

Measuring and benchmarking values alignment maturity: the OVAMI framework proposition

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to develop the organisational values alignment maturity index (OVAMI) as a composite maturity framework for assessing how systematically organisations address values alignment across the employment relationship. The article thereby responds to the lack of structured tools for evaluating and benchmarking alignment-related practices beyond entry-stage assessment.

Design/methodology/approach – A composite index was developed around three dimensions of alignment-related practices: employee lifecycle stages, alignment assessment methods and organisational responses to misalignment. Its structure is illustrated through an initial empirical application based on survey data collected from 104 HR managers in organisations operating in Poland.

Findings – Most organisations operate at low to intermediate levels of alignment maturity, and alignment practices remain unevenly distributed across dimensions. Reactive responses appear more common than systematic assessment across lifecycle stages, revealing a structural gap between recognition, monitoring and action.

Research limitations/implications – OVAMI is introduced as a conceptual–methodological proposition and has not yet been fully validated across sectors, contexts or national settings. The findings provide an initial empirical illustration of the framework and point to the need for further refinement and testing.

Practical implications – Organisations can use the framework to diagnose structural gaps in alignment management, compare practices across contexts and identify which dimensions of alignment maturity remain least developed.

Originality/value – By shifting attention from individual-level outcomes to the organisational structuring of alignment-related practices, the article extends the P–O fit perspective and introduces a maturity-based approach to assessing alignment as an organisational capability.

Keywords Values alignment, Person–organisation fit, Maturity model, HRM practices, Employee lifecycle, Benchmarking, Alignment maturity, Organisational capability

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Research on values alignment in organisations has consistently emphasised its importance for shaping key employee outcomes. Within this stream, the literature on person–organisation (P–O) fit shows that congruence between individual and organisational values is associated

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with higher job satisfaction, stronger organisational commitment and lower turnover intentions (Chatman, 1989; Kristof, 1996; O'Reilly *et al.*, 1991). These findings have established alignment as an important construct in organisational realisation and human resource management. At the same time, most existing approaches still conceptualise alignment primarily at the individual level and treat it as something assessed at a limited number of moments, most commonly during organisational entry.

This narrow focus creates an important limitation. In both research and practice, alignment is often approached through dispersed HR activities and isolated managerial interventions rather than through a coherent organisational logic. While alignment is experienced at the individual level, it is also produced and shaped through organisational practices that determine how values are communicated, assessed and acted upon across the employment relationship. Research on HRM systems suggests that the effectiveness of such practices depends on their internal consistency and coherence, as fragmented or weakly integrated practices may send conflicting signals to employees (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004; Lepak *et al.*, 2006). Empirical evidence further indicates that alignment-related practices are frequently unevenly distributed and insufficiently coordinated across organisational processes (Palaén-Tondel, 2025; Sugiono *et al.*, 2023; Villani and Grimaldi, 2024).

In response to these limitations, more recent scholarship has moved beyond entry-stage congruence and highlighted the need to examine alignment throughout the employment relationship. Research grounded in person–environment fit perspectives shows that fit should not be reduced to a single assessment at entry, but understood in relation to multiple interactions, stages and organisational conditions that shape how alignment is experienced and maintained (Edwards and Cable, 2009; Jansen and Kristof-Brown, 2006; Shipp and Jansen, 2011). Contemporary reviews likewise emphasise that alignment cannot be adequately captured through one-time assessments alone (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2023). This shift points to a broader understanding of alignment as not only a perceived match, but also something supported, reinforced or weakened through organisational practices distributed across the employee lifecycle.

Viewed from this perspective, alignment can be more precisely conceptualised as an organisationally embedded capability manifested through interconnected HR practices and managerial actions. From a configurational standpoint, organisational effectiveness depends on internally consistent bundles of practices, not on isolated interventions (Becker and Huselid, 1998; Delery and Doty, 1996). Applied to values alignment, this implies that what matters is not only whether organisations declare alignment as important, but whether they address it systematically across stages of the employment relationship, through appropriate methods and through coherent responses to emerging misalignment. Differences between organisations may therefore reflect differences in how alignment-related practices are structured, combined and enacted. However, although this more organisational understanding of alignment is increasingly visible, research still lacks a structured way to assess how developed these practices actually are. In management research, maturity models have been widely used to evaluate the extent to which organisational capabilities are formalised, integrated and systematically enacted (Röglinger *et al.*, 2012; Wendler, 2012), yet no comparable framework exists for values alignment. As a result, researchers lack tools for systematically comparing such practices across organisations, and practitioners lack a structured basis for diagnosing and benchmarking their approach to alignment management.

To address this gap, this article introduces the Organisational Values Alignment Maturity Index (OVAMI), a framework designed to assess and compare the maturity of organisational approaches to alignment. OVAMI conceptualises alignment as a capability embedded throughout the employment relationship and operationalises it through three dimensions: the

range of employee lifecycle stages at which alignment is addressed, the diversity of methods and tools used and the scope of organisational responses to misalignment. These dimensions are combined into a composite index that enables the classification of organisations into distinct maturity levels.

The purpose of this article is twofold. Firstly, it introduces a conceptual–methodological framework for assessing organisational values alignment as a capability embedded across the employment relationship and operationalised through a maturity-based index. Secondly, it provides an initial empirical illustration of this framework, showing how alignment-related practices can be systematically assessed and compared across organisations. The article does not present a fully validated measurement instrument, but a structured and preliminarily substantiated approach to diagnosing alignment maturity.

2. Theoretical framework for measuring organisational values alignment

2.1 *From person–organisation fit to organisational values alignment*

The theoretical starting point for examining organisational values alignment lies in the person–organisation (P–O) fit tradition, which has predominantly conceptualised alignment as the congruence between individual and organisational values (Chatman, 1989; Kristof, 1996; O'Reilly *et al.*, 1991). Extensive empirical evidence demonstrates that such congruence is associated with a range of desirable outcomes, including higher job satisfaction, stronger organisational commitment and reduced turnover intentions (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2005). As a result, values alignment has been firmly established as a key construct in organisational reality and human resource management.

At the same time, the P–O fit literature has progressively expanded beyond a narrow understanding of congruence, recognising that alignment may take different forms and operate through multiple mechanisms. Distinctions between supplementary and complementary fit highlight that alignment does not necessarily imply similarity but may also involve the extent to which organisational and individual characteristics reinforce or complete each other (Cable and Edwards, 2004). More broadly, person–environment fit research emphasises the multidimensional and context-dependent nature of alignment, suggesting that it cannot be reduced to a single, uniform construct (Edwards and Cable, 2009; Van Vianen, 2018).

Despite these advances, the dominant analytical focus remains centred on the individual level, where alignment is primarily treated as a perceptual state or evaluative outcome. Such an approach offers limited insight into how alignment is shaped, maintained or disrupted within organisational settings. In particular, it provides only a partial account of the organisational conditions under which alignment emerges and the mechanisms through which organisations influence alignment processes.

Addressing this limitation requires shifting from viewing alignment solely as an individual-level phenomenon towards recognising it as an organisational concern embedded in broader HR systems and managerial practices. Research on HRM systems shows that organisational practices operate as interrelated configurations that generate consistent or inconsistent signals to employees (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004; Lepak *et al.*, 2006). From this perspective, alignment is not only experienced by individuals but is also shaped by the structure, coherence and strength of these systems. Integrating micro- and macro-level perspectives further highlights the need to link individual perceptions with the organisational contexts in which they are produced (Wright and Boswell, 2002).

Together, these arguments point to the need to move beyond an exclusively individual understanding of alignment and to consider it as a phenomenon that is, at least in part, constituted at the organisational level.

2.2 *Alignment across the employment relationship*

This individual-level emphasis, however, remains insufficient for explaining how alignment is addressed across the employment relationship. Reconceptualising alignment as an organisational concern necessitates moving beyond its treatment as a phenomenon confined to organisational entry. While recruitment and selection processes have traditionally been seen as the primary stage at which alignment is assessed, alignment is shaped through a broader set of interactions unfolding throughout the employment relationship.

Research within person–environment fit shows that alignment is not fixed at entry but evolves as individuals and organisations interact (Jansen and Kristof-Brown, 2006; Shipp and Jansen, 2011). These interactions occur across multiple stages of the employee lifecycle, including onboarding, development, performance management and everyday work experiences. More recent reviews underline the difficulty of capturing such patterns using one-time assessments, pointing to the need for approaches that account for how alignment is sustained or disrupted throughout the employment relationship (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2023).

From an organisational perspective, this implies that alignment is distributed across stages instead of being confined to a single decision point. Different stages create distinct opportunities to signal values, assess alignment and respond to misalignment. However, these activities are often not coordinated in a systematic manner, and their cumulative effect on alignment remains insufficiently understood.

2.3 *Fragmentation of alignment practices and the limits of episodic assessment*

At the same time, extending alignment throughout the employment relationship does not in itself ensure that it is addressed in a systematic and coordinated way. Although alignment may be embedded across multiple stages of the employment relationship, in practice it is rarely addressed in a systematic and coordinated manner. Instead, alignment-related activities tend to be implemented as isolated interventions, often concentrated in selected HR processes such as recruitment or onboarding. This results in a fragmented approach, where different practices operate independently rather than forming a coherent organisational logic of managing alignment (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004; Lepak *et al.*, 2006; Wright and Boswell, 2002).

Such fragmentation limits the effectiveness of alignment efforts. When practices are not aligned with one another, they may send inconsistent signals regarding organisational values, weakening employees' ability to interpret and internalise them. Research on HRM systems supports the view that the strength and impact of organisational practices depend on their internal consistency and clarity, as well as on how they are perceived and interpreted by employees (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004; Nishii *et al.*, 2008). In the absence of such consistency, even well-designed individual practices may fail to contribute to a stable experience of alignment, as employees encounter discrepancies between formal declarations and everyday organisational realities.

This concern is also supported by prior empirical research on values alignment in HRM, which showed that organisations tend to concentrate alignment-related assessments at early recruitment stages, while post-entry monitoring remains comparatively limited (Pala-Tondel, 2025). Similar patterns have been identified in broader HRM research, where organisations often rely on discrete and loosely connected practices instead of integrated systems, limiting their ability to produce coherent and sustained effects (Lepak *et al.*, 2006; Wright and McMahan, 2011).

A further limitation of current approaches lies in their reliance on episodic assessment. Alignment is most often evaluated at discrete points, typically during recruitment or, less frequently, through *ad hoc* diagnostic tools. Such one-time assessments provide only a

partial and static view, capturing alignment at a specific moment instead of showing how it is supported, neglected or undermined across the employment relationship (Jansen and Kristof-Brown, 2006; Shipp and Jansen, 2011). Consequently, organisations may recognise the importance of alignment but lack mechanisms to monitor its development or to identify where misalignment emerges over time.

Fragmented and episodic approaches also constrain the ability of organisations to respond effectively to misalignment. While some practices focus on assessing fit, considerably less attention is given to how organisations act when misalignment is identified. Without structured responses, alignment remains a passive construct: something to be observed instead of actively managed. This limitation is consistent with research showing that the effects of HR practices depend not only on their presence, but on how they are enacted, interpreted and followed by organisational action (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004; Nishii *et al.*, 2008).

These limitations indicate that current approaches are insufficient for capturing alignment as an organisational phenomenon. What is missing is a structured perspective that integrates alignment-related practices across stages, methods and responses, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of how alignment is enacted in practice. This provides a foundation for reconceptualising alignment as a capability that can be systematically developed and assessed (Lepak *et al.*, 2006; Wright and Boswell, 2002).

2.4 Conceptualising alignment as an organisational capability

These limitations suggest that alignment cannot be adequately understood as a set of isolated practices or assessments. Instead, it can be conceptualised as an organisational capability: the organisation's ability to systematically address, assess and respond to alignment across the employment relationship. This perspective moves beyond viewing alignment as a collection of discrete practices and instead reflects the organisation's capacity to consistently enact and coordinate alignment-related processes (Lepak *et al.*, 2006; Wright and McMahan, 2011).

In strategic human resource management, capabilities are understood as patterned and repeatable configurations of practices that enable organisations to achieve desired outcomes (Becker and Huselid, 1998; Delery and Doty, 1996). The effectiveness of such capabilities depends on the coherence and integration of practices within a system, as well as on the clarity and consistency of the signals they generate (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004; Wright and Boswell, 2002).

Applied to alignment, this implies that alignment is shaped not only by individual perceptions but also by how organisations structure and integrate alignment-related practices. It reflects the organisation's capacity to consistently signal, evaluate and respond to values throughout the employment relationship, rather than relying on isolated interventions or one-time assessments (Lepak *et al.*, 2006; Wright and McMahan, 2011).

Such a capability may differ significantly in the extent to which it is formalised, integrated and consistently enacted across organisational processes. Organisations therefore vary in how systematically alignment is embedded and managed, creating observable differences in the development of alignment-related capabilities (Röglinger *et al.*, 2012; Wendler, 2012).

2.5 Maturity as a logic for assessing organisational capability

Viewing alignment as an organisational capability raises the question of how differences in the development of this capability can be meaningfully assessed.

If alignment is conceptualised as an organisational capability, it cannot be meaningfully assessed as a binary condition. Instead, it requires an approach that captures differences in the degree to which this capability is developed and integrated across organisations. Maturity

models provide such a framework by conceptualising capabilities as progressing through levels of increasing formalisation, coherence and systematic enactment (Röglinger *et al.*, 2012).

Instead of focusing on the mere presence or absence of individual practices, maturity-based approaches assess how consistently and comprehensively capabilities are implemented across organisational processes. This is particularly relevant in contexts where practices may exist but remain unevenly developed or weakly integrated, making single composite indicators insufficient for capturing meaningful differences between organisations (Wendler, 2012). This logic is also consistent with broader perspectives on capability development in strategic HRM, which emphasise that organisational effectiveness depends not on the mere presence of practices, but on the extent to which they are coherently structured and enacted (Wright and McMahan, 2011).

Applied to alignment, a maturity perspective enables differentiation between organisations that address alignment in an *ad hoc* manner and those that implement it through structured and integrated systems of practices. This provides a more nuanced basis for assessment than episodic or single-indicator approaches and allows alignment to be evaluated as a capability that varies in its level of development rather than as a static or binary condition.

2.6 Core dimensions of alignment maturity: stages, methods, and responses

A maturity perspective, however, still requires specifying the concrete dimensions through which alignment-related capability becomes analytically observable. Building on the conceptualisation of alignment as an organisational capability and its assessment through a maturity perspective, identifying analytically distinct dimensions becomes necessary to clarify how this capability is enacted in practice. If alignment is embedded across the employee lifecycle and realised through organisational practices, its assessment requires specifying the key components through which organisations operationalise alignment. This structuring is consistent with broader perspectives on HR systems, which emphasise that organisational practices can be meaningfully analysed in terms of their scope, mechanisms and action orientation (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004; Wright and Boswell, 2002).

The first dimension concerns the stages at which alignment is addressed. As discussed earlier, alignment is not confined to organisational entry but extends across multiple phases of the employment relationship. Organisations may differ in the extent to which they incorporate alignment-related practices across these stages, ranging from a narrow focus on recruitment to a broader, lifecycle-spanning approach (Jansen and Kristof-Brown, 2006; Shipp and Jansen, 2011). The coverage of stages, therefore, indicates how extensively alignment is embedded within organisational processes.

The second dimension refers to the methods used to assess and support alignment. Beyond individual tools, this dimension represents the mechanisms through which alignment is evaluated, interpreted and reinforced within the organisation.

Organisations may rely on a limited set of informal or *ad hoc* approaches, or they may use a more structured and diversified portfolio of assessment, interpretation and feedback mechanisms. The diversity of methods thus reflects the extent to which alignment is approached through complementary and coordinated processes rather than through isolated instruments, and how consistently such practices generate shared interpretations among employees (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004; Nishii *et al.*, 2008).

The third dimension refers to organisational responses to misalignment. While alignment is often discussed in terms of assessment, considerably less attention has been given to how organisations act upon the results of such assessments. Responses may range from minimal or

reactive actions to more structured interventions aimed at addressing misalignment through development, reassignment or systemic adjustments. The presence and range of responses therefore help indicate whether alignment is actively managed instead of passively observed, and whether organisations translate assessment into coordinated action (Lepak *et al.*, 2006; Wright and McMahan, 2011).

The selection of these dimensions is also informed by prior empirical research on values alignment in HRM, which demonstrated that organisations differ not only in the stages at which alignment is considered, but also in the methods used to assess it and the actions taken when misalignment is identified (Paleń-Tondel, 2025). These differences point to a broader structural variation in how organisations approach alignment, making stages, methods and responses analytically relevant dimensions of alignment maturity.

These three dimensions (stages, methods and responses) capture complementary aspects of how alignment is operationalised as an organisational capability. They reflect, respectively, the scope, the mechanisms and the action orientation of alignment practices. These dimensions are analytically distinct yet jointly capture how alignment is structured and enacted across organisations. Assessing alignment along these dimensions enables a more comprehensive understanding of how organisations approach alignment beyond isolated practices and provides the basis for constructing a structured maturity framework.

To enable comparability across dimensions, the proposed framework assumes a standardised scaling approach, which is further detailed in the methodological section.

2.7 OVAMI as a structured measurement framework

These dimensions provide the basis for translating the concept of alignment maturity into a structured measurement framework. The integration of the three dimensions identified above (stages, methods and responses) provides the foundation for a structured assessment of the maturity of organisational alignment practices. The OVAMI builds on this structure by combining these empirically and theoretically grounded dimensions into a coherent framework that enables the systematic evaluation of alignment-related practices at the organisational level. Instead of focusing on isolated indicators, OVAMI makes visible how alignment is structured, assessed and acted upon across the employment relationship.

The framework translates the conceptualisation of alignment as an organisational capability into a structured and measurable form that can be empirically assessed and compared across organisations. By aggregating the three dimensions into a composite index, OVAMI allows organisations to be positioned along a continuum of maturity, reflecting differences in the extent to which alignment practices are formalised, diversified and integrated (Röglinger *et al.*, 2012; Wandler, 2012). This approach supports not only the identification of overall maturity levels, but also the detection of imbalances across dimensions.

OVAMI enables a diagnostic perspective on alignment practices. By assessing stages, methods and responses separately, the framework allows organisations to identify which aspects of alignment management remain least developed and where structural gaps are most pronounced. Consequently, the index does not merely provide an aggregate score but offers insight into the internal configuration of alignment practices.

It is crucial to clarify that OVAMI does not measure values alignment as an employee-level outcome, nor does it capture how alignment is subjectively experienced or interpreted by employees. Instead, the index assesses the maturity of organisational practices related to alignment, focusing on the extent to which alignment is systematically addressed, evaluated and managed throughout the employment relationship. As such, OVAMI should be understood as a diagnostic tool for identifying structural strengths and gaps in alignment

management, rather than as a direct indicator of employees' experienced alignment. Consequently, high maturity of alignment practices does not necessarily guarantee consistent experiences of alignment but reflects the organisation's capacity to manage alignment-related processes.

The OVAMI framework, including the construction of the index and the procedures used to calculate maturity levels, is operationalised in detail in the methodological section.

3. Materials and methods

3.1 Research design

To translate this conceptual framework into an empirical illustration, the study applies OVAMI to survey data collected from HR managers. This article presents the OVAMI as a conceptual–methodological proposition supported by an initial empirical illustration. The study forms part of a broader multi-stage research project on values alignment in human resource management, designed to capture both organisational practices and employee experiences of alignment and misalignment across the employment relationship. The broader project combines quantitative and qualitative components. Within this architecture, the present article focuses exclusively on the quantitative stage addressing the organisational perspective, that is, how organisations approach values alignment through HR practices and related managerial actions. The empirical basis of the present study consists solely of the survey data reported below.

At the same time, the conceptualisation of OVAMI was not derived from the quantitative data set alone. While the empirical analysis presented in this article is limited to the survey data, the framework was conceptually informed by broader conclusions emerging from other stages of the project. These insights were used at a conceptual level and are not directly analysed or reported in the present article.

Accordingly, the role of the present study is dual. On the one hand, it develops OVAMI as a conceptual–methodological framework for assessing the maturity of organisational alignment practices. On the other hand, it provides an initial empirical application of this framework using survey data from HR managers. The purpose of the analysis is not to validate a finalised measurement instrument, but to construct and illustrate a structured approach to assessing alignment maturity across organisations.

The analytical procedure focuses on constructing the OVAMI index and applying it to the survey data to demonstrate how alignment maturity can be assessed and interpreted across organisations.

3.2 Sample characteristics

The study draws on a sample of 104 HR managers recruited through a professional research panel provider. Participants were selected from organisations operating in Poland and represented a broad range of sectors, including manufacturing, IT, healthcare and professional services, as well as both small-to-medium enterprises and large multinational corporations. Participants were recruited using predefined eligibility criteria, including current employment in an HR role with responsibility for HR processes. The sample also captured regional diversity across Poland, reflecting the dual structure of the national labour market. Detailed sample characteristics are presented in [Table 1](#).

The choice of HR professionals as respondents was intentional and theoretically grounded. Because the purpose of this article is to examine values alignment as it is addressed through organisational practices, HR managers constitute the most appropriate informants. They are directly involved in the design, implementation and coordination of HR processes through which alignment may be assessed, reinforced or responded to. This

Table 1. Sample characteristics

Variable	Category	<i>n</i>	%
Ownership origin	Foreign-owned subsidiaries	34	32.7
	Domestic-owned	70	67.3
Ownership form	Private	35	33.7
	Public	10	9.6
	Other (cooperative, mixed ownership, NGO)	59	56.7
Respondent gender	Male	30	28.8
	Female	74	71.2
Sector	Trade	22	21.2
	Manufacturing/logistics/construction	24	23.1
	IT and professional services (incl. Finance)	28	26.9
	Education/health/public	17	16.3
	Other (incl. agriculture)	13	12.5

Source(s): Author's own elaboration based on survey data (valid $n = 104$)

includes practices related to recruitment, onboarding, evaluation, development, retention and actions taken when misalignment is identified. Accordingly, HR professionals are particularly well positioned to report on the stages at which alignment is considered, the methods used to assess it, and the organisational responses adopted when misalignment occurs.

The diversity of the sample is analytically important for the purposes of this study. Since the article does not seek to estimate employee-level experiences of alignment, but rather to examine how organisational practices differ across settings, variation in sector, size and organisational context provides an appropriate basis for analytical comparison across organisations. In this sense, the sample enables observation of different configurations of alignment-related practices and supports the diagnostic and benchmarking logic of OVAMI.

At the same time, the role of the sample in the present article should be interpreted with methodological precision. The sample is used to provide an initial empirical illustration of the framework and to demonstrate its feasibility and analytical usefulness as a structured tool for assessing the maturity of organisational alignment practices.

3.3 Data collection procedure

Data were collected using a computer-assisted web interviewing (CAWI) approach. The survey was administered in April 2022 through a professional research panel provider, which ensured access to respondents occupying HR-related roles in organisations operating in Poland.

Participation in the study was voluntary, and responses were collected anonymously. The use of an online survey enabled standardised data collection across a geographically and sectorally diverse sample, while supporting consistency in the reporting of organisational practices related to values alignment. Prior to the main data collection, the questionnaire was pre-tested with a small group of HR professionals to verify clarity, content relevance and internal consistency. Participants were given approximately 15–20 min to complete the survey.

The questionnaire comprised 11 core questions and explored issues such as whether organisations consider values alignment, at which stages it is addressed, how it is assessed and what actions are taken when misalignment is identified. The inclusion of both closed-ended and open-ended items enabled the collection of both quantifiable data and

contextualised organisational insights. However, the present article draws only on the structured, quantitative component of the survey.

It should be noted that the questionnaire was not originally designed as a direct maturity model instrument. Rather, it was constructed to capture a broad range of organisational practices related to values alignment. The identification of the three core dimensions (stages, methods and responses) was guided primarily by the theoretical framework developed in this study. The survey data were subsequently used to organise and illustrate how these dimensions are reflected in organisational practices.

Thus, OVAMI should be understood as a theoretically grounded framework that is applied to the survey data to demonstrate its empirical relevance and analytical usefulness. The role of the data is not to derive the framework, but to support its initial empirical illustration.

3.4 Construction of the OVAMI index

With the study design and data source established, the next step is to specify how the OVAMI framework was operationalised as a composite index. The OVAMI framework was constructed as a composite index integrating three analytically distinct dimensions of alignment-related practices: stages, methods and responses. The first dimension represents the range of employee lifecycle stages at which values alignment is addressed. The second reflects the diversity of methods and tools used to assess or support alignment. The third captures the range of organisational actions taken when misalignment is identified. This multidimensional structure reflects the logic of composite indicators used to represent complex organisational capabilities in HRM and management research (Becker and Huselid, 1998; Delery and Doty, 1996; Wendler, 2012).

Each dimension was operationalised using binary indicators reflecting the presence or absence of specific organisational practices (0 = absence, 1 = presence). In total, the index comprises 16 indicators derived from the survey instrument: four for stages, seven for methods and five for responses. These indicators were selected to operationalise the three dimensions identified in the theoretical framework, ensuring alignment between conceptual definitions and empirical measurement. As the indicators represent distinct practices, the index follows a formative measurement logic, whereby each element contributes a unique aspect to the overall construct rather than representing interchangeable manifestations of a single latent variable. A detailed mapping of all indicators to the three OVAMI dimensions and coding rules is provided in Table S1 of the Supplementary Materials, while the treatment of missing values is reported in Table S2 of Supplementary Materials. Raw scores were calculated as the sum of indicators within each dimension. Because the three dimensions differ in their original ranges, direct comparison of raw scores would be misleading. To ensure comparability, all dimension scores were rescaled to a common 0–100 metric using a linear transformation based on the minimum and maximum possible values. This approach is consistent with established procedures in the construction of composite indices and benchmarking tools (Wendler, 2012).

The overall OVAMI score was computed as the arithmetic mean of the three standardised dimension scores. Equal weighting was applied to all dimensions. This decision reflects the conceptual assumption that stages, methods and responses represent complementary components of alignment management, none of which can be theoretically prioritised without additional empirical justification. In the absence of such justification, equal weighting ensures transparency and methodological parsimony.

Based on the aggregated OVAMI score, organisations were classified into four maturity levels: Ad hoc, Emergent, Structured and Integrated. These categories reflect increasing

levels of formalisation, diversification and integration of alignment-related practices across the employment relationship. The thresholds were defined to support interpretability and comparative benchmarking across organisations, rather than to represent empirically validated cut-off points.

OVAMI is designed not only as a composite index but also as a diagnostic framework. By retaining the three underlying dimensions, the index enables the identification of structural imbalances across stages, methods and responses. This allows for the detection of areas in which alignment-related practices remain underdeveloped and provides a basis for more targeted organisational interventions. The construction of the index is intended to provide a structured and transparent operationalisation of alignment maturity, not a finalised measurement instrument subject to full psychometric validation.

3.5 Analytical strategy

Once the OVAMI index had been constructed, the analytical procedure focused on examining its distribution, internal relationships and comparative usefulness across organisational contexts. The analytical strategy was designed to support the exploratory and illustrative purpose of the study. Given the conceptual–methodological nature of the article, the analyses do not aim to test causal relationships or to provide full psychometric validation of the proposed framework. Instead, they are intended to offer an initial empirical illustration of how the OVAMI index operates and how its dimensions relate to one another in organisational practice.

The analysis proceeded in four steps. Firstly, descriptive statistics were used to examine the distribution of raw and standardised scores for the three OVAMI dimensions and for the composite index. This included the distribution of organisations across the four maturity levels, as well as the distribution of practices within stages, methods and responses.

Secondly, benchmarking analyses were conducted across selected organisational characteristics, including ownership type, sector and firm size. These comparisons were based on differences in mean OVAMI scores and dimension-level scores across groups and were intended to illustrate relative positioning rather than to establish statistically definitive group differences.

Thirdly, Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient (ρ) was applied to explore associations among the three OVAMI dimensions and between each dimension and the total OVAMI score. This method was selected because of the ordinal and composite nature of the data and because it does not require assumptions of normal distribution. The correlation analysis was used to examine whether the dimensions behaved in a way consistent with the internal logic of the framework.

Fourthly, internal association patterns within dimensions were examined to assess the extent to which indicators co-occurred in organisational practice. These analyses should be interpreted with caution, as OVAMI is conceptualised as a formative, not reflective, framework. Accordingly, the indicators are not expected to exhibit high internal consistency, but rather to make visible distinct and complementary aspects of organisational alignment practices. It is worth noting that the pilot character of the present study concerns the OVAMI framework, not the underlying survey itself. The data set derives from a full quantitative stage of a broader research project, whereas the index proposed here represents an initial, exploratory attempt to structure and assess such practices in a standardised way. The findings should therefore be interpreted as preliminary evidence regarding the feasibility, interpretability and diagnostic usefulness of OVAMI, not as full validation of a finalised measurement instrument.

This analytical strategy is consistent with early-stage development of composite indices, where descriptive and correlational analyses are used to assess preliminary structural coherence and empirical usefulness prior to further refinement and validation.

3.6 Ethical considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with standard ethical guidelines for social science research. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the academic purpose of the study, the anonymity of their responses and their right to withdraw at any stage.

No personally identifiable information was collected, and all data were analysed in aggregated form. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to participation by proceeding with the online questionnaire.

4. Results

4.1 Distribution of OVAMI scores and maturity levels

The empirical illustration begins by showing how organisations are distributed across OVAMI maturity levels. Based on the aggregated OVAMI score, organisations were classified into four maturity levels: *Ad hoc* (0–25), Emergent (26–50), Structured (51–75) and Integrated (76–100). These thresholds provide a categorical interpretation of the index, allowing organisations to be positioned along a continuum of alignment maturity.

Descriptive statistics were calculated for both raw and standardised OVAMI scores; however, for clarity of presentation, the distribution across maturity levels is reported here.

As presented in [Table 2](#), the distribution of organisations across maturity levels is differentiated. The largest proportion of organisations falls within the Emergent category (44.2%, $n = 46$), followed by *Ad hoc* (26.9%, $n = 28$) and Structured (22.1%, $n = 23$), while a smaller share reaches the Integrated level (6.7%, $n = 7$).

This distribution indicates that organisations are spread across multiple maturity levels instead of being concentrated within a single category, suggesting that the index reflects variation in the extent to which alignment-related practices are formalised and integrated.

[Figure 1](#) provides a visual overview of these results, complementing the tabular presentation by showing both the mean dimension profile and the distribution of organisations across the four maturity levels.

It is important to emphasise that the observed distribution should be interpreted as an empirical illustration of the classification logic embedded in the OVAMI framework, not as a generalisable representation of alignment maturity in a given population.

4.2 Distribution of practices across OVAMI dimensions

The overall distribution of maturity levels is complemented by a closer look at how practices are distributed across the three OVAMI dimensions. The distribution of practices across the

Table 2. Distribution of organisations across OVAMI maturity levels

Maturity level	Score range	<i>N</i>	%
Ad hoc	0–25	28	26.9
Emergent	26–50	46	44.2
Structured	51–75	23	22.1
Integrated	76–100	7	6.7

Source(s): Author's own elaboration based on survey data (valid $n = 104$)

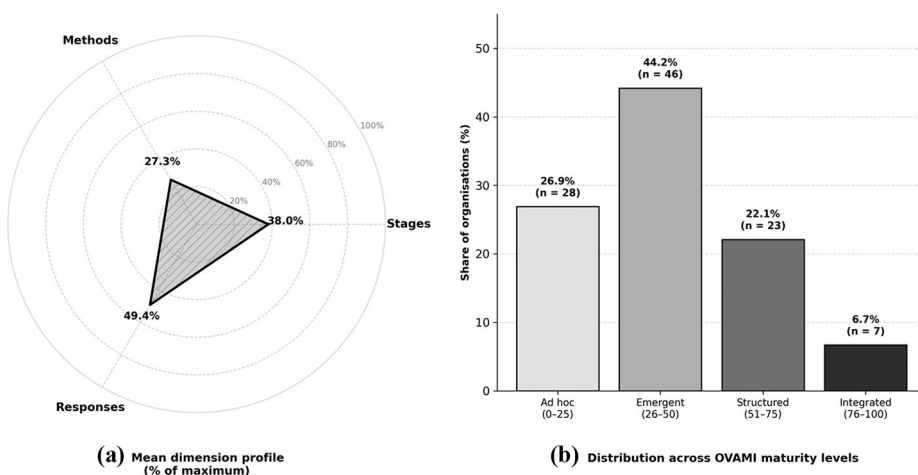


Figure 1. OVAMI results: dimension profile and maturity-level distribution

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on survey data (valid N = 104)

three OVAMI dimensions (stages, methods and responses) provides further insight into the structural differentiation captured by the index. As shown in Table 3, the mean number of alignment-related practices identified within each dimension differs, with stages at $M = 1.52$ ($SD = 1.02$), methods at $M = 1.91$ ($SD = 1.17$) and responses at $M = 2.47$ ($SD = 0.93$).

The distribution of raw counts (Table 4) further illustrates these differences. In the case of stages, the majority of organisations report addressing alignment at only one (54.8%) or two (21.2%) points in the employee lifecycle, while only 14.4% extend this to three stages. This indicates a relatively limited spread of alignment practices throughout the employment relationship.

The methods dimension shows greater dispersion. Organisations are distributed across multiple categories, with 35.6% using one method, 29.0% using two and 16.8% using three, while a smaller proportion (3.2%) reports the use of four or more methods. This pattern suggests variation in the extent to which alignment is operationalised through diversified assessment tools.

In contrast, the responses dimension exhibits a higher concentration of practices. A substantial share of organisations report multiple response mechanisms, with 30.8% indicating four or more responses and only 2.9% reporting no response practices. This suggests that organisations are more likely to take action when misalignment is identified than to systematically assess alignment across multiple stages.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of raw OVAMI variables

Dimension	Mean	SD	Median	Min.	Max.
Stages	1.52	1.02	1.00	0	4
Methods	1.91	1.17	2.00	0	7
Responses	2.47	0.93	2.00	0	5

Source(s): Author's own elaboration based on survey data (valid $n = 104$)

Table 4. Distribution of organisations by stages, methods and responses

Dimension	0 (%)	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4+ (%)	% missing
Stages	9.6	54.8	21.2	14.4	–	9.6
Methods	15.4	35.6	29.0	16.8	3.2	6.0
Responses	2.9	11.5	30.8	24.0	30.8	9.6

Source(s): Author's own elaboration based on survey data (valid $n = 104$)

These patterns are consistent with the multidimensional structure of the OVAMI framework and illustrate how the three dimensions represent different aspects of alignment-related practices.

4.3 Internal relationships within the OVAMI framework

Beyond the distribution of practices across dimensions, the next step is to examine how these dimensions relate to one another within the OVAMI framework. The relationships between the three OVAMI dimensions were examined to assess the internal structural coherence of the index. As shown in Table 5, all pairwise correlations between stages, methods and responses are positive and statistically significant. The correlation between stages and methods is $\rho = 0.43$ ($p < 0.001$), between stages and responses $\rho = 0.55$ ($p < 0.001$) and between methods and responses $\rho = 0.47$ ($p < 0.001$).

These results indicate that organisations demonstrating more developed practices in one dimension also tend to show higher levels in the others. At the same time, the moderate magnitude of these relationships implies that the dimensions are not interchangeable. Rather than reflecting the same underlying pattern, they represent distinct but related aspects of alignment management. This is consistent with the formative logic of the OVAMI framework, in which each dimension contributes a different component to the overall structure.

The correlations between each dimension and the overall OVAMI score are substantially higher. The relationship with the total index equals $\rho = 0.79$ for stages, $\rho = 0.82$ for methods and $\rho = 0.84$ for responses, all at $p < 0.001$. These coefficients indicate that all three dimensions contribute meaningfully to the composite score while retaining sufficient differentiation to justify their separate inclusion.

The robustness checks reported in Table S3 of the Supplementary Materials show a comparable pattern using Spearman's rho, with coefficients ranging from 0.459–0.490 between dimensions and from 0.794–0.839 between each dimension and the OVAMI total.

Table 5. Correlations between OVAMI dimensions and total index

Correlation pair	r	p	Valid N
Stages – methods	0.43	< 0.001	94
Stages – responses	0.55	< 0.001	94
Methods – responses	0.47	< 0.001	98
Stages – OVAMI total	0.79	< 0.001	94
Methods – OVAMI total	0.82	< 0.001	98
Responses – OVAMI total	0.84	< 0.001	94

Source(s): Author's own elaboration based on survey data (valid $n = 104$)

Taken together, these results are consistent with the internal structure of the framework and illustrate how OVAMI operates as an integrated, but non-redundant, multidimensional construct. These findings should be interpreted as part of an exploratory assessment of internal relationships within the framework, rather than as evidence of full psychometric validation.

4.4 Differentiation across organisational contexts

Having examined the internal structure of the OVAMI framework, the analysis next considers how OVAMI scores vary across selected organisational contexts. The OVAMI framework enables the differentiation of organisations across key contextual characteristics, including ownership structure, sector and firm size. For analytical purposes, the original sector categories were aggregated into broader groups to ensure sufficient group sizes for comparison, as shown in Table S4 of the Supplementary Materials. As presented in Tables 6–8, variation in OVAMI scores can be observed across these categories, indicating that the index is sensitive to differences in organisational environments.

In terms of ownership origin, organisations with foreign capital exhibit a higher mean OVAMI score ($M = 42.07$, $SD = 14.31$) compared to domestically owned organisations ($M = 36.39$, $SD = 17.18$).

Across sectors, mean scores range from $M = 32.63$ (Logistics, Transport and Trade) to $M = 43.33$ (IT and Professional Services), with intermediate values observed in Manufacturing and Construction ($M = 41.34$) and Education and Healthcare ($M = 42.65$).

With respect to firm size, a gradual increase in OVAMI scores can be observed, from small organisations ($M = 30.11$) to medium ($M = 38.46$) and large organisations ($M = 41.23$).

Regarding ownership form (Table 9), only limited variation in OVAMI scores can be observed. Mean values for private ($M = 33.23$) and public organisations ($M = 35.86$) remain relatively close, suggesting that ownership form does not constitute a strong differentiating factor in the present sample.

Rather than focusing on the interpretation of specific group differences, these results illustrate the capacity of the OVAMI framework to position organisations relative to relevant reference groups. Therefore, the index supports comparative assessment, allowing organisations

Table 6. Benchmarks by ownership origin (domestic vs foreign)

Ownership	Mean	SD	Median	N
Domestic	36.39	17.18	31.19	59
Foreign	42.07	14.31	42.62	38

Source(s): Author's own elaboration based on survey data (valid $n = 97$)

Table 7. Benchmarks by sector

Sector	Mean	SD	Median	N
Manufacturing and construction	41.34	15.22	41.67	32
Logistics, transport and trade	32.63	13.79	31.25	19
IT and professional services	43.33	14.71	42.86	21
Education and healthcare	42.65	15.08	42.86	25

Source(s): Author's own elaboration based on survey data (valid $n = 97$)

Table 8. Benchmarks by firm size

Firm size	Mean	SD	Median	N
Small	30.11	14.29	28.57	19
Medium	38.46	15.72	37.50	39
Large	41.23	14.87	41.67	39

Source(s): Author's own elaboration based on survey data (valid $n = 97$)

Table 9. Benchmarks by form of ownership

Form	Mean	SD	Median	N
Private	33.23	15.81	31.25	62
Public (core)	35.86	14.67	35.71	28

Source(s): Author's own elaboration based on survey data (valid $n = 90$; universities and non-profits excluded)

to consider their maturity level both in absolute terms and in relation to comparable entities operating under similar conditions.

The observed variation across contexts shows that alignment-related practices are not uniformly distributed. However, the purpose of this analysis is not to establish statistically generalisable differences between sectors or organisational types, but to demonstrate that the OVAMI framework captures such variation in a structured and comparable way.

By enabling comparisons across multiple contextual dimensions, OVAMI allows for the identification of relative positioning and potential capability gaps, supporting its use as a comparative and diagnostic tool.

4.5 Diagnostic capacity of the OVAMI framework

The three-dimensional structure of OVAMI makes it possible to identify imbalances across stages, methods and responses. Because these dimensions are assessed separately prior to aggregation, the framework enables comparison not only of overall maturity levels, but also of the internal configuration of alignment practices. As illustrated by the preceding analyses, organisations with comparable overall OVAMI scores may differ in the distribution of practices across individual dimensions. In some cases, relatively higher scores are observed in methods than in responses, indicating that alignment is more strongly reflected in assessment-related practices than in actions taken after misalignment is identified. In other cases, higher scores in responses coincide with more limited coverage of lifecycle stages, indicating that organisational actions are present despite a narrower distribution of such practices across the employment relationship. A similar pattern can be observed in organisations in which alignment practices are concentrated primarily at the recruitment stage, with comparatively limited extension into later phases of the employment relationship. In such cases, the dimensional structure of the index reflects a narrower distribution of these practices across stages, even where methods or responses are more developed. These patterns show that similar overall OVAMI scores may correspond to different internal profiles of alignment practices. The framework, therefore, makes it possible to distinguish between organisations that reach comparable maturity levels through different configurations of stages, methods and responses. By retaining the dimensional structure

alongside the composite score, OVAMI allows the identification of which components remain less developed within a given organisational profile. In this way, the framework reveals not only differences in overall maturity, but also variation in the internal composition of practices across organisations.

4.6 Illustrative cases

To further illustrate the empirical application of the OVAMI framework, selected cases are presented in [Table 10](#). The four organisations were chosen to represent different sectors, sizes and ownership profiles, while covering the full maturity continuum from Ad hoc to Integrated. Their OVAMI scores range from 6.7–85.7, showing substantial variation in the overall level of alignment–practice maturity.

The cases also differ in their position relative to broader benchmark values. Case A, a small domestic private organisation in the trade sector, records the lowest OVAMI score (6.7) and remains substantially below both the national and sectoral reference points. Case B, a medium-sized foreign private organisation in IT and professional services, is located in the Emergent category and scores above both benchmark values. Case C, a large domestic public organisation in education and healthcare, is classified as Structured and also exceeds both reference levels. Case D, a medium-sized domestic private organisation in manufacturing and construction, represents the highest maturity level, with an OVAMI score of 85.7 and a markedly stronger position relative to both national and sectoral benchmarks.

The four cases, therefore, illustrate variation not only in overall maturity scores, but also in the relative position of organisations operating in different contexts. They show how the same framework can be used to position organisations across the maturity continuum while situating them in relation to relevant comparison points.

Because the OVAMI score is based on three separate dimensions, the illustrative cases also support comparison of different internal profiles of alignment-related practices. Thus, the cases complement the aggregate results by showing how overall maturity levels can be examined in relation to broader organisational context and internal dimensional structure.

5. Discussion

5.1 Theoretical contribution

This article contributes to management theory by proposing a way to conceptualise and assess values alignment at the organisational level instead of treating it exclusively as an individual-level outcome. In dominant person–organisation fit research, alignment has most often been examined through employee perceptions and their attitudinal or realisation consequences. The OVAMI framework complements this perspective by shifting analytical attention towards the organisational arrangements through which alignment is addressed, monitored and acted upon across the employment relationship.

From the perspective of management research, this shift is important because it repositions values alignment as a matter of organisational design and capability rather than as a phenomenon located solely in individual experience. As a result, the article extends existing work at the intersection of strategic HRM, organisational analysis and person–organisation fit by showing that alignment can be examined through the structure and configuration of organisational practices. This allows alignment to be understood not only as a state of congruence, but also as something embedded in the way organisations organise, coordinate and enact alignment-related processes.

A further theoretical contribution lies in introducing a maturity-based logic to the study of alignment-related practices. While maturity models have been widely used in management research to assess the development of organisational capabilities, comparable approaches

Table 10. Case illustration: benchmarking selected organisations

Case	Sector	Size	Ownership	OVAMI	Maturity level	Benchmark comparison
A	Trade	Small	Domestic–Private	6.7	Ad hoc	-32 national, -26 sector
B	IT and professional services	Medium	Foreign–Private	46.2	Emergent	+7 national, +3 sector
C	Education and healthcare	Large	Domestic–Public	64.1	Structured	+20 national, +21 sector
D	Manufacturing and construction	Medium	Domestic–Private	85.7	Integrated	+47 national, +44 sector

Source(s): Author's own elaboration based on survey data (valid $n = 4$ illustrative cases)

have not been applied to values alignment. By integrating stages, methods and responses into a single framework, OVAMI offers a structured basis for analysing differences in how organisations develop and configure alignment-related practices.

The contribution of the article therefore lies not in presenting a fully validated measurement instrument, but in advancing a conceptual–methodological proposition that makes values alignment more analytically visible at the organisational level. In doing so, the article provides a bridge between abstract discussions of alignment and the management-theoretical need to examine how such phenomena are embedded in organisational structures and practices.

5.2 Reframing alignment as a systemically embedded organisational capability

The findings support a broader understanding of values alignment as a phenomenon shaped not only by employee perceptions, but also by the way organisations structure alignment-related practices throughout the employment relationship. Rather than locating alignment exclusively in subjective experiences of fit, the present results indicate that organisations differ in the extent to which alignment is embedded in a wider configuration of stages, methods and responses.

This shifts the interpretation of alignment from a mainly entry-stage or perception-based construct towards a more systemically embedded organisational phenomenon. In this perspective, alignment is not reduced to whether employees perceive congruence at a given moment, but is linked to how consistently organisations create, distribute and enact practices through which alignment may be assessed, reinforced or addressed when tensions emerge.

The results also suggest that alignment-related practices are not evenly developed across organisations. Variation across the three OVAMI dimensions indicates that alignment may be present in some parts of the employment relationship while remaining weakly developed in others. This is especially important for moving beyond static understandings of alignment, as it shows that organisational approaches to alignment can differ not only in intensity, but also in internal configuration.

Viewed in this way, alignment can be understood as an organisational capability embedded in the management of the employment relationship, not as a construct exhausted by individual-level fit perceptions. This does not replace experiential understandings of alignment but complements them by making visible the organisational conditions under which alignment-related processes are more or less systematically enacted.

5.3 OVAMI as a diagnostic and benchmarking tool

A central value of the OVAMI framework lies in its ability to support both diagnostic assessment and structured comparison of alignment-related practices across organisations. Because the framework combines a composite maturity score with three analytically distinct dimensions, it makes it possible to examine not only the overall level of alignment-practice maturity, but also the internal profile through which that level is reached.

From a diagnostic perspective, OVAMI helps identify which components of alignment-related practice remain less developed within a given organisation. Separate assessment of stages, methods and responses makes it possible to detect uneven configurations, such as relatively stronger assessment-related practices combined with weaker organisational responses, or broader response repertoires accompanied by limited coverage across the employment relationship. In this way, the framework allows differences in internal composition to remain visible rather than being absorbed entirely into a single aggregate score.

From a comparative perspective, the framework also enables organisations to be positioned in relation to relevant contextual reference points, including sector, ownership origin and firm size. This creates a basis for benchmarking that goes beyond isolated descriptive indicators by showing how organisational profiles relate to broader patterns observed across comparable settings.

These two functions are interconnected. Benchmarking makes it possible to assess relative organisational position, whereas the dimensional structure of the framework makes it possible to identify which aspects of alignment-related practice contribute to that position. OVAMI therefore operates not only as a classificatory tool, but also as an analytical framework for examining how alignment-related practices are distributed, combined and differentiated across organisations.

5.4 Practical implications

The practical implications of OVAMI lie in shifting attention from isolated alignment-related activities towards the broader configuration of practices through which alignment is addressed across the employment relationship. Thus, the framework enables organisations to evaluate not only whether alignment is considered important, but how systematically it is assessed, supported and acted upon in practice.

One implication concerns the continued dominance of entry-stage thinking. Where alignment is addressed primarily during recruitment or onboarding, it risks being treated as a selection issue, not as an ongoing managerial concern. The present findings suggest that later stages of the employment relationship often remain underdeveloped in this regard, pointing to the need to integrate alignment more explicitly into development, evaluation and retention-related processes.

Another implication concerns the relationship between assessment and action. Some organisations appear to respond to misalignment without having comparably structured mechanisms for monitoring it, while others develop methods of assessment without translating them into coherent responses. From a practical perspective, alignment is unlikely to be strengthened through the simple addition of isolated practices. What matters more is the coordination between identifying alignment, interpreting its absence and acting upon the resulting information in a consistent way.

The framework also supports more targeted organisational improvement. Because OVAMI distinguishes between stages, methods and responses, it allows organisations to identify where alignment management remains least developed. Limited lifecycle coverage may point to the need to extend alignment practices beyond recruitment; a narrow set of methods may suggest overreliance on a small number of assessment tools; weak responses may indicate that misalignment is observed but not actively managed. In this way, the framework supports redesign rather than the mere expansion of existing practices.

Finally, OVAMI may also support organisational learning over time. Repeated application of the framework would make it possible to assess whether interventions are producing more balanced and integrated configurations of alignment-related practices. Although the present study does not examine such use longitudinally, the framework offers a structure that may support developmental monitoring in practice.

5.5 Boundary conditions and limitations

Several limitations should be taken into account when interpreting the present findings. OVAMI is introduced here as a conceptual–methodological proposition, and the empirical results should therefore be read as an initial demonstration of its applicability rather than as evidence of a fully validated measurement instrument. The index has not yet been subjected

to extensive validation across different samples and contexts, and its broader generalisability remains to be established.

The study is based on data collected from HR respondents using a CAWI approach, which reflects organisational practices as reported by a single informant. Although this approach enables the systematic collection of information on alignment-related activities, it may be affected by reporting bias and does not fully reflect variation in how such practices are enacted across organisational settings.

An additional limitation concerns the scope of the construct itself. OVAMI captures the maturity of alignment-related practices, not employees' subjective experiences of alignment or misalignment. Higher maturity levels should therefore not be interpreted straightforwardly as evidence of stronger perceived alignment among employees. Rather, the framework assesses the structural capacity of organisations to manage alignment-related processes, not the effectiveness of those processes as experienced at the individual level.

The operationalisation of the index also necessarily simplifies complex organisational practices into discrete categories and scores. While such simplification is required for measurement and comparison, it may reduce the nuance of alignment processes and overlook contextual factors that shape how practices are applied in specific settings.

Finally, the cross-sectional design limits the possibility of assessing how alignment maturity develops over time or how changes in maturity relate to broader organisational outcomes. Although OVAMI assumes that alignment practices can be assessed repeatedly, this potential remains to be verified empirically.

These limitations suggest that OVAMI should be understood as an initial step towards the systematic assessment of alignment maturity. Its further development requires both methodological refinement and broader empirical testing.

5.6 Future research directions

The introduction of the OVAMI framework creates several directions for further research, with empirical validation representing the most immediate next step. Future studies should therefore focus first on testing the measurement properties of the index across different samples, sectors and national contexts, including the robustness of its three-dimensional structure and the stability of maturity classifications. Such work is essential for determining whether OVAMI can develop from a conceptual–methodological proposition into a more fully validated measurement framework.

Beyond validation, an important avenue for further investigation concerns the relationship between alignment maturity and both organisational and employee-level outcomes. While the present study focuses on the structure of alignment practices, future research could examine how different configurations of stages, methods and responses relate to outcomes such as employee well-being, commitment, turnover or the experience of misfit.

Further research is also needed to explore how alignment maturity develops over time. Longitudinal designs would allow examination of transitions between maturity levels and provide insight into the mechanisms through which alignment practices become more integrated or remain fragmented despite growing organisational awareness of their importance.

Another line of inquiry concerns the embedding of alignment practices within broader HRM architectures. Examining how alignment interacts with systems such as talent management, performance management or organisational culture may contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of its role in shaping organisational capabilities.

Finally, the OVAMI framework creates opportunities for comparative research across industries, institutional environments and organisational forms. Such studies could help

identify contextual patterns influencing the development of alignment practices and refine the applicability of the framework across diverse settings.

These directions position OVAMI not only as a measurement framework, but as a foundation for a broader research agenda focused on understanding how alignment is structured, managed and developed within organisations.

6. Conclusions

The OVAMI provides a structured framework for assessing how alignment-related practices are developed and coordinated within organisations. By integrating three dimensions (stages, methods and responses) it indicates the extent to which alignment is addressed across the employment relationship and supports a more systematic examination of its organisational embedding. The findings indicate that alignment-related practices are typically present but unevenly distributed and insufficiently integrated. The predominance of low to intermediate maturity levels suggests that alignment is often approached in a localised or reactive manner, rather than as a coordinated organisational capability. This pattern points to the persistence of entry-focused and fragmented approaches, despite increasing recognition that alignment requires continuous and structured management across multiple stages of the employment relationship.

The article contributes to the literature by extending the conceptualisation of alignment beyond individual-level outcomes and by introducing a maturity-based approach to assessing how alignment is managed through organisational practices. At the same time, OVAMI is positioned as an initial conceptual–methodological proposition, and its further development depends on systematic empirical validation and refinement across diverse contexts.

From a practical perspective, the framework enables organisations to diagnose structural imbalances in alignment management, compare configurations of practices and identify areas requiring targeted development. By linking measurement with interpretation, OVAMI supports a more coherent and evidence-informed approach to managing alignment-related processes.

Overall, alignment can be understood not only as an experience of fit, but also as a capability shaped by the configuration of organisational practices. OVAMI provides a first structured step towards capturing this perspective in a measurable form, establishing a foundation for further validation and for the continued development of research on alignment management in organisations.

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The author confirms that the manuscript was fully conceived, designed and written by the author. Generative AI tools were not used to create or draft the manuscript's substantive content, hypotheses, analysis or results. In line with Emerald's research publishing ethics, generative AI (Claude, Anthropic) was used solely to support language copy-editing of the author's original text (grammar, clarity and readability) and the technical preparation of figures based on the author's own data and analytical outputs. The author retains full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity and originality of the work.

Ethics statement

Ethical approval was not required under national regulations. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and informed consent was obtained; data were processed in line with GDPR (see Section 3.5).

Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the author upon reasonable request.

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Supplementary material

The supplementary material for this article can be found online.

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