

VIET NAM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY HO CHI MINH CITY  
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**ALLIANCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICE FOR HIGHER TRUST,  
COMMITMENT, AND INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL  
RELATIONSHIP PERFORMANCE- A STUDY OF TRAVEL  
COMPANIES IN VIETNAM**

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**SUMMARY INFORMATION ABOUT  
RESEARCH GAPS AND CONTRIBUTIONS  
OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION**

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**I. RESEARCH GAPS:**

The inter-organizational relationships (IRs) theory existed a long time ago and very famous in many fields such as societies, economics, policies and administration science (Weber, 1947), in health and welfare agencies (Phillips, 1960; Hage & Aiken,1971) in Midwest, in marketing field (Palmatier et al., 2007), in accounting field (Dekker, 2004), in Spain tourism clusters (Elche et al., 2018), in hospitality field (Medina-Munoz & García-Falcón, 2000). Many studies paid high attention to apply new method of IRs in business networks as a potential protector that may lead organizations to overcome the risks, problems, and uncertain environments caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby the alliance relationships allowed their businesses to continue and develop (Al-Omouh et al., 2022; Gölgeci & Kuivalainen, 2020; Corrêa et al., 2021). According to Cummings (1991), a good relationship does not happen by itself, therefore, each stakeholder must be actively involved in activities or tasks in IRs to build a good exchange relationship. According to Gölgeci and Kuivalainen (2020), this adaptive behavior for the organizations supported a change and participate in IRs to gain knowledge, plans and ideas in alliance relationships, thus striving

for growth and survival through new method of operation to overcome the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic through trust and commitment (Al-Omouh et al., 2022; Palmatier et al., 2007). The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic produced many challenges for organizations in all industries, and the pandemic forced organizations to sense and respond flexibility and frequency of interaction to find new ways to survive (Al-Omouh et al., 2022; Meflinda et al., 2018), frequency of interaction describe the quality of the exchange relationships (Binder, P. A 2019; Saukko et al., 2020; Turker, 2014). Based on the changes in communication and coordination, the organizations can improve better business relationships by using advanced and supportive technology (e.i., MS.Team, Zoom software, automatic consulting Chatbots; customer relationship management-CRM; social media technologies) from their partners to achieve IORP (Al-Omouh et al., 2022; Gölgeci & Kuivalainen, 2020). Itani et al. (2020) examined how sales staff use customer relationship management and social media technologies affect buyer-seller information in exchange relationships, the findings reported that communication support competitive information collection, product information, and buyer information sharing. In addition, the organizations can utilize the availability of skills from their partners to learn appropriate technological processes to produce new products or launch new services (Ode & Ayavoo, 2020). Furthermore, Oliver, (1990) stated that the environmental uncertainty is the opportunity prompted managers to seek out inter-allied those administrators had alike qualifications to them, IRs expect the private companies were connected to other firms, but these companies keep their separate missions and try to cooperate in joint efforts. As Hodge et al. (1998) stated that an organization might form exchange relationships with other organizations to reduce uncertainty and thus gain greater control over the aspects of the macro-environment that are critical for the organization's survival. Previous studies had found the antecedents of successful partnerships, including coordination, commitment, trust, quality communication, information sharing, and participation (Mohr & Spekman, 1994; Monczka et al., 1998; Medina-Muñoz & García-Falcón, 2000) they just explored direct impact on IRs. Furthermore, Palmatier et al. (2007) found commitment and trust positively affect IORP and were the critical mediating variables in IORP model (Yang et al., 2019; Ashnai et al., 2016). However, there exists research gaps in these areas.

First, González-Torres et al. (2021) conducted a qualitative approach to build a direct sales model to overcome epidemic outbreaks based on trust, commitment, and coordination evolution towards relationship management between hotel chains and tour operators in Spain.

The symmetric trust and commitment will reduce the uncertainty resulting from opportunism and minimize the demand for extensive control procedures (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), maximize relationship quality in B2B relationships (Pfajfar et al., 2022). Similarly, Elche et al. (2018) had contributed to explore the literature of IRs, they discovered the influence of relationships with “the core and peripheral partners in clustered firms,” but their study did not analyze the impacts of the relationships between variables. Many studies just explored direct impact on IRs and have not explore the indirect yet (Mohr & Spekman, 1994; Monczka et al., 1998; Medina-Muñoz & García-Falcón, 2000).

Notably, based on the need to expand our knowledge of potential constructs of IORP, Medina-Munoz and Garcia-Falcon (2000) suggested that for better understanding of successful IRs, further research should examine the effects of independent variables of flexibility and frequency of interaction on IR effectiveness. It lacked research to analyze the factors of AMP and IORP through trust and commitment (Al-Omouh et al., 2022) through trust and commitment. However, the factor of flexibility, frequency of interaction has not investigated the association yet. Based on previous study show what was not known about the relationship among factors of AMP and IORP through mediating trust and commitment, the first point is that based on the empirical studies have proved the IR success model was significant statistics, but there was a problem is that the scholars have not added the mediating variables to explore the relationship among these factors (Medina-Munoz & García-Falcón, 2000; Monczka et al., 1998; Mohr & Spekman, 1994).

Third, in a study by Uddin et al. (2020), the authors developed a synthesis coordination theory by combining supply network theory and TCT. The results showed that the hybrid relational context has a positive correlation with capabilities and methods and leads to efficiency in inter-organizational cost management; a weak point is that this study did not explore the indirect influences among these factors. Moreover, Yeh et al. (2020) suggested that inter-organizational trust did not have a direct or significant impact on IRs and failed to predict the relationship between trust and IRs; however, they found a positive impact of relationship trust on IRs through the mediation of stakeholders’ commitment factor. In addition, Ali et al. (2021) integrated international joint venture management practices based on TCT to understand the method that improved IORP. They found that trust, communication, and culture of organizations in exchange relationships had a positive effect on improving performance of collaboration. TCT is a lens of structural management

practices, and the results also found that there were no positive effects among these structural management practices when they used TCT to explore performance of international joint venture management. Based on the previous studies discussed above, the results remain negative effects and non-significant, and another weak point is that these studies did not investigate the combined role of coordination, participation, frequency of interaction, flexibility, and commitment in structural management practices reducing opportunism and enhance the performance of collaboration (Ali et al., 2021). Based on the previous studies, their results are a springboard for our research on travel companies and their partners.

Fourth, most research in IRs have been carried out in developed countries, especially in the Western context (Yang, 2019; Ashnai, 2016; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Pfajfar et al., 2022), IRs is interesting and also necessary to validate the applicability of IRs in Spain by a study of González-Torres et al. (2021) conducted a qualitative approach to build a direct sales model to overcome epidemic outbreaks based on trust, commitment, and coordination evolution towards relationship management between hotel chains and tour operators in B2B. Hence, the theoretical framework of this research is expected to explain how well factors of AMP and IORP models developed in the Western fit the context of alliance relationships among travel companies and their partners in Vietnam, and to add to body of knowledge on these fields.

Finally, the development of tourism sectors and the entire industry contributes greatly to the socio-economic growth of Vietnam. However, no previous research has investigated the influences of alliance management practices on IORP among travel companies and their partners in Vietnam context. As the discussion above shows the necessity of this study, previous studies have been explored success of IRs in B2B relationships or dyadic relationships. However, the IRs research in tourism industry at the level of focal organization was limited in travel companies in Vietnam context, it was marked by barely any research to investigate the impact of AMP factors on higher trust, commitment, and IORP between travel companies and their suppliers. Although the attributes in exchange relationships drive to performance, including inter-organizational trust, commitment, coordination, communication, flexibility, participation, and frequency of interaction have been mentioned by many studies in developed countries (Mohr & Spekman, 1994; Medina-Muñoz & García-Falcón, 2000; Elche, D. et al., 2018; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Pfajfar et al., 2022; Palmatier et al., 2007; Ashmai et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2019; González-Torres et al., 2021; Ali Shahzad et al., 2021; Uddin et al., 2020), the results were inconsistent due to mediating factors that various studies

have not clearly explored both direct and indirect effects among these constructs. Therefore, further research needs to explore the relationship among these constructs in other phenomena to understand the connections of these factors in uncertainty environment in a specific context that have been found limitation. Hence, the IRs need more studies to advance research and understand the behaviour of members in IRs in the tourism field, besides that the study of IRs provide a greater understanding of how each factor of AMP directly and indirectly affect high trust, commitment, and IORP. To address the research gaps foregoing, this study aims to identify what factors of AMP affect IORP and conduct an empirical study to validate the proposed hypotheses by testing the direct and indirect effect relationship between factors of AMP, trust, commitment, and IORP toward the exchange relationship between travel companies and their partners context in Vietnam.

This research presents empirical findings for the connections between factors of AMP, trust, commitment, and IORP, and how these factors of AMP foster inter-organizational relationship performance in both direct and indirect influence of tourism industry in Vietnam. Based on the above evidence, practical implications and organizational developmental policies are recommended to assist tourism managers to improve their knowledge to build a strategy effectiveness to develop tourism sustainability, as well as building the relationship marketing and high inter-organizational performance of tourism firms.

## **II. CONTRIBUTIONS:**

New contributions in terms of academic and practical aspects of the dissertation are as follows:

- **Academic contributions**

This study has several theoretical contributions. Firstly, from reviewing a large of literature we have gained 3 main constructs. The first group of constructs include factors of AMP (communication, coordination, participation, flexibility, frequency of interaction) play as the independent variables. The second group of constructs include trust and commitment play as the independent variables, mediating variables, dependent variables. The third group of constructs include IORP that play as dependent variable. Based on the previous studies offer some points to explore in-depth understanding concepts, definitions of IORP, trust, commitment, communication, coordination, participation directly affect IR success (Palmatier et al., 2007; Medina-Munoz & García-Falcón, 2000; Monczka et al., 1998; Mohr & Spekman, 1994).

Secondly, this study contributed to build a comprehensive theoretical model of the characteristics of IORP by adding two factors frequency of interaction and flexibility, and it confirmed frequency of interaction, it also provided an updated the theoretical bases of these variables from 1947 to 2022 from previous studies (Weber, 1947; Palmatier et al., 2007; Morgan & Hunt, 1994, Medina-Munoz & García-Falcón, 2000; Mohr & Spekman, 1994; Elche et al., 2018; Yang et al., 2019; Saukko et al., 2020; Pfajfar et al., 2022), this study updated the latest theories of IOR and AMP factors, including trust, commitment, communication, coordination, flexibility, frequency of interaction, participation. Since these factors represented a social issue and behaviour that occurred at different objectives' research, different times, places (e.g., western countries, in US, Spain) and on different fields. Therefore, this research responded to earlier calls for applying IORP theory in tourism industry in Vietnam with a relationship between travel companies and their partners, the antecedents of AMP, trust and commitment play as independent variable, mediation variable, and dependent variable to explore the IORP of travel companies engage in IRs with their partners were empirically studied.

Thirdly, this is the first study that provided new insights into the factors of AMP influence the performance of inter-organizational relationship through mediating trust and commitment between travel companies and their partners (restaurants, accommodation, transportation companies, tourist destinations), because previous studies just explored the B2B relationships to explore a successful of IOR and was inconsistent results due to mediating factors that various studies have not clearly explored. Fourth, the contribution of this study used RDT and TCT are the lens of IORP model to analysis and test hypothesis that existence of default hypothesis is important helpful for theory testing, which sets this study apart from many recent empirical investigations that have framed from previous research (Mohr & Spekman, 1994; Medina-Munoz & García-Falcón, 2000; Gibson et al., 2002).

Finally, this study contributed to the stream of inter-organizational relationship research by determining the relationship between factors of AMP and trust, commitment, IORP. The findings of this study were potentially supported a more profound knowledge of effective IRs for managers of travel companies and other tourism sectors in Vietnam to foster higher trust and commitment to lead to IORP in their firms with their partners, it achieved the plausible, insightful, and relevant results in Vietnam tourism through highlighting the importance of tourism collaboration and found the reasons of forming the relationships and suggests management strategies.

- **Practical contributions:**

The current study makes several practical contributions. First, the results from this study can be used by travel companies, accommodation, restaurants, transportation companies, tourist attractions, shopping centers, practitioners, business owners, and other sectors engaged in the alliance relationships. The findings suggest some different strategies to build IORP in this study.

Firstly, it emphasized the travel companies build inter-organizational communication, coordination, and participation among alliance relationships, which lead to inter-organizational commitment to increase total sales, share resources, sales growth, cooperation, benefit expectations, and the capability to implement the mutual objectives. It connected with information sharing and activities between travel companies and their business partners are strengthen IORP development.

Second Secondly, it emphasized to build alliance strategies based on inter-organizational communication and participation between travel companies and their business partners through inter-organizational trust to increase a high degree of harmony, trust their partner's decisions, competence, and abilities to fulfill agreements and promises to share resources and operational strategies. Implementing these activities between travel companies and their business partners build more robust IORP. Additionally, inter-organizational trust and commitment are the simultaneous processes that increase a high level of trust and commitment to control resources scarcity and operational strategies, which can both build a thriving cooperative strategy rely on IORP,

Third, the COVID-19 pandemic has wholly crippled the tourism industry in Vietnam, this study provides the managers of tourist firms and sectors with some practical inter-organizational governance mechanisms to react positively under pressure from the crises caused by COVID-19 pandemic. all parties should coordinate more by delivering knowledge about sustainable development to all staff and partners, so they need to open courses to educate and train them on implementing sustainability and protecting the environment. In addition, the travel companies and tourism sectors should commit to implementing pay reasonable award salaries for staff and not using child labour or forced labour. Third, the travel companies and their partners should improve local economic development by using the local services in destinations. They should consider frequent interaction and involvement with their partners and the local citizens to campaign for protecting the environment in destinations by donating money and facilities for the local people to protect the environment



and conserve wildlife. In addition, the travel companies and tourism managers should propagandize that all staff and guests commit to saving energy and water, commit to balancing biodiversity, avoid increased pollution and waste by building environmental management systems in destinations, and use green products. The travel companies and their partners should restore travel confidence by working together to implement commitment priority “safe and clean” by protecting health and safety provisions for guests such as the restaurants and bars implementing a commitment to serving healthy food and not serve wild animal dishes. The rumor said that “the COVID-19 pandemic was appeared because of eating wild animal dishes”. So, the tourism sectors also have a significant opportunity to drive change. It drives all tourism sectors to quickly form exchange partnerships to work together and promote service systems by working at home, sending all information and documents by email, conducting meetings with partners carried out via Zoom, a virtual meeting software that improved staff efficiency, and making decisions quickly in the tourism sector.

Fourth, in a very fierce tourism market to acquire competitive advantage, the travel companies and tourism sectors get successfully sustain to build unique tourism products to serve tourists. As a result, the travel companies should pay more attention to its partners to improve the interaction higher. Furthermore, the more partners carry out commitment, the high effectiveness they put into the cooperation. Then, the coordination of both sides indicates the effort in their work. The accommodation is one of the most significant partners of travel companies since tourists spend most of their time with its infrastructure such as pool, massage, spa, bar, etc. By creating good relationship with the accommodation that is successful in the business performance since travel firms were provided with customers’ data of their behaviour while staying at the hotel and other factors such as cost, leasing, service fees, etc. that form successful partnership.

Finally, the travel companies and tourism sectors should focus on the elements such as show the genuine concern for members’ alliance by building trust and commitment to achieve a successful relationship marketing strategy, it provided the excellent services and products, priority members alliance and customer retention, maintain ongoing communication with members alliance, support rewarding, discounts, etc. To reach relationship marketing' benefits like enhance experience, come up with new product and service ideas, makes members of alliance stand out from competitors boost members of alliance revenue by advertise products and services on social media, Website, Chatbots, so the travel companies should invest to boost relationship marketing activities for both travel companies themselves

and their business partners, first they should prioritize relationship marketing issues such as increase customer market, internal market, influence market, recruitment market, supplier market, referral market etc. Then, they should boost the frequency of interaction in both formal and informal channels such as frequency keep in touch by email, phone, Facebook, fax, etc. In addition, they should help each other with other services such marketing, staff training, customer care, share information. And sending tourist to these business partners more often. Besides that, the travel companies should need tightening up a little in effectiveness of inter-organizational relationship through relationship marketing to get many benefits such as special promotions, potential benefits include more sales from their business partners, appropriate commission levels, additional and improved promotional and advertising support by their business partners (i.e., accommodation, restaurants, bars, transport companies, tourist destinations). In addition, the travel companies receive promotional support such as posters, sign boards, brochures, leaflets, displays, advertisement at accommodation, at the transport companies and stations, introduce tours to guests, etc. from their partners. Therefore, they should be considered the main criteria helping tourism firms and governments to achieve higher levels of performance. The travel companies should speed up the coordination of activities such as having plan and schedule for services or delivery guests to partners, then the travel companies got many benefits from their partners such as sales promotion (e.g., early booking discount, bulk booking, and get corporate discount rate).

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