PhD Title:

"A Study Of Linkages Between Human Resource Management Practices And SMEs Performance In Vadodara District"

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A STUDY OF LINKAGES BETWEEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND SMEs PERFORMANCE IN VADODARA DISTRICT

ABSTRACT

Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) form the backbone of a developing economy like India, in all spheres of development viz. economical, technological, regional, socio-cultural, political and global.

The present study tries to find out the linkages between HRM practices and performance of SMEs in the Vadodara district by undertaking a survey of 126 SME firms and 215 respondents. The analysis of data is divided into three main sections: Section I: Descriptive Statistics, Section II: Inferential Statistics and Section III: Structural Equation Modeling to establish the linkages between HRM practices and SMEs performance.

The study concludes by showing the significant contribution of sound HRM practices for enhancing the performance of SMEs.

Key words: SMEs, HR Practices, performance, Structural Equation Modeling, linkages.

STATE OF THE ART OF THE RESEARCH : A BRIEF OVERVIEW

In the present study, a survey has been conducted through primary study of 126 SME firms across the eight Industrial Estates of Vadodara district. The 215 respondents in the study comprise of 83 owners (including entrepreneurs, Directors, CEOs, Chairman, Proprietor, Partner) and 132 other employees including people from senior management. Structural Equation Modeling and other techniques have been used to analyze the linkages between HR practices and SMEs performance.

BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) form the backbone of a developing economy like India. It contributes to 45% of industrial output, 40% of exports and has created 805 lakh employment. The sector produces over 6000 products varying from traditional to hi-tech items employing about 59 million persons in over 26 million units throughout the country, and

contributes to 37.33% of share in total manufacturing output in GDP (MSME Annual Report 2014-15). Thus, the essence of extracting the maximum potentialities of this sector. Inspite of being the backbone of an emerging economy like India, there is dearth of information about human resource management practices in MSMEs…thus, the researcher's interest in undertaking the study and finding the linkages between HRM practices and the business performance of SMEs in Vadodara district.

THE LINKAGE BETWEEN HRM PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE- AN INTRODUCTION

Many researches have proved a linkage between HRM Practices leading to enhance organizational performance through enhanced employee outcomes. The present research focus encircles this linkage between HRM and performance. The representation of the HRM-performance relationship put forward by Guest *et al* (2000), as shown in Figure 1 - serves as a useful visual representation of this strategic linkage.

Figure 1: Model of the linkage between HRM and Performance
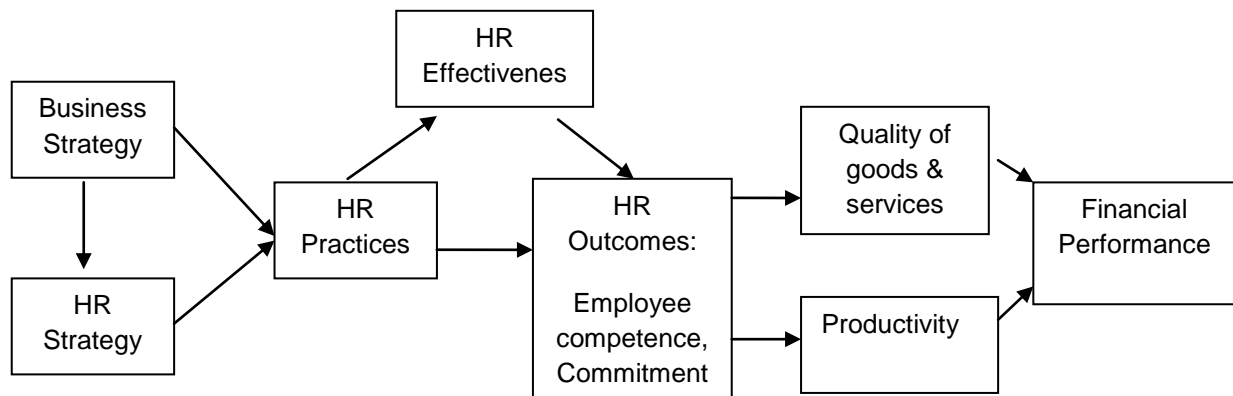
(Source: Guest *et al*, 2000)

Another model which has inspired the researcher is the one given by Paawe & Richardson (1997). They found linkages between HR activities and performance of firm through HRM outcomes like employee satisfaction, motivation, trust and the like. They also found that there exists a reverse causality wherein 'Performance' of a firm leads to improvised HRM activities as well.

DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

To find the linkages between HR Practices and SMEs performance in Vadodara district.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are as under:

1.   To find the linkages between HRM Practices and Performance of SMEs in the Vadodara district.

2.   To find the linkages between HRM Practices and Employee Outcomes in SMEs.

3.   To find the linkages between Employee Outcomes and Performance of SMEs.

4.   To identify the state of HR practices and the major HRM practices being practiced in the SMEs.

5.   To understand the various aspects of SMEs with respect to its presence in the present scenario.

6.   To understand the various policy initiatives and strategies undertaken in the sector.

7.   To identify the various problems, challenges or issues faced by the SMEs as a part of the qualitative study.

8.   To give recommendations and suggestions to improve the SME sec tor.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY (ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION BY THE STUDY)

The study is significant because the following results will be achieved from the study:

1. Understanding the linkages between HRM practices and SMEs performance in the Vadodara district and shall contribute to theory building of this important linkage.

2. Investigate the current HR practices which are practically prevalent in the SMEs. .

3. Identify the problems and challenges faced by the entrepreneurs/ Managing Heads of the SMEs in general, through a qualitative study.

4. Identify the major policies as well as new policy initiatives prevalent in the SMEs, through a detailed study of the MSMED Act, 2006 and other policy initiatives.

5. Give recommendations for improvising the SME sector. which can be imbibed by SME owners/ Managing heads/ Chambers of Commerce & Industry, industry associations etc to improvise the SME sector.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: Descriptive Research Design

Sampling Design:

- Non-probability Sampling method of Convenience Sampling has been used for selecting the samples.

- The samples are selected from eight Industrial Estates out of a total of 12 Industrial Estates (ie. 67% of Industrial Estates) in Vadodara District, comprising of GIDC Makarpura, Sardar Estate, Patel Estate, Gorwa BIDC Industrial Estate, Chhani Estate, Mujmahuda, Vadodara City area and Padra Industrial Estate and others (comprising of few units from the other four estates).

- To justify the Sampling Method, the total territory (Vadodara District) has been divided into stratas of each Industrial Estate, based on the FSSI Directory (Federation of Small Scale Industries) and 10% of firms have been taken from each Industrial Estate.

Sampling Unit & Sampling Size

- The respondents constitute of Owners/ Entrepreneurs and others which includes employees as well as people from Senior Management. (viz. Heads of Department/ HR Managers/ HR Executives/ Supervisors/ Administrative Heads/ Accountants) of the selected SME firms, in the various industrial estates in the Vadodara district.

- The sample size comprises of 215 respondents from 126 SME firms across the eight Industrial Estates of Vadodara district. The 215 respondents in the study comprise of 82 owners (including entrepreneurs, Directors, CEOs, Chairman, Proprietor, Partner) and 133 other employees, including people from senior management, comprising of General Managers, Heads of Departments, HR Managers, Supervisors, HR Executives, Incharges, Accountants etc.

Research Tool

- The research tool is a detailed structured Questionnaire filled by the Owners/ HR Heads/ Managing heads of the SME firms.

- The Research tool comprises of five point Likert scale questions (where 1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Neither Agree Nor Disagree, 4= Agree and 5= Strongly Agree), multiple-choice questions, check-list questions as well as few open-ended questions to gather the respondent's views on few important issues.

- Data was collected using the one-to-one approach as an interactive discussion through personal contact is most suitable to gain the insights into a problem.

Analysis: The data analysis is divided into three parts:

Section I: Descriptive Statistics (Eg. frequency distribution analysis, including percentages, mean, standard deviation, Reliability Tests etc).

Section II: Inferential Statistics (Eg. Using non-parametric tests like Mann Whitney Test, Kruskal-Wallis Test, Logistic Regression etc)

Section III: Structural Equation Modeling (To find the linkages between HRM Practices, Employee Outcomes as well as Organizational Outcomes).

ACHIEVEMENTS WITH RESPECT TO OBJECTIVES: ANALYSIS SNAP-SHOT

Objective	Analysis
- To identify the state of HR practices and the major HRM practices being practiced in the SMEs in Vadodara district.	**Mean & Std. Deviation, Descriptive Statistics, Multiple Responses, Cross-Tabulation, Mann-Whitney, Kruskal-Wallis**
- To find the linkages between HRM Practices and Performance of SMEs; between HRM Practices and Employee Outcomes and between Employee Outcomes and Performance of SMEs in the Vadodara district.	**Logistic Regression** **Structural Equation Modeling**

RESULTS & FINDINGS

SECTION I: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive Statistics was done to get an overview of the samples selected, using various frequency distribution analysis, including percentages, mean, standard deviation, Reliability Tests etc.

1. Frequencies of Industrial Estates

10% of firms have been taken from each Industrial Estate based on the FSSI Directory (Federation of Small Scale Industries), which was the sampling frame.

Table 1: Frequencies of Industrial Estates

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	MUJMAHUDA	8	3.7	3.7	3.7
	GORWA BIDC	16	7.4	7.4	11.2
	CHHANI	18	8.4	8.4	19.5
	SARDAR ESTATE	13	6.0	6.0	25.6
	PATEL ESTATE	10	4.7	4.7	30.2
	PADRA ESTATE	3	1.4	1.4	31.6
	VADODARA CITY	23	10.7	10.7	42.3
	OTHERS	15	7.0	7.0	49.3
	GIDC MAKARPURA	109	50.7	50.7	100.0
	Total	215	100.0	100.0	

(Source: Primary Data)

2.   Age of the Respondents

Table 2: Age of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-25 YRS	6	2.8	2.8	2.8
	26-35 YRS	59	27.4	27.4	30.2
	36-45 YRS	**66**	**30.7**	30.7	60.9
	46-55 YRS	57	26.5	26.5	87.4
	ABOVE 55 YRS	27	12.6	12.6	100.0
	Total	215	100.0	100.0	

About 31% of the respondents belonged to the middle age-group of 36-45 yrs (Table 2).

3.   Gender of the Respondents

Table 3: Gender of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	**MALE**	**196**	**91.2**	**91.2**	91.2
	FEMALE	19	8.8	8.8	100.0
	Total	215	100.0	100.0	

It can be seen from Table 3 that majority of the respondents (about 91%) are males.

4.   Designation of Respondents

Table 4: Designation of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Owner/MD	82	38.1	38.1	38.1
	Other Managing Heads/emp	133	61.9	61.9	100.0
	Total	215	100.0	100.0	

It can be seen from Table 4 that about 38% of the respondents were owners/ entrepreneurs whereas about 62% of the respondents were other employees including senior managers.

5.   Size of the Firm

It can be seen from Table 5 that about 67% of the firms were small enterprises whereas about 33% firms were medium enterprises. The MSMED Act, 2006 defines small enterprises as the manufacturing units with investments in plant and machinery above Rs. 25 lakhs and upto Rs. 5 crore and for medium enterprises above Rs. 5 crore and upto Rs. 10 crore (MSMED Act).

Table 5: Size of the Firm

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SMALL	143	66.5	66.5	66.5
	MEDIUM	72	33.5	33.5	100.0
	Total	215	100.0	100.0	

(Source: Primary data)

6.   Our firm has some written documentation of HR Policies

Research shows that well-written business policies and procedures allow employees to clearly understand their roles and responsibilities within predefined limits, and removes ambiguity.

It was found that 47% of the SMEs had no rules, regulations or HR policies in written form in the form of Employee Handbook, Rule-book or HR Manual, as shown in Table 6. .

Table 6: Our firm has some written documentation of HR Policies

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
EMP HANDBOOK	**49**	**22.8**	**22.8**	22.8
RULE BOOK	22	10.2	10.2	33.0
HR MANUAL	43	20.0	20.0	53.0
NOTHING LIKE	**101**	**47.0**	**47.0**	100.0
Total	215	100.0	100.0	

7.   The person who handles HR functions

It is also worth mentioning that about 49% of the firms had no internal HR expert designated to undertake the HR functions in the firm, but was mostly taken care of by the owner/ entrepreneur.

Table 7: The person who handles HR functions

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No Internal HR expert	106	49.3	49.3	49.3
Presence of Internal HR expert	**109**	**50.7**	**50.7**	100.0
Total	215	100.0	100.0	

Descriptive Statistics of Scale Items (Only key items summarized)

Table 8: Cronbach's Reliability Test, Mean & Standard Deviation (of Scale Items)*

	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Cronbach(α)
HR Practices				
Good performers are given non-financial incentives.	2.98	1.127	215	**0.802**
Employees can openly communicate with the superiors	4.14	.574	215	
Mean & σ of HR Practices	**3.847**	**0.812**		
Employee Outcomes				
Employees are punctual and report daily	3.55	0.873	215	**0.888**
Employees co-operate among themselves	3.97	0.761	215	
Mean & σ of Employee Outcomes	**3.771**	**0.800**		
Organizational Outcomes				
Return on Investment (in %) has increased	3.68	.887	215	**0.865**
Measures have been taken by the firm for product/ service development	4.24	.688	215	
Mean & σ of Organizational Outcomes	**4.037**	**0.747**		

Interpretation

After arranging the items in ascending order of the Means, it can be observed from Table 8 that the Mean is 2.98 which is the lowest for the statement 'Good performers are given non-financial

incentives'. The Standard Deviation for the same item is 1.127. This shows that SME firms do not encourage Non-Financial incentives to a great extent. It can also be observed that Product Development has highest mean of 4.24 with standard deviation of 0.688, which is a good sign and shows the fact that SMEs undergo a lot of product development, based on customer needs.

Multiple Responses

Responses were gathered to know the most prevalent HR practice prevalent in the SMEs in Vadodara district. Table 9 shows the most important method/ source of the HR Practice.

Table 9: Summary of major HRM Practices found

HRM Practice	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Sources of Recruitment: Employee's Referral	147	25.8%	68.4%
Sources of Selection: Interview	174	40.7%	81.7%
Sources of Selection: On Job Testing	109	25.5%	51.2%
Welfare Measures: Insurance (ESIC)	184	27.5%	86.8%
Welfare Measures: Bonus	177	26.4%	83.5%
Performance Assessed By: Performance Appraisal Format	82	29.8%	39.4%
Performance Assessed By: Evaluate Past Performance (informally by HOD/ owner)	136	49.5%	65.4%
Use of Performance Assessment: Developing Employees	123	26.8%	60.3%
Type of Training: On-the-Job Training	189	43.5%	88.7%

(Source: Primary data)

SECTION II: INFERENTIAL STATISTICS

Inferential Statistics was used to draw some inference about the various linkages between HRM Practices, Employee Outcomes and Firm's Performance using various inferential statistics like Cross-tabulation and Chi-square Mann Whitney Test, Kruskal-Wallis Test, Logistic Regression.

Crosstabs

1.   Documentation of HR Practice and Type of Firm

H0: There is no significant association between type of firm and documentation of HR practice.

H1: There is significant association between type of firm and documentation of HR practice.

Table 10: Chi-Square Tests of Documentation of HR Practice & Type of firm

	Value	**Df**	**Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	44.222[a]	15	.000
Likelihood Ratio	49.507	15	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.800	1	.371
N of Valid Cases	215		

a. 11 cells (45.8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .41.

As the **p-value is less than 0.05** (in Table 10), so we **reject null hypothesis** and conclude that there is significant association between type of firm (type of firm includes Proprietary, Partnership, Private, Joint-stock or Private Limited) and documentation of HR practice (in the form of Employee hand-book, Rule-book, HR Manual, nothing like)

2.   Documentation of HR Practice and Size of the Firm

H0: There is no significant association between size of the firm and documentation of HR practice.

H1: There is significant association between size of the firm and documentation of HR practice.

Table 11: Chi-Square Tests: Documentation of HR Practice * Size of the Firm

	Value	**Df**	**Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	25.611[a]	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	26.401	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.370	1	.000
No. of Valid Cases	215		

Table 11: Chi-Square Tests: Documentation of HR Practice * Size of the Firm

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.611[a]	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	26.401	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.370	1	.000
No. of Valid Cases	215		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have T count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.37.

As the **p-value is less than 0.05** (in Table 11), so we **reject null hypothesis** and conclude that there is a significant association between size of the firm (small or medium) and documentation of HR practice (in the form of Employee hand-book, Rule-book, HR Manual, nothing like).

3. Presence of an Internal HR expert & Documentation of HR Practice

H0: Documentation of HR practice is not associated with the presence of an internal HR Expert.

H1: Documentation of HR practice is associated with the presence of an internal HR Expert.

Table 12: Chi-Square Tests: Presence of an Internal HR expert * Documentation of HR Practice

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17.405[a]	3	.001
Likelihood Ratio	17.923	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.707	1	.030
No. of Valid Cases	215		

As the p-value is less than 0.05, so we reject null hypothesis and and conclude that Documentation of HR practice is associated with the presence of an internal HR Expert.

Non-Parametric Tests

As the data are measured on an ordinal scale and are not normally distributed and shows inhomogeneity of variance, so non-parametric Tests were used for the analysis.

Mann-Whitney Test

1.   Presence of an Internal HR Person * HR Practices

H_0: There is no significant influence of the presence of an internal HR person on HR Practices

H_1: There is a significant influence of the presence of an internal HR person on HR Practices

Table 13: Mean Ranks: Influence of presence of an internal HR person on HR Practices

	The person who handles HR functions	N	**Mean Rank**	Sum of Ranks
Organizes training and skill development programs	No Internal HR expert	106	92.37	9791.00
	Presence of Internal HR expert	109	**123.20**	13429.00
	Total	215		
Enough opportunity for career growth	No Internal HR expert	106	93.43	9903.50
	Presence of Internal HR expert	109	**122.17**	13316.50
	Total	215		

As can be seen in Table 13, the mean rank of 'Presence of internal HR expert' is 123.20 and 122.17 respectively for 'The firm organizes Training & skill development programs' and 'There is enough opportunity for career growth', so it can be concluded that HR experts consider that the firm organizes training and skill development programs as well as that there is enough opportunity in the firm for career growth.

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Table 14: Test Statisticsᵃ Mann Whitney: Influence of the person who handles HR functions on HR Practices

	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Selection is on the basis of merit	4600.500	10271.500	-3.153	**.002**
Organizes training and skill development programs	4120.000	9791.000	-3.901	**.000**
Employees receive feedback	4719.000	10390.000	-2.851	**.004**
Enough opportunity for career growth	4232.500	9903.500	-3.653	**.000**
Compensation is decided on the basis of competence or ability	4550.500	10221.500	-3.353	**.001**
Good performers are given financial incentives	4785.000	10456.000	-2.311	**.021**
Good performers are given non-financial incentives.	4711.500	10706.500	-2.416	**.016**
Good performers are given more authority and responsibility.	4936.000	10607.000	-2.086	**.037**

a. Grouping Variable: The person who handles HR functions

As the p-value of all the statements shown in Table 14 is less than 0.05, so we reject the null hypothesis, and conclude that there is a significant influence of person who handles HR functions on the following HR practices: Selection, Training and skill development, Feedback mechanism, Opportunity for career growth, Compensation, Financial or Non-Financial Incentives as well as Authority and responsibility (delegation of power).

SECTION III: STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING

Structural Equation Modeling was used to find the linkages between HR Practices, Employee Outcomes as well as Organizational Performance. The Base Model is as shown in Figure 2. However, the researcher is improving on the model to sharpen the linkages.

Base-Model

<p style="text-align:center">Figure 2: Structural Equation Modeling Base-Model</p>
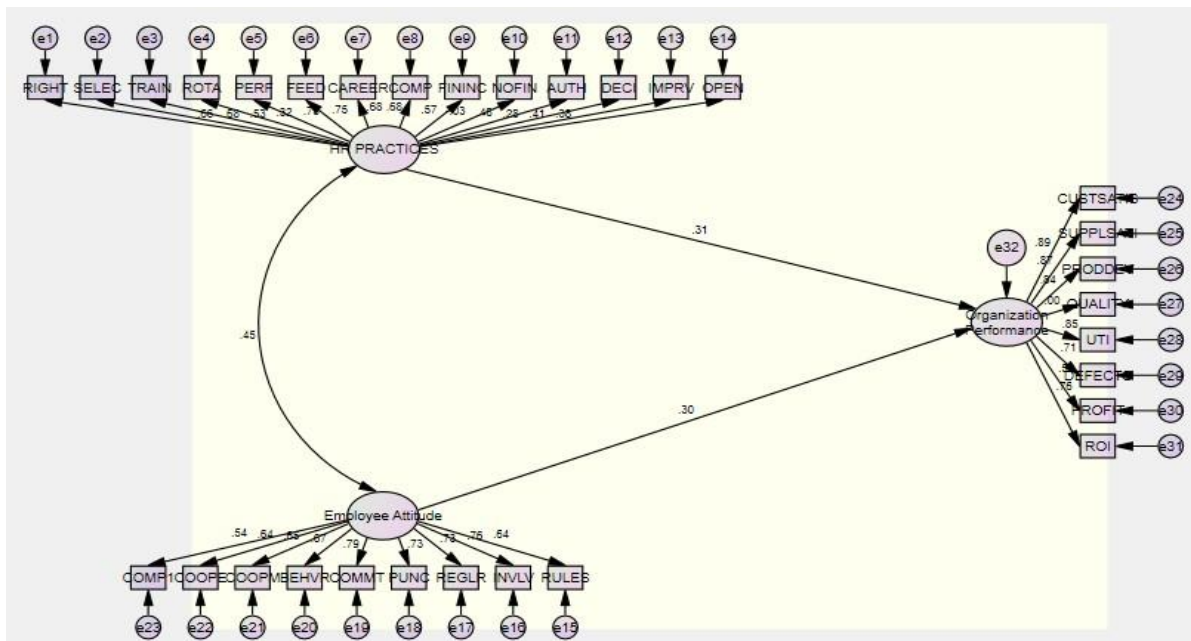
(Source: Primary data)

Output

A hypothesized Technology Acceptance Model was tested using structural equation modeling using AMOS 18 software.

The Hypotheses are (only major ones):

Linkage 1:

H0: HR Practices does not affect Organizational Performance.

H1: HR Practices positively and directly affects Organizational Performance.

Linkage 2:

H0: Employee Outcomes does not affect Organizational Performance.

H2: Employee Outcome positively and directly affects Organizational Performance.

Linkage 3:

H0: There exists no covariance between HR Practices and Employee Outcome.

H3: There exists covariance between HR Practices and Employee Outcome.

Relation Between Constructs	Estimate	P Value	Null Hypothesis
HR Practices→Organizational Performance (**Linkage 1**)	0.879	**0.000**	**REJECT**
Employee Outcome → Organizational Performance (**Linkage 2**)	0.702	**0.000**	**REJECT**
HR Practices ← → Employee Outcome (**Linkage 3**)	0.096	**0.000**	**REJECT**

As the p values for all the three statements are less than .05 so we reject the Null Hypothesis and conclude the following linkages:

Linkage 1:

H1: HR Practices positively and directly affects Organizational Performance.

Linkage 2:

H2: Employee Outcome positively and directly affects Organizational Performance.

Linkage 3:

H3: There exists covariance between HR Practices and Employee Outcome.

Major output:

1. All estimates whose P-value is less than 0.05 are indicated by *** and so they are significant estimates

2. **Minimum Discrepancy** which is chi-Square divided by degree of freedom i.e. Cmin/DF should be less than 5. Here it is **4.507 so the parsimonious (prudent) model is fit.**

3. All **NFI (Normed Fit Index), RFI (Relative Fit Index) and TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index) are nearer to 0.9 which is good** (A value close to .95 is considered representative of a well-fitting model).

4. **RMSEA (Root mean square error of approximation) is 0.128** which is more than 0.05 so the model is good (Values less than .05 indicates good fit).

CONCLUSION

The study concludes linkages between HR Practices and SMEs performance with respect to employee outcomes as well as organizational outcomes. The study has come out with some major HR practices which are prevalent in the SME firms in the Vadodara district. The study also brought about the emphasis of the presence of HR internal experts in the SME firms, which helps to improve the implementation of effective HR Practices.

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ANNEXURE 1: LIST OF PAPERS PUBLISHED RELATED TO THE PhD STUDY

Year	Sr. No.	Description
2015-16	1	*'An empirical analysis of the governance in SMEs at Vadodara district: The road ahead'*, Sankalpa-Journal of Mgt. & Research', Volume 6, Conference Issue, February 2016, Impact Factor: 2.813 (ISRA: JIF, Year 2016). ISSN 2231:1904. *
	2	*'An empirical analysis of the HRM practices and SMEs performance in Vadodara district-A Prelude',* Research Trends in Economics, Finance & HRM, Excel Publishers, April 2016, ISBN 978-93-85777-44-8.
2014-15	3	*'SMEs priority for sustainability: Customer over profits',* Sankalpa-Journal of Mgt. & Research', Volume 5, Conference Issue, February 2015, Impact Factor: 2.372 (ISRA: JIF, Year 2015). ISSN 2231:1904. *
	4	*'The linkage between HRM Practices & Performance of SMEs: A conceptual understanding'*, Management of SMEs in global era, Excel India Publishers (2015), ISBN: 978-93-84869-34-2*
2013-14	5	*'SMEs innovative Human Resource Management practices for competitive advantage'*, Protsahan-A Journal to encourage young researchers, Vol.1, No.1, Part-II (Sept 2013), ISSN: 2321-869X.*
2012-13	6	*'Improving Corporate Governance of SMEs for inclusive growth in an emerging economy like India'*, 'Sankalpa-Journal of Management & Research', Vol 3, Special Issue (February 2013), ISSN No. 2231-1904.*
	7	*'Small and medium enterprises…A panacea for economic growth & development - An analytical study of the global scenario'*, IES Mumbai (Feb, 2013), Sita Publications, Mumbai, ISBN No. 978-81-86052-08-2.
	8	*'Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises…A silver-lining for economic stability & growth'*, NICM Bulletin- The Journal of Management & Co-operation, Vol IX, No.3 (July-September 2012), ISSN No. 2249-2275.*

(Academic Year July-June)   *(* With guide Dr. Rajesh Khajuria, as Co-author)*