

## Revolutionizing E-HRM in Andhra Pradesh's MSMEs: The Productivity Paradox of Technology

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### Abstract

In recent years, the field of Human Resources (HR) has undergone significant transformations, largely attributed to the emergence of electronic Human Resource Management (e-HRM). The proliferation of intranet and internet technologies has ushered in a new era for HR practices. This research aimed to investigate the influence of e-HRM on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) with a specific focus on its potential positive impact on productivity. Recognizing the pivotal role of human resource management in conferring competitive advantages to organizations, we distributed a total of 652 questionnaires to survey respondents. Out of these, 554 questionnaires were returned with complete responses and formed the basis for our analysis. To assess the effects of e-HRM activities, including e-recruitment, e-training, e-compensation, e-communication, and e-performance appraisal, on employee satisfaction, we employed the multiple linear regression method. We also employed the same method to explore how employee satisfaction correlates with the productivity of MSMEs. The insights gleaned from this research hold potential value for managers and decision-makers in various MSMEs by guiding them towards areas that can enhance employee motivation and satisfaction. This, in turn, has the potential to contribute to the achievement of organizational objectives, ultimately translating into improved performance.

**Key words:** e-recruitment, e-training, e-compensation, e-communication, and e-performance appraisal.

### Introduction

The advent of electronic Human Resource Management (e-HRM) is a consequence of the rapid development of Information Technology (IT) in recent years, which has brought about significant changes in business operations and the requirements of support functions. This transformation in HRM is a response to the challenges posed by globalization and the constantly evolving business environment (Parry, 2011) (Kidron et al., 2013: 3). In the 1980s, information systems (IS) were initially integrated into Human Resource Management (HRM) to handle administrative procedures and payroll processing (Bondarouk & Rul, 2009). This marked the inception of the concept of a Human Resource Information System (HRIS), which was designed with the HR department in mind, aiming to streamline processes and improve overall service (Rul et al., 2004). The rapid expansion of the Internet in the subsequent decade ushered in the era of electronic HRM (e-HRM) (Strohmeier, 2009). Businesses began adopting web-based HRM software, revolutionizing the traditional HRM approach (Wickramasinghe, 2010). Rul et al. (2004) noted that the distinction between HRIS and eHRM depends on the intended audience. While HRIS primarily targets HR personnel, e-HRM focuses on workers and management. They defined e-HRM as "a method of implementing HR strategies, policies, and practices within companies through the deliberate and purposeful support and/or full use of web technology-based channels" (Rul, et al., 2004: 2). Strohmeier (2007) added that "the design, development, and deployment of information systems (IS) for networking and assisting actors in their joint performance of HR functions" constitute e-HRM (2007: 2). In a more contemporary definition, Martin and Reddington (2010) expanded e-HRM to encompass the use of the internet, web-based systems, Web 2.0 social media technologies, and mobile communication technologies to transform HR interactions from face-to-face to technology-mediated (2010: 2). Despite its increasing relevance, the literature on e-HRM is still in its early stages, with studies being more descriptive and exploratory than focused on verifying explicit hypotheses or cumulatively advancing the state of knowledge (Marler & Fisher, 2013; Strohmeier, 2007). However, the outlined criteria suggest a distinctive HRM perspective in e-HRM. By utilizing information technology, e-HRM can shift its focus towards service orientation and foster a collaborative environment for HR operations that involves both internal and external stakeholders, including job candidates, managers, employees, and HR professionals (Stone & James, 2013). In line with Lepak and Snell (1998), effective HR should be adaptable, strategy-focused, and customer-responsive within a business. E-HRM aims to address these requirements by enhancing the strategic role of HRM, reducing administrative HR tasks,

improving efficiency, standardizing processes, reducing HRM-related costs, and enhancing HR service delivery (Rul et al., 2004; Parry & Tyson, 2011). These efforts aim to increase employee satisfaction with HRM services and empower managers. Marler and Fisher (2013) note the absence of conclusive research demonstrating a direct link between the adoption of e-HRM and lower costs, improved organizational performance, or strategic alignment. However, the objectives of e-HRM and its costs are tied to the primary role of HR, which can either be administrative and cost-focused or strategic with a focus on gaining a competitive edge (Marler, 2009). Strategic Role: Parry's (2011) study suggests that organizations are more likely to adopt e-HRM when it aligns with their strategy, facilitating a shift to a more strategic HR role. It's crucial to note that the implementation of e-HRM alone doesn't automatically render an HR function "strategic" (Parry & Tyson, 2011). Marler (2009) categorizes e-HRM as primarily an external emphasis, aiming to enhance efficiency and reduce costs. However, HR activities such as hiring, training, performance management, and rewards contribute to internal capabilities, which are essential for sustaining a competitive advantage. Electronic systems increase the likelihood of having engaged and productive employees, enabling organizations to adapt rapidly to changing business environments (Marler & Fisher, 2013). While research on the extent to which e-HRM makes HRM more strategic has yet to produce concrete data (Marler & Fisher, 2013; Bondarouk & Huub, 2013), HR professionals perceive themselves as participating in strategic decision-making thanks to HRM systems, even if non-HR executives might not share the same perception (Hussain et al., 2007). Chalk et al. (2013) argue that human resources data are indispensable for maintaining the strategy development process, which, in turn, enhances employee performance and business outcomes. In summary, e-HRM is an evolving field that has the potential to enhance the strategic role of HRM by leveraging technology to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and provide better services. Its effectiveness in achieving these objectives may vary depending on the organization's primary HR focus, whether administrative or strategic.

## Literature Review

The two types of HRM activities in e-HRM are transactional and transformative. Transactional activities are those that include regular transactions and record keeping (Parry, 2011); they include administrative functions like payroll and personnel data management that are fundamental to HRM. In other words, HRM tools that support fundamental business processes like recruitment, selection, training, compensation, and performance management may be used to manage HR throughout the entire employee life cycle as part of transformational activities that add value to the organisation with a strategic component (Bondarouk, Rul & van der Heijden, 2009; Parry, 2011). According to Stone and Lukaszewski (2009), the majority of big businesses utilise e-HR to draw candidates for available positions. Simón and Esteves (2016) found that e-recruiting helps businesses locate the best candidates from a broad applicant pool at a lower cost; the user-friendliness and system speed of the application are factors that impact applicant appeal (Braddy et al., 2003; Cober et al., 2003; Sinar, Reynolds, & Paquet, 2003, in Strohmeier, 2007). As technology advances, some businesses (like T-Mobile) hold job fairs using Second Life Virtual Environments, which let customers into a virtual environment (Stone, et al., 2015). A new method of recruitment emerged as a result of the growth of social media: social recruiting (Ouiridi, Ouiridi, Segers & Pais, 2016). The process is more dynamic, relational, and strengthens the employer 11 brand when done through platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook (Carrillat, D'Astous, & Morissette Gregoire, 2014; Girard & Fallery, 2011; Girard, Fallery, & Rodhain, 2013; Henderson & Bowley, 2010 in Ouiridi et al., 2016).

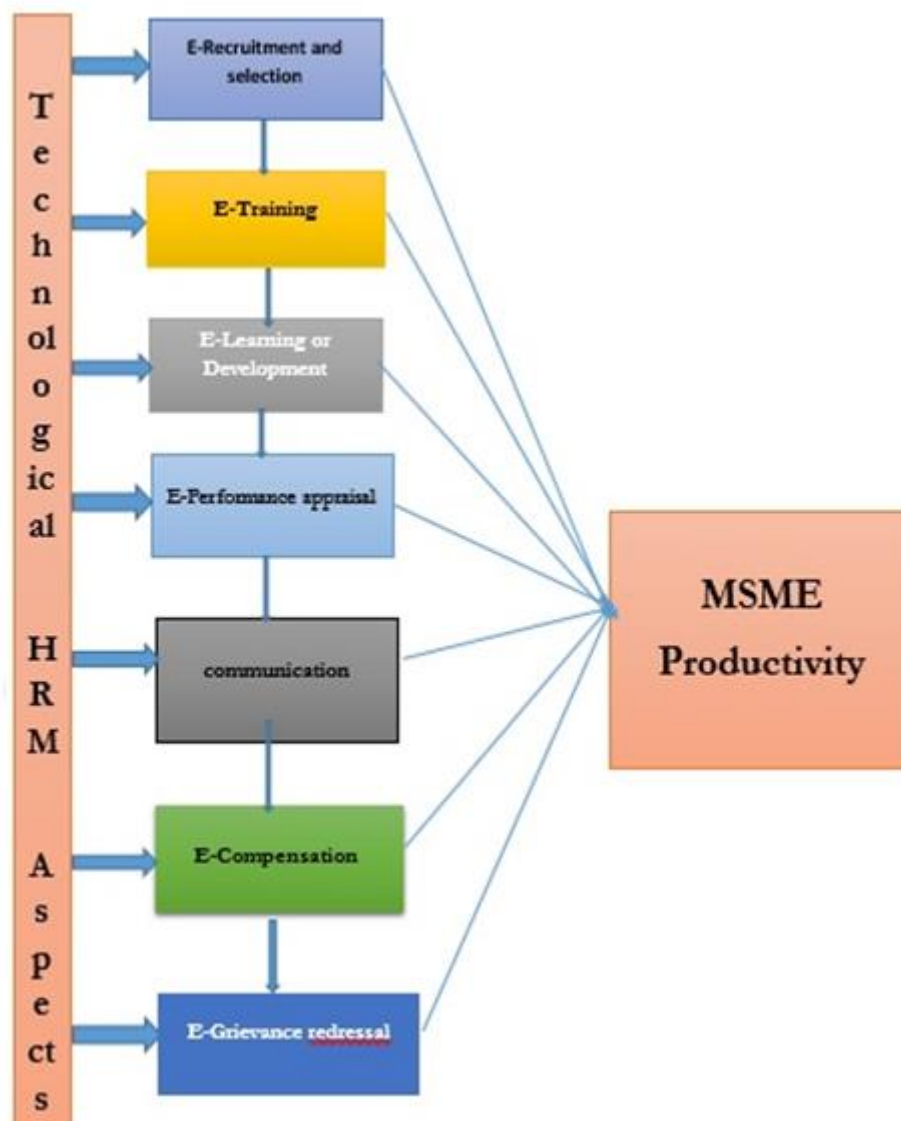
E-selection includes technology techniques like aptitude and personality tests that "improve the possibility of incumbent's fitting the position criteria" (Stone, Stone-Romero & Lukaszewski, 2006: 234). Strohmeier (2007) could not discover any correlation between the use of e-selection methods and the selection of the best candidates, or selection validity. According to Payne et al. (2009), e-performance is "an online performance assessment system in a software application that supports the completion of performance evaluations online." Both managers and workers may use it. E-performance makes it easier to keep track of workers' performance, evaluate it in accordance with organisational requirements, and provide feedback (Stone, et al., 2015). Additionally, it may give information to spot rating flaws including central tendency, excellent performance, and HR issues (Stone, et al., 2006). Employee perceptions of e-performance were examined by Payne et al. (2009) who discovered that more engagement and more accurate assessments lead to a perception of increased involvement.

Delivering training digitally through computers, laptops, or mobile phones has been one of the biggest advances in training and development in recent years (Brown & Charlier, 2013). Brown and Charlier (2013) propose a paradigm with three domains to effectively deploy e-learning, i.e., ensure high utilisation. 1) Learner traits, such as learning preferences and practises; 2) Technology perceptions, such as utility and usability; and 3) Workplace

setting, such as learner workload and learning environment. E-learning does not yet include human contact, like other e-tools, which might slow down the learning process. Using virtual worlds, gamification, and mobile technologies will enable a mixed approach as technology and Web 2.0 advance (Stone, et al., 2015)

E-compensation seeks to enhance the administration and communication of pay and benefits, to boost employee happiness, and to assess the efficiency of the pay system (Stone & James, 2013; Stone, Stone-Romero & Lukaszewski, 2006). Any of these e-HRM products will eventually integrate Strohmeier's employee relationship management (ERM) concept (2012). ERM incorporates elements of the customer relationship management (CRM) concept, which means that we may offer value for the client via personalisation in order to win his or her loyalty. Equally important, ERM focuses on attraction and retention by enabling long-term connections via continual individualization to provide value for the company and the employee in order to win their loyalty. Each employee may, for instance, have a unique career path. E-tools must have collaborative functions, some of which are already present, as well as the activation and coordination of various contact points and channels (Strohmeier, 2012), both of which are still under development, in order to accomplish this personalization.

## Conceptual Framework



## HYPOTHESIS

### Section 1: E-Recruitment &selection

- **H0:**There is a positive impact of Recruitment and selection on MSME productivity
- **H1:** There is no positive impact of Recruitment and selection on MSME productivity

### Section 2: E-Training

- **H0:**There is a positive impact of E-Training on MSME productivity
- **H1:** There is no positive impact of E-Training on MSME productivity

### Section 3: E-Learning or development

- **H0:**There is a positive impact of E-Learning or development on MSME productivity
- **H1:** There is no positive impact of E-Learning or development on MSME productivity

### Section 4: E- Performance appraisal

- **H0:**There is a positive impact of E-Performance appraisal on MSME productivity
- **H1:** There is no positive impact of E-Performance appraisal on MSME productivity

### Section 5: E-Communication

- **H0:**There is a positive impact of E-Communication on MSME productivity
- **H1:** There is no positive impact of E-Communication on MSME productivity

### Section 6: E-Compensation

- **H0:**There is a positive impact of E-Compensation on MSME productivity
- **H1:** There is no positive impact of E-Compensation on MSME productivity

### Section 7: E-Grievance redressal

- **H0:**There is a positive impact of E-Grievance redressal on MSME productivity
- **H1:** There is no positive impact of E-Grievance redressal on MSME productivity

## Methodology

### Variables and Measures

#### Methodology and Data Collection:

In this research, the survey questions were thoughtfully designed to identify the most influential variables impacting HRM practices and to measure the study variables. A five-point Likert scale was employed as the measurement tool, where 1 represents "strongly disagree," and 5 signifies "strongly agree." This Likert scale was selected to assess the level of agreement or disagreement among the respondents. Likert-scale inquiries are particularly valuable when seeking insights into respondents' opinions and sentiments regarding a particular subject. They offer the advantage of ease of standardization, making data obtained from Likert scale questions well-suited for statistical analysis.

#### Questionnaire Pre-Testing:

Before being deployed in the actual research, the questionnaire underwent a thorough pre-testing phase. The purpose of this pre-test was to identify and rectify any potential technical issues or ambiguities in the questionnaire. Ensuring that the questions' wording was appropriate for the employees was a key objective of the pre-test.

#### Benefit of Third-Party Perspective:

To enhance the questionnaire's quality and clarity, it received valuable input from third parties who were not involved in the main survey. This external perspective helped reduce the potential for errors and oversights. Based on the feedback received, certain questions were modified to improve elements such as wording, content, and format.

This meticulous approach to questionnaire design and pre-testing helps ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected, contributing to the overall robustness of the research findings.

**Sample size:** 554

**Sampling procedure:** convenience sampling

#### Data Analysis Procedure

The questionnaire is divided into two parts: Respondents were questioned about their demographics in the first part. In the second portion, respondents were questioned about their opinions on the relationship between elements of e-hrm and customer perception and purchasing patterns. On a Likert scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing strong agreement and 5 denoting strong disagreement, the claims are scored. disagreement

## Data Analysis And Interpretation

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.

SPSS 22 was used to analyse the data. The research uses exploratory factor analysis to demonstrate concept validity and Cronbach alpha to assess internal consistency. The regression method was used to find any possible relationships between the variables.

For the purpose of conforming constructs in the EFA, PCA (Principal Component Analysis) was applied (Exploratory Factor Analysis). According to Hair et al. (1998), factor loading larger than or equal to 0.30 is believed to satisfy the lowest level, followed by factor loading greater than or equal to 0.40 and 0.50, which is thought to be highly important. This study's termination point was set at a factor loading of 0.50.

The results of the factor analysis are shown in Table 2. KMO When the value is between 0.5 and 1.0, a component analysis is advantageous for the data. The level of dependency between the variables is determined using Bartlett's sphere-city test. Researchers may discover the result by calculating the significance level of the test. When the values are extremely tiny, there are probably substantial correlations between the variables (less than 0.05). The data may not be appropriate for a factor analysis if the p-value is higher than.10. They demonstrate that factor analysis is suitable for this collection of data. All twenty-one items were verified for the final analysis since no item had a loading value lower than 0.5.

**Table 1: Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis**

Macro Variable	Micro Variable	Factor loadings	KMO Measure of Sample Adequacy (>0.5)	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		Items confirmed	Items dropped	Cum % of loading
				Chi Square	Sig. (<.10)			
e-HRM	Recruitment and selection	.928	.562	210.430	.000	6	0	66.48
	E-Training	.898	.705	355.625	.000	6	0	78.536
	E-Learning or development	.737	.642	309.165	.000	6	0	72.860
	E-Performance appraisal	.822	.628	120.772	.000	6	0	60.684
	E-Communication	.979	.691	1386.834	.000	6	0	90.467
	E-Compensation	.944	.591	121.272	.000	6	0	78.4
	E-Grievance redressal	.872	.706	248.604	.000	6	0	72.884

**Reliability analysis:**

Calculating Chronbach Alpha helped researchers assess the questionnaire's internal consistency and reliability. Nunally and Bernstein (1994) recommend adopting an alpha value as low as 0.60 for new scales, although a lower alpha value is acceptable. If not, it is common practise to impose the need of an internally consistent established scale with an alpha value of 0.70. The study's threshold value for Cronbach's alpha is 0.7.

**Table 2: Results of the Reliability Examination**

	<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha</b>
1	Recruitment and selection	.732
2	E-Training	.881
3	E-Learning or development	.808
4	E-Performance appraisal	.669
5	E-Communication	.946
6	E-Compensation	.805
7	E-Grievance redressal	.755
Over all Reliability of the Questionnaire		.801

Table 2s Cronbach's alpha values are over the cutoff value of 0.7, which is acceptable. With a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.801, the questionnaire's overall reliability is demonstrated.

**Regression Analysis**

Stepwise regression analysis is used to identify the predictor-criterion connection between the dependent and independent variables. A correlation between e-hrm factors and MSME productivity was investigated.

**Results of Hypotheses Testing for MSME productivity as Dependent Variable**

A number of separate regression models are developed and tested for the MSME productivity as dependent variable. 7 E-hrm factors i.e., Recruitment and selection, E-Training , E-Learning or development, E-Performance appraisal, E-Communication, E-Compensation, E-Grievance redressal taken as independent variables in regression models with MSME productivity as dependent variable as depicted in Figure 1.

According to the results of the step-wise regression analysis in above tables 7 factors (Recruitment and selection, E-Training , E-Learning or development, E-Performance appraisal, E-Communication, E-Compensation, E-Grievance redressal) were found to be significant predictors of "MSME productivity." Using the R square of 0.934, we can see that these 5 variables are capable of explaining "MSME productivity" to the degree of 93.4 percent in the data in Table 3(a). According to Table 3(b), the "ANOVA results for the regression model are provided, demonstrating validity at the 95 percent confidence level."A brief overview of the corresponding coefficients .

**Table 3(a) Model Summary**

<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>
1	.863 <sup>a</sup>	.744	.743	.355
2	.911 <sup>b</sup>	.830	.829	.290
3	.936 <sup>c</sup>	.876	.874	.248
4	.955 <sup>d</sup>	.912	.910	.210
5	.962 <sup>e</sup>	.926	.925	.192
6	.986 <sup>c</sup>	.825	.874	.348
7	.925 <sup>d</sup>	.812	.810	.288

**Table 3 (b) ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	87.776	1	87.776	696.150	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	30.135	553	.126		
	Total	117.911	554			
2	Regression	97.885	2	48.943	581.674	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Residual	20.026	552	.084		
	Total	117.911	554			
3	Regression	103.276	3	34.425	557.490	.000 <sup>d</sup>
	Residual	14.635	551	.062		
	Total	117.911	554			
4	Regression	107.488	4	26.872	608.429	.000 <sup>e</sup>
	Residual	10.423	550	.044		
	Total	117.911	554			
5	Regression	109.232	5	21.846	591.557	.000 <sup>f</sup>
	Residual	8.679	549	.037		
	Total	117.911	554			
6	Regression	102.132	6	22.678	581.508	.000 <sup>f</sup>
	Residual	7.879	548	0.057		
	Total	110.011	554			
7	Regression	113.114	7	21.546	595.667	.000 <sup>f</sup>
	Residual	7.679	547	0.061		
	Total	120.793	554			

Dependent Variable: MSME productivity

Predictors: (Constant), Recruitment and selection, E-Training , E-Learning or development, E-Performance appraisal, E-Communication, E-Compensation, E-Grievance redressal

**Table 3 (c) Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.498	.087		5.752	.000
	Recruitment and selection	.800	.030	.863	26.385	.000
2	(Constant)	.517	.071		7.310	.000
	Recruitment and selection	.475	.039	.512	12.280	.000
	E-Training	.325	.030	.457	10.961	.000
3	(Constant)	.215	.069		3.124	.002
	Recruitment and selection	.440	.033	.475	13.217	.000
	E-Training	.284	.026	.400	11.055	.000
	E-Learning or development	.183	.020	.231	9.343	.000

	(Constant)	.156	.058		2.663	.008
4	Recruitment and selection	.262	.034	.283	7.811	.000
	E-Training	.224	.023	.316	9.928	.000
	E-Learning or development	.171	.017	.216	10.310	.000
	E-Performance appraisal	.271	.028	.328	9.765	.000
	(Constant)	.074	.055		1.358	.176
5	Recruitment and selection	.185	.033	.199	5.655	.000
	E-Training	.191	.021	.268	8.965	.000
	E-Learning or development	.168	.015	.212	11.045	.000
	E-Performance appraisal	.250	.026	.302	9.758	.000
	E-Communication	.173	.025	.191	6.873	.000
	(Constant)	.074	.055		1.358	.176
6	Recruitment and selection	.185	.033	.199	5.655	.000
	E-Training	.325	.030	.457	10.961	.000
	E-Learning or development	.215	.069	.448	3.124	.002
	E-Performance appraisal	.440	.033	.475	13.217	.000
	E-Communication	.173	.025	.191	6.873	.000
	E-Compensation	.183	.035	.185	5.783	.000
	(Constant)	.284	.026	.400	11.055	.000
7	Recruitment and selection	.183	.020	.231	9.343	.000
	E-Training	.156	.058		2.663	.008
	E-Learning or development	.362	.034	.283	7.711	.000
	E-Performance appraisal	.284	.026	.400	11.055	.000
	E-Communication	.183	.020	.231	9.343	.000
	E-Compensation	.156	.058	.331	2.663	.008
	E-Grievance redressal	.162	.024	.283	7.821	.000

a. Dependent Variable: MSME productivity

### Test Results for Hypotheses

Hypothesis No.	Independent Variables	to	Dependent Variables	R-Square	Beta Coefficient	t-value	Sig Value	Status of Hypotheses
H1	Recruitment and selection	→	MSME productivity		.139	4.583	0.075	Accepted
H2	E-Training	→	MSME productivity		.211	7.437	0.000	Accepted



H3	E-Learning development	or →	MSME productivity	0.934	.215	11.793	0.003	Accepted
H4	E-Performance appraisal	→	MSME productivity		.265	8.771	0.012	Accepted
H5	E-Communication	→	MSME productivity		.195	7.379	0.017	Accepted
H6	E-Compensation	→	MSME productivity		.285	7.671	0.032	Accepted
H7	E-Grievance redressal	→	MSME productivity		.135	5.329	0.0057	Accepted

## Conclusion

The primary aim of this research was to enhance our understanding of the evaluation of e-HRM aspects concerning MSME productivity. This study encompassed seven independent variables and one dependent variable. The outcomes of this research revealed that all seven dimensions of e-HRM serve as significant predictors of "MSME productivity." Consequently, the study's findings underscore a positive association between these e-HRM dimensions and the productivity of MSMEs.

## Potential for Future Research:

While this study offers valuable insights, there is an opportunity for future research to expand upon these findings. Future investigations could consider the inclusion of additional variables that may exert a more substantial impact on the relationship between e-HRM and MSME productivity. Such an approach could provide a more comprehensive understanding of this dynamic. The data collection method employed in this study utilized convenience sampling rather than random sampling. It's important to acknowledge that convenience sampling can introduce bias, as participants are not randomly selected from the population. Therefore, when seeking to generalize the findings, it is essential to exercise caution and recognize the potential for sample bias. This study involved a participant pool of 554 individuals. Nonetheless, the study's sample size was relatively limited. For more robust and widely applicable results, future research could consider expanding the sample size to ensure a more representative and diverse cross-section of the population. In summary, this research contributes to our understanding of the positive association between e-HRM dimensions and MSME productivity. However, future studies should explore additional variables to deepen this understanding, utilize more rigorous sampling methods, and consider larger and more representative samples to enhance the generalizability of findings.

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