has increasingly emphasised the critical role of context while it has been recommended that cross-cultural dynamics may also play a role in TM (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2020). At a national level, this might include aspects such as political developments, economic situations, demographic changes, or legislation (e.g., Cooke *et al.*, 2014; Tymon *et al.*, 2010). In addition, societal culture can shape how organisations adopt TM, particularly in respect to how organisations view talent and whether a more inclusive or exclusive perspective is chosen by firms (Beamond *et al.*, 2016). Drawing on the seminal work of Hofstede (2001) on national culture, in this current study, we are particularly interested in uncertainty avoidance. This is because Greece (i.e. the research's country context) scores the highest in this cultural dimension (Hofstede Insights, 2024). *Uncertainty avoidance* relates to “the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these” (Hofstede Insights, 2024).

In high uncertainty avoidance societies, organisations tend to adhere to governmental regulations and develop corresponding organisational rules; with the aim to retain those that display the desired behaviours, they usually employ meritocratic practices (Tatoglu *et al.*, 2016). Employees seem interested in contributing to organisations if job security is promised (Bhatia and Baruah, 2020). The odds are also that they will not unite to protect their interests perhaps in the fear of losing their jobs (Rao, 2013). Taking this a step further, exclusive TM might be

legitimate in a societal context of high uncertainty avoidance such as Greece, driven by the desire to minimise risks and uncertainty when hiring and managing talents; in such a context, rigid procedures include, for example, specific selection criteria and performance metrics, potentially making more flexible (and inclusive) approaches more difficult to implement (Bhatia and Baruah, 2020).

TM and organisational culture

Organisational culture can be defined as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group has learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (Schein, 2004, p. 17). An organisational culture generally has a set of common attributes including; it is a group phenomenon and thus resides in shared behaviours, values, and assumptions; it is pervasive, meaning it is relevant across multiple levels, functions, and geographies in an organisation; it is enduring, indicating that it influences group members over a long-term period; and it is implicit in its nature, being a silent language which group members sense and respond to during their work (Groysberg *et al.*, 2018). Organisational culture plays a significant role in providing a purpose, being a sense-making device, reinforcing values, and serving as a control mechanism to shaping behaviours (Kotter, 2018).

The impact of organisational culture on TM can be illustrated through the attraction-selection-attrition model as discussed in the seminal work of Schneider (1987). According to this model, individuals are attracted to organisations whose members are similar to themselves in terms of their values, interests, and personalities. In turn, organisations are, with

some exceptions, more likely to select individuals who possess attributes that are aligned with existing members and needs of the organisation. Importantly, the model suggests that over time, those individuals that do not fit within their firm's organisational culture will leave (Schneider, 1987). Thus, the approach chosen to attract, select, and retain talent is naturally being influenced by a firm's organisational culture.

Evidence from the HRM literature suggests that managerial decisions are driven by both the cultural dynamics of an organisation and of the society within which this organisation operates (e.g. Lin *et al.*, 2020; Mamman and Al Kulaiby, 2014). Importantly, the mediating role of organisational culture in the relationship between societal culture and HR practices has been highlighted (see e.g., Aycan *et al.*, 2000). While the importance of a TM approach that is aligned with organisational culture has been flagged by various scholars (see e.g., Stahl *et al.*, 2012; Thunnissen *et al.*, 2013), empirical research illustrating the degree to which organisational culture interplays with a country's societal culture in a TM setting remains embryonic to date (Krishnan and Scullion, 2017). This current study examines this relationship in the specific context of the Greek H&T industry.

Methods

Research design and sample

H&T TM literature has predominantly employed qualitative research designs, likely in an attempt to better understand the TM phenomenon within this industry (Kravariti *et al.*, 2022). However, for this research stream to reach a more mature stage, more quantitative studies are needed to test and report causal-effect relationships (von Krogh *et al.*, 2012). This rationale underpins the research design of this study. Our quantitative study was conducted in small- and

medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Greek hotel industry, the backbone to the Greek H&T industry and a significant contributor to the country's economy and employment (SETE, 2018). We considered the following inclusion criteria for our sample organisations: (1) consist of 1-249 employees with maximum €43 million total balance sheet (European Commission, 2015); (2) do not belong to global hotel chains, whose franchises often enact TM practices developed by headquarters with limited contextual adaptation (ILO, 2010); (3) have recorded high returns in revenues despite Greece's turbulent economic environment, primarily due to investment in innovative technologies and their talented workforce; (4) complimentary to HRM practices targeting the whole workforce, have developed and enacted practices targeting talents as confirmed by hotels' HR managers and/or senior management. We stratified our sample by location and randomly selected one case from each stratum (i.e., southern, central and northern Greece). Stratified random sampling was the most appropriate method since our large sampling frame was pre-divided into three strata (Saunders *et al.*, 2015).

We administered an online questionnaire consisting of four sections. Section A collected demographic data (see Table 1), whereas sections B through D asked participants to indicate their level of agreement with items measuring TM practices, societal culture, and organisational culture, respectively (for the items measuring each construct see Table 3). We used a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree) to measure all scale items. The HR representative of each of the three participating organisations distributed the voluntary and anonymised online questionnaire to all employees (n = 320), emailing all staff the SurveyMonkey link, leading to a 59% response rate. Our final sample included 188 employees.

All study participants were Greeks (100%), which facilitated further statistical analyses as we did not have to further differentiate in terms of ethnic groups. Our gender-balanced sample

included males (49.5%) and females (50.5%) with varying levels of responsibility in the organisation (see Table 1). Most respondents held either an undergraduate (45.2%) or postgraduate (28.2%) degree, which is indicative of Greeks equalling high educational attainments with better employment opportunities (OECD, 2020). The majority of participants (41.3%) were aged 29 years or less, and most respondents had a tenure of maximum two years (42%). Those figures reflect the characteristics of the H&T industry's workforce, with younger employees frequently being employed by organisations (Robinson *et al.*, 2019).

[Insert Table 1 about here]

Due to potential limitations in our sample size, particularly concerning self-reported bias, we implemented several procedural and statistical measures to address common-method bias, as recommended by relevant scholarship (e.g., Podsakoff *et al.*, 2012). First, we ensured participant confidentiality by securing their anonymity. Second, we placed questions measuring TM practices (the dependent variable) separately from those measuring societal and organisational culture (the independent and mediating variables, respectively). Third, we collected data from various sources, including managers and employees. Fourth, an examination of the correlation matrix revealed no correlations greater than 0.9 among the study factors. Fifth, the statistical outcome of Harman's one-factor test was below the maximum threshold of 0.5.

Measures

Perceived TM approaches. Similar to recent scholarship that measures TM quantitatively (e.g., Kravariti *et al.*, 2023a), we focus on examining perceived TM practices related to talent recruitment, learning and development, rewards management, and retention in organisations

employing both inclusive and exclusive TM approaches. In doing so, we focus on employees' perception of TM practices which might differ from intended TM practices by organisations (Meyers *et al.*, 2020). Specifically, eight TM constructs were developed to measure each of the perceived TM practices for inclusive (sample item: 'The organisation offers opportunities for development equally to all employees') and exclusive (sample item: 'The organisation rewards employees who perform better than others') TM.

Societal and organisational culture. We adopted the robust CVSCALE instrument developed by Yoo *et al.* (2011) to measure Greece's uncertainty avoidance societal culture. To evaluate the perceived organisational culture, we adopted the Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) as developed by Cameron and Quinn (2015) consisting of four cultural orientations, i.e. hierarchy, adhocracy, market and clan.

Control variables. We performed Chi-Square Tests of Independence to check for potential ineffective randomisation in our study sample (see Table 2). Statistics indicated that respondents' nationality explain statistically significant differences in exclusive TM ($p < .05$); hence, we controlled for it.

[Insert Table 2 about here]

Results

Given that the TM scale was developed and the scales measuring both societal and organisational culture were translated in Greek and then back to English, we performed exploratory factor analysis (EFA; Kravariti *et al.*, 2023a) following the 5-step process suggested by several scholars (e.g., Howard and Henderson, 2023). First, we confirmed data quality, as the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure scored greater than 0.6 (Kaiser, 1974) and Bartlett's Test of

Sphericity was statistically significant (Barlett, 1954), while the sample size of approximately 200 cases was deemed sufficient (Howard and Henderson, 2023). Next, principal components analysis led to the retention of factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 (Finch, 2020), a result also confirmed by Cattell's scree test (Cattell, 1966). We then rotated factors using the Direct Oblimin technique, which is known for facilitating indicators' loading to a single factor (Howard and Henderson, 2023). This process resulted in the retention of indicators with strong loadings (i.e., greater than 0.40) while indicators with cross-loadings greater than 0.30 were deleted (see Table 3; Howard and Henderson, 2023). Preliminary checks rejected the possibility of multicollinearity (VIF < 10.00; Tolerance > 0.10) and autocorrelation (Durbin Watson = 2.0), and allowed the consideration of extreme cases (Cook's distance < 1) in subsequent analyses.

[Insert Table 3 about here]

Pearson correlations coefficients (see Table 4) showed that an uncertainty avoidance societal culture has no statistically significant relationship with either exclusive or inclusive TM ($r = -.03, p > .05$ and $r = .02, p > .05$, respectively). However, it has a positive and statistically significant relationship with hierarchy ($r = .36, p < .01$), adhocracy ($r = .24, p < .01$), and clan ($r = .31, p < .01$) organisational cultures as well as it is negatively but statistically significantly correlated to market organisational culture ($r = -.21, p < .01$).

[Insert Table 4 about here]

To test the mediating role of each of the organisational cultural orientations on the relationship between the uncertainty avoidance societal culture and exclusive/inclusive TM practices, we employed PROCESS Version 4 as an appropriate macro for studies exploring rather

small samples, and which enabled us to run ten thousand bootstrapping samples with 95% confidence interval (Hayes, 2018).

As illustrated in Table 5, the direct effects of uncertainty avoidance societal culture on *exclusive TM* via hierarchy (effect = $-.13$; $p = .48$), adhocracy (effect = $-.05$; $p = .75$), and clan (effect = $-.00$; $p = .99$) organisational cultures are negative and insignificant, whereas via market organisational culture are negative and significant (effect = $-.15$; $p = .03$). The confidence intervals for the indirect effect of uncertainty avoidance societal culture on exclusive TM via hierarchy (bootstrapping estimate = $.08$; 95% CI [$-.04, .22$]), adhocracy (bootstrapping estimate = $.01$; 95% CI [$-.08, .10$]), and market (bootstrapping estimate = $.01$; 95% CI [$-.06, .11$]) organisational cultures are positive but insignificant, while via clan organisational culture are negative and insignificant (bootstrapping estimate = $-.04$; 95% CI [$-.15, .07$]); thus, none of the organisational cultural orientations serve as a mediator. This outcome indicates that within the H&T industry, exclusive-oriented TM practices are not driven by a country's context, unless organisations functioning within such a societal context are of a market-oriented organisational culture, in which case a societal culture of high uncertainty avoidance would drive those organisations to disregard this TM approach. It is also noteworthy that none of the examined organisational cultures serve as a mediating mechanism through which societal culture impacts exclusive TM.

[Insert Table 5 about here]

As presented in Table 6, the direct effects of uncertainty avoidance societal culture on *inclusive TM* via hierarchy (effect = $.14$; $p = .41$), adhocracy (effect = $.01$; $p = .75$), market (effect = $.06$; $p = .69$), and clan (effect = $.02$; $p = .89$) organisational cultures are positive but

insignificant. The confidence intervals for the indirect effect of uncertainty avoidance societal culture on inclusive TM via hierarchy organisational culture are negative and significant (bootstrapping estimate = $-.11$; 95% CI $[-.24, -.00]$). The confidence intervals for the indirect effect of uncertainty avoidance societal culture on inclusive TM via adhocracy organisational culture are positive but insignificant (bootstrapping estimate = $.01$; 95% CI $[-.07, .10]$), whereas via market (bootstrapping estimate = $-.04$ 95% CI $[-.14, .02]$) and clan (bootstrapping estimate = $-.00$; 95% CI $[-.11, .10]$) organisational cultures are negative and insignificant; thus, only hierarchy organisational culture is a mediator. These results suggest that within the H&T industry, inclusive-oriented TM practices are not dependent on societal culture, unless organisations functioning in such contexts are of a hierarchy-oriented organisational culture, which would drive them to disregard this TM approach.

[Insert Table 6 about here]

Discussion and conclusions

Results revealed that TM, whether inclusive or exclusive, was not determined by societal or organisational culture within the Greek hotel industry. Despite scholarship highlighting the need for context-bound TM strategies and practices (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2020), this research established that context is not deterministic for TM in the way it was adopted in the Greek H&T industry. We assert that context might have been neglected as many H&T organisations, like other firms, have employed a mimetic approach to TM (Paauwe and Farndale, 2017). As SMEs oftentimes lack resources, skills, and time for the development of TM, considering contextual alignment was perhaps beyond their capabilities (Harney and Alkhalaf, 2021). In other words, they may have ad-hoc adopted TM without prior careful consideration of cultural adaptation,

simply because TM has already been proven elsewhere to be a remedy to organisational recovery. More broadly, these results confirm previous studies which have suggested that many SMEs in the H&T industry place little emphasis on strategically integrating TM practices (Garavan *et al.*, 2021; Jooss *et al.*, 2023). Yet, the increasingly competitive environment suggests that a differentiated approach to talent attraction, development, and retention is needed in order for the industry's organisations to meet the requirements of the future of work (Kravariti *et al.*, 2023b). In line with Stahl *et al.* (2012) and Thunnissen *et al.* (2013), we conclude that TM could increase its legitimacy if a cultural lens is more carefully considered by organisations.

In response to the first research question, our study results do not provide strong evidence of Greece's societal culture either driving or restraining particular TM approaches. This finding is contradictory to literature (e.g., Bhatia and Baruah, 2020; Tatoglu *et al.*, 2016) which recommends that exclusive TM may be a good fit for societies of high uncertainty avoidance such as Greece, because they favour meritocracy and often overlook cases of injustice. It also underscores potential lack of environmental fit as it is evident that TM practices, whether inclusive or exclusive, are not aligned with the values/norms of the external institutional environment. Drawing on SHRM literature (Pauuwe and Farndale, 2017), TM's alignment with the external environment is necessary because H&T organisations need to understand how macro contextual factors impact TM and thereafter decide to employ the most fit-for-purpose TM approach, ultimately better tackling talent shortages and increasing organisational performance.

In answering the second research question, surprisingly, there is no strong evidence of organisational culture mediating the relationship between societal culture and inclusive/exclusive TM, except for a market-oriented organisational culture which serves as the vehicle through

which a societal culture of uncertainty avoidance would push organisations towards disregarding exclusive TM. This finding is inconsistent with attestations from the HRM literature that have already established the mediating role of organisational culture between societal culture and HR practices (Aycan *et al.*, 2000). This might indicate that like in other contexts (Krishnan and Scullion, 2017), research on the impact of organisational culture on TM implementation is nascent within the H&T industry.

Theoretical implications

The aim of this research was to examine the role of societal and organisational culture on TM within the Greek H&T industry. Our principal contribution lies in simultaneously considering the external and internal work environments, potentially shaping TM approaches. In doing so, we more centrally integrate a cultural lens into the TM discourse. Moreover, we extend the growing body of literature on H&T TM (Jooss *et al.*, 2021b; Kravariti *et al.*, 2022), revealing empirical evidence from the Greek hotel industry.

It is also interesting to note that our results did not point towards a positive/negative relationship between organisational culture and the two TM approaches. This evidence contradicts the principles of the attraction-selection-attrition model as discussed in the seminal work of Schneider (1987) which suggests that organisations would engage with management practices that better fit their organisational culture. Importantly, we are *not* deemphasising the role of organisational culture. Rather, we suggest that in order to effectively manage talents, organisations need to strategically align their TM approach to their internal context, i.e. their organisational culture (Thunnissen *et al.*, 2013). For example, organisational culture can

facilitate the sharing of core values and behaviours across various organisational functions (Kotter, 2018).

Practical implications

Neglecting contextual factors when developing TM approaches is deleterious for SMEs, particularly when facing ongoing talent challenges. Misalignment with organisational cultural fit leads to ineffective recruitment strategies and retention challenges, and can negatively impact reputation and long-term sustainability. In contrast, considering organisational and societal cultures allows firms to align their TM approach with the values of the organisation and the country. Achieving a culture fit will likely lead to better recruitment, selection, retention, and engagement, and ultimately performance. Organisations need to develop a solid understanding of the operating context, including awareness of societal norms, as well as be clear around their own organisational culture. Once this baseline is established, firms can align TM approaches with cultural norms and practices. Subsequently, talents can be assessed based on culture fit during selection processes as well as during performance management. Achieving greater alignment between TM and organisational and societal culture creates a more positive work environment, attracts and retains talents, and enhances individual and organisational performance. We suggest that by placing greater focus on aligning TM with contextual factors, including culture, Greek SMEs in the H&T can better tackle talent shortages.

Limitations and future research

Like any study, our research comes with some limitations. First, we considered Greece's predominant societal culture and its impact on TM. Although high uncertainty avoidance is the

societal dimension that Greece scores the highest (Hofstede Insights, 2024), we appreciate that within this society, there exist several sub-cultures (e.g., high power-distance and individualism; Hofstede Insights, 2024) where Greece scores significantly lower but which however could provide a further explanation as to the extent to which culture helps nurturing particular TM approaches. Due to the specific context examined, our findings should be treated with caution, while examining sub-cultures of the Greek or any other context's society is key to better understand cultural effects on TM.

Second, we considered societal and organisational culture as one form of environmental fit. We recognise that there are additional forms of environmental fit and a range of other contextual factors that impact TM approaches. For example, at a macro level, economic conditions, government regulations, and technological advances likely shape SMEs' approach to managing talent. At a meso-level, supply and demands in SMEs and the H&T industry more broadly, impact TM. Finally, at an individual level, leadership and resources within SMEs significantly influence what TM approaches can be operationalised. All these forms of environmental fit require some attention to develop TM approaches aligned with organisational business needs. Thus, future research could employ qualitative research methods to explore how organisations adopt and align their TM approaches driven by additional environmental factors beyond culture. This approach may also provide deeper insights into why this study found a significant disconnect between theoretical expectations and practical findings.

Third, we acknowledge that we had no information prior to data collection regarding whether the investigated hotels adopted an inclusive, exclusive, or hybrid TM approach. This may have influenced the interpretation of our results. For instance, inclusive TM may be prioritised by organisations that emphasise investing in key talent while also nurturing –rather

than excluding– those regarded as “the others” (Magrizos *et al.*, 2023). Comparing/contrasting the perspectives of various employee groups could have important implications for TM. Therefore, we recommend that future studies first develop an understanding of the distribution of TM approaches in organisations before collecting data.

Fourth, methodologically we recognise that ECF and the PROCESS macro on SPSS have their own limitations as statistical analysis methods. For instance, compared to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), ECF does not allow for the inclusion of optimal factors that could enhance theoretical explanation (Finch, 2020). While the PROCESS macro facilitates mediation/moderation analyses with smaller samples and simplifies the process (Hayes, 2018), it lacks the flexibility to test extremely complex models and deems the identification of assessment errors involved in testing impossible (Sarstedt *et al.*, 2020). Such limitations could be addressed by Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) methods, which can assess very complex models with a range of mediators and moderators simultaneously (Sarstedt *et al.*, 2020).

Fifth, we acknowledge that this is a cross-sectional study and there might be concerns about single-wave data’s ability to establish causality. In this study, we deliberately opted for collecting cross-sectional data. Culture is a phenomenon which hardly changes over time (Hofstede, 1980), which means that this study would yield similar findings even if variables were measured over more than one time period. In addition, we collected data from multiple sources (i.e., managers and employees) as each of them uniquely contributes to testing the relationships among the study variables. Although comparing and contrasting managers’ and employees’ perspectives was beyond the scope of this study, collecting multi-source data helped us to control for common-method biases (Spector *et al.*, 2019). Due to employing a survey-based subjective measurement, we also included two questions to our questionnaire which measured respondents’

degree of knowledge on the subject matter and their confidence in answering the questions (Hughes *et al.*, 2014). We see scope for future research to collect either qualitative data so that to triangulate our statistical findings, or quantitative data to gather insights over more than one time period.

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Table 1: Overview of participants (n = 188)

	Value label	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	93	49.5
	Female	95	50.5
Age	18–23	40	21.3
	24–29	47	25.0
	30–35	29	15.4
	36–41	24	12.8
	42–47	23	12.2
	48–53	11	5.9
	54–59	4	2.1

	≥ 60	10	5.3
Education	Postgraduate	53	28.2
	Undergraduate	85	45.2
	Secondary school	50	26.6
Responsibility level	C.E.O./Director	3	1.6
	Senior manager	34	18.1
	Middle manager	28	14.9
	Professional	13	6.9
	Owner	4	2.1
Length of service	Line employee	106	56.4
	0–2 years	79	42.0
	3–5 years	30	16.0
	6–8 years	18	9.6
	9–11 years	32	17.0
	12–14 years	8	4.3
	≥ 15 years	21	11.2
Nationality	Greek	188	100.0

Table 2: Chi-square tests of independence

Variable	Gender $\chi^2/df, p$ value	Age $\chi^2/df, p$ value	Education $\chi^2/df, p$ value	Responsibility level $\chi^2/df, p$ value	Length of service $\chi^2/df, p$ value	Nationality $\chi^2/df, p$ value
Uncertainty avoidance	.288/2, $p = .87$	12.524/14, $p = .56$	3.269/4, $p = .51$	4.458/10, $p = .92$	2.699/10, $p = .99$	5.825/4, $p = .21$
Hierarchy	4.224/4, $p = .38$	12.371/28, $p = 1.00$	2.110/8, $p = .98$	2.469/8, $p = .96$	16.076/20, $p = .71$	1.533/8, $p = .99$
Adhocracy	2.355/4, $p = .67$	26.729/28, $p = .53$	6.963/8, $p = .54$	12.179/8, $p = .14$	18.797/20, $p = .54$	13.588/8, $p = .09$
Market	4.604/4, $p = .33$	37.990/28, $p = .10$	9.309/8, $p = .32$	4.723/8, $p = .79$	22.096/20, $p = .34$	6.218/8, $p = .62$
Clan	4.681/4, $p = .32$	19.342/28, $p = .89$	9.309/8, $p = .32$	6.512/8, $p = .59$	24.701/20, $p = .21$	14.176/8, $p = .08$
Exclusive TM	2.540/4, $p = .64$	26.734/28, $p = .53$	9.309/8, $p = .32$	13.101/8, $p = .11$	21.252/20, $p = .38$	21.603/8, $p = .01$
Inclusive TM	3.132/4, $p = .54$	31.814/28, $p = .28$	9.309/8, $p = .32$	12.027/8, $p = .15$	16.502/20, $p = .69$	9.889/8, $p = .27$

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; χ^2 = test statistic value; df = degree of freedom.

Table 3: Measures and EFA results for perceived societal and organisational culture, and TM

Construct	Item	Factor loading
Societal culture: Uncertainty avoidance	- It is important to have instructions spelled out in detail so that I always know what I'm expected to do.	.43
	- It is important to closely follow instructions and procedures.	.77
	- Rules and regulations are important because they inform me of what is expected of me.	.58
	- Standardised work procedures are helpful.	.71
Organisational culture: Hierarchy	- Instructions for operations are important.	.40
	- The organisation is very controlled and structured place. Formal procedures generally govern what people do.	.60
	- The leadership in the organisation is generally considered to exemplify coordinating, organising, or smooth-running efficiency.	.87
	- The management style in the organisation is characterised by security of employment, conformity, predictability, and stability in relationships.	.91
	- The glue that holds the organisation together is formal rules and policies. Maintaining a smooth-running organisation is important.	.95
	- The organisation emphasises permanence and stability. Efficiency, control, and smooth operations are important.	.94
	- The organisation defines success on the basis of efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling and low-cost production are critical.	.92
Organisational culture: Adhocracy	- The organisation is a very dynamic and entrepreneurial place. People are willing to stick their necks out and take risks.	.67
	- The leadership in the organisation is generally considered to exemplify entrepreneurship, innovation, or risk taking.	.89
	- The management style in the organisation is characterised by individual risk taking, innovation, freedom, and uniqueness.	.52
	- The glue that holds the organisation together is commitment to innovation and development. There is an emphasis on being on the cutting edge.	.91
	- The organisation emphasises acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued.	.92
	- The organisation defines success on the basis of having the most unique or newest products. It is a product leader and innovator.	.86
Organisational culture: Market	- The organisation is very result-oriented. A major concern is getting the job done. People are very competitive and achievement oriented.	.78
	- The leadership in the organisation is generally considered to exemplify a no-nonsense, aggressive, results-oriented focus.	.92

	- The management style in the organisation is characterised by hard-driving competitiveness, high demands, and achievement.	.90
	- The glue that holds the organisation together is the emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment.	.91
	- The organisation emphasises competitive actions and achievement. Hitting stretch targets and winning in the marketplace is dominant.	.90
	- The organisation defines success on the basis of winning in the marketplace and outpacing the competition. Competitive market leadership is key.	.92
Organisational culture: Clan	- The organisation is very a personal place. It is like an extended family. People seem to share a lot of themselves.	.55
	- The leadership in the organisation is generally considered to exemplify mentoring, facilitating or nurturing.	.68
	- The management style in the organisation is characterised by teamwork, consensus and participation.	.81
	- The glue that holds the organisation together is loyalty and mutual trust. Commitment to this organisation runs high.	.92
	- The organisation emphasises human development. High trust, openness and participation persist.	.96
	- The organisation defines success on the basis of the development of human resources, teamwork, employee commitment and concern for people.	.94
Exclusive TM	- The organisation retains key employees that hold pivotal positions.	.84
	- The organisation attracts and recruits key people.	.86
	- The organisation rewards employees who perform better than others.	.99
	- The organisation offers training opportunities to certain employees.	.98
Inclusive TM	- The organisation recruits anyone who possesses certain qualities that match current workforce, e.g. communication skills.	.83
	- The organisation retains all employees regardless of their position.	.95
	- The organisation offers opportunities for development equally to all employees.	.95

Table 4: Means, standard deviations and correlations

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(1) Uncertainty avoidance	2.89	.58							
(2) Hierarchy	3.23	1.06	.36**						
(3) Adhocracy	3.05	.99	.24**	.07					
(4) Market	3.16	1.11	-.21**	-.09	.11				
(5) Clan	3.14	1.00	.31**	.25**	.32**	.24**			
(6) Exclusive TM	3.15	1.32	-.03	.08	.02	-.01	-.05		
(7) Inclusive TM	3.50	1.22	.02	-.13	.02	.09	.00	-.82**	
(8) Nationality	1.59	1.38	.05	.02	-.04	.01	-.03	-.16*	.08

*p < .05; **p < .01; N = 188.

Table 5: Mediating role of organisational cultural orientations on the relationship uncertainty avoidance societal culture and exclusive TM (PROCESS macro, Model 4)

Predictor	Coeff.	SE	t	p	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
<i>Dependent variable model: Exclusive TM</i>						
Constant	3.36	.51	6.55	.00	2.35	4.37
Hierarchy	.12	.10	1.30	.20	-.06	.31
Nationality	-.15	.07	-2.22	.03	-.29	-.02
Uncertainty avoidance	-.13	.18	-.71	.48	-.48	.22
<i>Indirect effect of X on Y</i>						
	<i>Effect</i>	<i>Boot SE</i>				
Hierarchy	.08	.07			-.04	.22
<i>Dependent variable model: Exclusive TM</i>						
Constant	3.48	.56	6.51	.00	2.42	4.53
Adhocracy	.02	.10	.24	.81	-.17	.22
Nationality	-.15	.07	-2.19	.03	-.29	-.02
Uncertainty avoidance	-.05	.17	-.31	.75	-.39	.28
<i>Indirect effect of X on Y</i>						
	<i>Effect</i>	<i>Boot SE</i>				
Adhocracy	.01	.04			-.08	.10
<i>Dependent variable model: Exclusive TM</i>						
Constant	3.61	.63	5.75	.00	2.37	4.84
Market	-.02	.09	-.22	.83	-.19	.16
Nationality	-.16	.07	-2.28	.02	-.29	-.02
Uncertainty avoidance	-.15	.07	-2.20	.03	-.29	-.02
<i>Indirect effect of X on Y</i>						
	<i>Effect</i>	<i>Boot SE</i>				
Market	.01	.04			-.06	.11
<i>Dependent variable model: Exclusive TM</i>						
Constant	3.65	.52	6.96	.00	2.62	4.69
Clan	-.08	.10	-.76	.45	-.28	.12
Nationality	-.16	.07	-2.25	.03	-.29	-.02
Uncertainty avoidance	-.00	.18	-.02	.99	-.35	.34
<i>Indirect effect of X on Y</i>						
	<i>Effect</i>	<i>Boot SE</i>				
Clan	-.04	.06			-.15	.07

CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; 10,000 bootstrapping samples were used; SE = standard error; N = 188.

Table 6: Mediating role of organisational cultural orientations on the relationship uncertainty avoidance societal culture and inclusive TM (PROCESS macro, Model 4)

Predictor	Coeff.	SE	t	p	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
<i>Dependent variable model: Inclusive TM</i>						
Constant	3.55	.48	7.43	.00	2.60	4.49
Hierarchy	-.17	.09	-1.93	.06	-.35	.00
Nationality	.07	.06	1.15	.25	-.05	.20
Uncertainty avoidance	.14	.17	.82	.41	-.19	.46
<i>Indirect effect of X on Y</i>						
	<i>Effect</i>	<i>Boot SE</i>				
Hierarchy	-.11	.06			-.24	-.00
<i>Dependent variable model: Inclusive TM</i>						
Constant	3.26	.50	6.51	.00	2.27	4.25
Adhocracy	.03	.09	.32	.75	-.16	.21
Nationality	.07	.09	.32	.75	-.16	.21
Uncertainty avoidance	.01	.16	.07	.95	-.31	.33
<i>Indirect effect of X on Y</i>						
	<i>Effect</i>	<i>Boot SE</i>				
Adhocracy	.01	.04			-.07	.10
<i>Dependent variable model: Inclusive TM</i>						
Constant	2.87	.58	4.92	.00	1.72	4.03
Market	.10	.08	1.23	.22	-.06	.26
Nationality	.07	.08	1.23	.22	-.06	.26
Uncertainty avoidance	.06	.16	.40	.69	-.25	.38
<i>Indirect effect of X on Y</i>						
	<i>Effect</i>	<i>Boot SE</i>				
Market	-.04	.04			-.14	.02
<i>Dependent variable model: Inclusive TM</i>						
Constant	3.32	.49	6.74	.00	2.35	4.29
Clan	-.00	.09	-.01	.99	-.19	.19
Nationality	.07	.07	1.13	.26	-.05	.20
Uncertainty avoidance	.02	.16	.14	.89	-.30	.35
<i>Indirect effect of X on Y</i>						
	<i>Effect</i>	<i>Boot SE</i>				
Clan	-.00	.05			-.11	.10

CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; 10,000 bootstrapping samples were used; SE = standard error; N = 188.