HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES IN MSMES IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT OF TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study is to investigate these approaches and provide insights on how MSMEs can increase their workforce's stability and commitment, which will improve their overall sustainability and productivity. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of employee retention for MSMEs. Elevated employee turnover rates may result in increased hiring and on boarding expenses, function disruptions, and depletion of organizational expertise. Furthermore, keeping qualified workers on board is essential to preserving the caliber and consistency of goods and services, which has a direct impact on client happiness and company expansion. Employee retention is not only a corporate need but also a socioeconomic requirement in Coimbatore, where MSMEs constitute the foundation of the local economy. This paper made an attempt to discuss the Human Resource Practices in MSMEs in Coimbatore District of Tamil Nadu.

KEY WORDS: MSME, human resource management. Staff retention, HR strategies, employee engagement, and company expansion

INTRODUCTION
The human resource practices of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role in their success within the modern corporate landscape. These procedures are essential for maintaining a competitive edge through successful personnel retention, as well as operational efficiency. This study examines the specific HR methods that can improve employee retention in MSMEs in Coimbatore District, a thriving industrial region in Tamil Nadu, India. Because of its broad and often changing corporate environment, Coimbatore—known for its thriving textile, engineering, and manufacturing sectors—presents a special instance for researching the dynamics of human resource management. For MSMEs, which frequently confront different difficulties than

larger firms, employee retention has arisen as a crucial concern. These difficulties include having fewer financial resources, having fewer formal HR systems, and being more vulnerable to changes in the market. In order to draw in, nurture, and keep talent, MSMEs in Coimbatore need to use creative and customized HR strategies. This paper made an attempt to discuss the Human Resource Practices in MSMEs in Coimbatore District of Tamil Nadu.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study's coverage on HR strategies for enhancing employee retention in MSMEs with a focus on the Coimbatore District covers a number of angles to provide readers a thorough grasp of the problem. The purpose of this study is to investigate and evaluate the various HR tactics used by MSMEs in Coimbatore in order to determine how they affect workforce retention rates. The study will cover a wide range of HR procedures, including hiring and selection, performance management, benefits and pay, training and development, and employee engagement. We'll look at each of these components to see how they work, both separately and together, to keep workers in these companies. Coimbatore District, a major industrial hub in Tamil Nadu, India, is the study's geographic emphasis. Coimbatore is renowned for having a wide variety of MSMEs, especially in the manufacturing, engineering, and textile industries. The study will be able to thoroughly explore the distinct industrial, cultural, and economic traits that affect HR practices in the region because to its regional focus. By focusing on Coimbatore, the research can provide unique insights and recommendations that are directly applicable to the local business context. This approach will be beneficial to the MSMEs functioning in the region. This study's target group consists of Coimbatore-based MSMEs' owners, HR managers, and staff. The purpose of integrating these important stakeholders in the research is to obtain a comprehensive understanding of HR practices and their efficacy. The research will utilize a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative insights from case studies and interviews with quantitative data from surveys. This methodology will ensure a thorough analysis, encompassing both data patterns and in-depth narratives that illuminate the subtleties of staff retention tactics and issues within MSMEs.

REVIEWS OF LITERATURE

Kotey and Folker (2007). MSMEs benefit significantly from structured training programs that enhance employee skills and productivity. The study highlights that tailored training programs, which address specific needs of MSMEs, can lead to higher employee satisfaction and retention. The authors suggest that government support and collaboration with educational institutions can help MSMEs overcome the barriers to implementing effective training programs.

Cardon and Stevens (2004) examine the challenges and opportunities of implementing formal appraisal systems in MSMEs. The study finds that although many MSMEs rely on informal feedback mechanisms, formalizing appraisal processes can improve performance and employee morale. The authors recommend customized appraisal systems that align with the specific goals and culture of MSMEs to maximize their effectiveness.

Mayson and Barrett (2006) explore the recruitment challenges faced by MSMEs, such as limited resources and less attractive compensation packages compared to larger firms. The study suggests that MSMEs can leverage their unique work environments, flexible structures, and growth opportunities to attract potential employees. The authors recommend the use of social networks and local recruitment strategies to enhance the recruitment process in MSMEs.

Becton and Schraeder (2009) analyze various motivational strategies used by MSMEs, such as recognition programs, flexible working hours, and career development opportunities. The

study highlights that intrinsic motivators, such as job satisfaction and work-life balance, play a significant role in motivating employees in MSMEs. The authors recommend that MSMEs focus on creating a positive work environment and providing opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Markos and Sridevi (2010) discuss the importance of fostering a culture of engagement in MSMEs. The study finds that engaged employees are more committed, perform better, and are less likely to leave the organization. The authors suggest that MSMEs can enhance engagement by providing meaningful work, recognizing employee contributions, and offering opportunities for growth and development.

Kim and Gong (2009) examine the impact of work-life balance practices on employee satisfaction and retention in MSMEs. The study finds that flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting and flexible schedules, positively influence employee well-being and productivity. The authors recommend that MSMEs adopt work-life balance initiatives to attract and retain talent, particularly as employees increasingly prioritize work-life balance in their career choices.

Sundbo (1999) explores the challenges and benefits of diversity in MSMEs. The study suggests that while MSMEs may struggle with implementing formal diversity policies due to limited resources, fostering an inclusive culture can enhance creativity and problem-solving. Sundbo recommends that MSMEs focus on creating an environment that values different perspectives and experiences, which can lead to improved business outcomes and employee satisfaction.

Harney and Dundon (2006) investigate the strategic role of HR in MSMEs. The study finds that MSMEs often lack formal strategic HR frameworks, relying instead on informal practices. However, integrating HR strategies with business objectives can enhance overall performance. The authors suggest that MSMEs develop strategic HR plans that are flexible and adaptive to their unique contexts, focusing on talent management, employee development, and performance management.

Wilkinson (1999) examines the dynamics of employee relations in small firms. The study finds that informal and close-knit relationships between employees and management in MSMEs can lead to high levels of trust and loyalty. However, the lack of formal HR policies can sometimes result in inconsistent practices. Wilkinson suggests that MSMEs should strike a balance between maintaining their informal culture and implementing necessary formal HR policies to ensure fairness and consistency.

Heneman and Berkley (1999) explore compensation strategies in small firms, highlighting that competitive pay is crucial for employee retention. The study suggests that MSMEs often struggle to match the salaries offered by larger firms, but they can offer other benefits such as flexible work hours, stock options, and performance bonuses.

Garavan, Carbery, and Rock (2012) discuss the importance of identifying and developing talent in small firms. The study finds that MSMEs often face challenges in talent management due to limited resources and informal HR practices. However, strategic talent management, including targeted recruitment, continuous development, and succession planning, can significantly enhance organizational performance.

Hasle and Limborg (2006) examine the occupational health and safety practices in small enterprises. The study finds that MSMEs often lack formal health and safety policies, which can lead to higher risks of workplace accidents and illnesses. The authors recommend that MSMEs adopt proactive health and safety measures, including regular training, risk assessments, and the implementation of safety protocols.

De Jong and Vermeulen (2006) explore the role of HR practices in fostering innovation in small firms. The study finds that HR practices such as encouraging creativity, providing continuous learning opportunities, and fostering a collaborative work environment can significantly enhance innovation. The authors recommend that MSMEs adopt flexible HR practices that support experimentation and risk-taking, which are essential for innovative activities.

Davis and Vladica (2006) investigate the adoption of e-HRM (electronic Human Resource Management) systems in small firms. The study finds that while MSMEs are slower to adopt HR technology due to cost and complexity concerns, those that do adopt e-HRM systems experience improved HR processes, such as recruitment, payroll management, and employee record-keeping.

Spence and Schmidpeter (2003) examine the ethical practices and CSR activities in small firms. The study finds that MSMEs often engage in informal CSR activities that reflect their values and community ties. The authors suggest that while formal CSR policies may be less common in MSMEs, fostering a culture of ethical behavior and social responsibility can enhance their reputation and employee loyalty. Spence and Schmidpeter recommend that MSMEs integrate ethical considerations into their business strategies and engage with local communities to drive positive social impact.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

The scope also includes a thorough analysis of the HR procedures used by MSMEs today and how staff members view them. This entails assessing the suitability and efficiency of hiring procedures, the accessibility and calibre of training materials, the value of remuneration packages, and the deployment of performance management systems. The study will also look into how employee engagement programs and corporate culture contribute to a positive and encouraging work environment. Identifying these elements will facilitate the identification of gaps and areas requiring improvement in the current HR frameworks. The study will also take into account the external factors—such as the state of the economy, the dynamics of the labour market, the regulatory landscape, and improvements in technology—that are impacting HR practices in MSMEs. By analysing these external effects, the research can provide a contextual understanding of the opportunities and problems faced by MSMEs in Coimbatore. This wider view is essential for creating HR strategies that are flexible enough to adjust to changing conditions in the future, in addition to being effective in the current environment. The study will analyse HR practices over a five-year period to identify current trends and advancements. We chose the MSME sector and its HR practices for this time frame to ensure the findings are current and relevant. The ultimate goal of this research is to contribute to the body of knowledge in academia as well as real-world corporate applications. From an academic standpoint, it aims to close knowledge gaps in HR practices in MSMEs in a particular geographic area. The research's practical goal is to offer MSMEs in Coimbatore viable suggestions for raising employee retention rates, which will increase their general productivity and sustainability. This study aims to help MSMEs expand and become more resilient in the Coimbatore District by addressing the complex facets of HR management and its effect on employee retention.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of the study is to analyze the Human Resource Practices in MSMEs in Coimbatore District

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This design is chosen to provide a holistic understanding of the HR practices and their impact on employee retention in MSMEs in Coimbatore District. A purposive sampling technique will be used to select MSMEs in Coimbatore District. The sample will include a diverse range of MSMEs in terms of size, industry sector, and employee demographics. This approach ensures that the findings are representative and applicable across different types of MSMEs in the district.

Table 1
Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
Under 25 Years	24	5.9
25-34 years	80	19.5
35-44 years	181	44.1
45-54 years	99	24.1
55 Years and Above	26	6.3
Total	410	100.0
Gender	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Male	255	62.2
Female	146	35.6
Others	9	2.2
Total	410	100.0
Education Level	**Frequency**	**Percent**
High School	36	8.8
Diploma	100	24.4
Bachelor's Degree	138	33.7
Master's Degree	78	19.0
Doctorate	42	10.2
Others	16	3.9
Total	410	100.0
Marital Status	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Single	42	10.2
Married	283	69.0
Divorced	76	18.5
Widowed	9	2.2
Total	410	100.0
Monthly Income	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Less than Rs.20,000	17	4.1
Rs.20,000 - Rs.40,000	209	51.0
Rs.40,000 - Rs.60,000	117	28.5
Rs.60,000- Rs.80,000	41	10.0
More than Rs.80,000	26	6.3
Total	410	100.0

Source: Primary Data

The table provides a demographic profile of the respondents based on various characteristics such as age, gender, education level, marital status, and monthly income. This demographic data offers valuable insights into the population surveyed, highlighting the diversity and distribution of different categories among the respondents.

The age distribution of the respondents reveals a varied age group representation. The majority of respondents fall within the 35-44 years age group, accounting for 44.1% of the total respondents. This suggests that a significant portion of the population surveyed is in the prime working age group, potentially at the peak of their professional careers. The 25-34 years age group is the second-largest, with 19.5% of the respondents, indicating a strong representation of young adults who might be in the early stages of their careers. The 45-54 years age group represents 24.1% of the respondents, showing a solid middle-aged workforce presence. The under 25 years and 55 years and above age groups have the least representation, with 5.9% and 6.3%, respectively, indicating fewer younger and older individuals in the surveyed population.

In terms of gender, the male respondents dominate the survey, constituting 62.2% of the total population. Female respondents account for 35.6%, indicating a significant gender disparity. The "Others" category, which includes non-binary or other gender identities, represents 2.2% of the respondents. This gender distribution suggests a male-centric population in the survey, which could influence the overall findings, particularly in areas where gender perspectives might differ.

The education level of the respondents shows a diverse range of qualifications. The largest group holds a Bachelor's Degree, representing 33.7% of the population. This is followed by those with a Diploma (24.4%) and a Master's Degree (19.0%). The high representation of respondents with higher education qualifications, such as Bachelor's and Master's degrees, indicates a well-educated population, likely with professional and career-oriented aspirations. Respondents with a Doctorate degree make up 10.2% of the population, signifying a small but significant group with advanced expertise. High school graduates and those in the "Others" category represent smaller portions of the population, 8.8% and 3.9%, respectively.

The marital status of the respondents shows that the majority are married, accounting for 69.0% of the population. This could suggest a stable and settled demographic, possibly with family responsibilities that influence their financial and lifestyle choices. Single respondents make up 10.2% of the population, while divorced individuals constitute 18.5%, indicating a significant portion of respondents who may have undergone marital changes. Widowed individuals represent a small percentage, 2.2%, reflecting a limited presence of this group in the survey.

The monthly income distribution provides insights into the financial standing of the respondents. A significant portion of the population (51.0%) earns between Rs.20,000 and Rs.40,000, indicating a middle-income group as the majority. Respondents earning between Rs.40,000 and Rs.60,000 make up 28.5% of the population, representing a higher income bracket. Those earning less than Rs.20,000 constitute 4.1%, reflecting a smaller low-income group. Meanwhile, respondents with a monthly income of Rs.60,000 to Rs.80,000 represent 10.0%, and those earning more than Rs.80,000 account for 6.3%, indicating a relatively small but affluent group within the population.

Table 2
Employment Particulars

Year of Experience	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 Year	43	10.5
1-3 Years	193	47.1
4-6 Years	140	34.1

7-10 Years	34	8.3
Total	410	100.0
Position	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Entry - level	43	10.5
Mid-level	136	33.2
Senior-level	190	46.3
Managerial Level	7	1.7
Executive level	34	8.3
Total	410	100.0
Department	**Frequency**	**Percent**
HR Department	28	6.8
Production Department	17	4.1
Marketing Department	172	42.0
Finance Department	41	10.0
Operation Department	143	34.9
Others	9	2.2
Total	410	100.0
Employment Type	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Full Time	219	53.4
Part time	116	28.3
Contract	49	12.0
Temporary	26	6.3
Total	410	100.0

Source: Primary Data

The table presents employment particulars of the respondents, focusing on aspects such as years of experience, position, department, and employment type. This data offers insights into the professional backgrounds and job characteristics of the surveyed population.

The distribution of respondents based on years of experience reveals that the majority are relatively early in their careers. The largest group, representing 47.1% of the respondents, has 1-3 years of experience. This suggests a workforce that is still in the developmental phase, gaining essential skills and building their professional profiles. The second-largest group, with 4-6 years of experience, accounts for 34.1% of the respondents. These individuals are likely transitioning into more established roles within their respective fields. A smaller percentage of respondents, 10.5%, have less than one year of experience, indicating new entrants into the workforce. Finally, 8.3% of the respondents have 7-10 years of experience, suggesting a more seasoned group, although this is the smallest cohort. The overall distribution highlights a young and emerging workforce with a strong presence in the early to mid-career stages.

When analyzing the job positions of the respondents, a clear hierarchy emerges. The majority, 46.3%, occupy senior-level positions. This indicates that a significant portion of the respondents has ascended the career ladder, likely overseeing teams or projects within their organizations. Mid-level positions are held by 33.2% of the respondents, reflecting a substantial group with considerable responsibility and experience but not yet at the top of the organizational structure. Entry-level positions, at 10.5%, correspond with the earlier data on years of experience, indicating that many respondents are at the beginning of their careers. The managerial and executive levels are less represented, with 1.7% and 8.3% of respondents, respectively. This

suggests that while there is a strong presence of leadership within the surveyed population, the majority of respondents are still in non-executive roles.

The distribution of respondents across different departments indicates a strong focus on marketing and operations. The Marketing Department, with 42.0% of the respondents, emerges as the most represented area. This could reflect the growing importance of marketing in modern organizations, particularly in customer engagement and revenue generation. The Operations Department follows closely, with 34.9% of respondents, highlighting the significance of operational efficiency and management in the workplace. The Finance Department, with 10.0% of respondents, shows a moderate representation, likely focusing on financial planning and control. The HR Department, representing 6.8%, indicates a smaller focus on human resources functions within the surveyed population. The Production Department, at 4.1%, suggests a limited number of respondents involved in manufacturing or production activities. The "Others" category, with 2.2%, encompasses various other departments, indicating some diversity in departmental representation.

Regarding employment type, the majority of respondents, 53.4%, are employed full-time, reflecting a stable workforce with long-term commitments to their organizations. Part-time employment is also significant, accounting for 28.3% of respondents. This indicates flexibility in work arrangements, possibly catering to individuals balancing other commitments or seeking more flexible work schedules. Contract employment, representing 12.0% of respondents, suggests a notable presence of non-permanent roles, which may be linked to project-based work or specialized skills. Temporary employment, with 6.3% of respondents, indicates a smaller group of workers in short-term positions, possibly filling immediate or seasonal needs within organizations.

Cluster Analysis for Opinion about Current Human Resource Practices of MSMEs

Cluster analysis is made to know the segments or categories a dataset into groups based on similarities. Following is the cluster analysis for opinion about current human resource practices of MSMEs. After the hierarchical cluster analysis, the agglomeration schedule suggest there are two cluster is possible with regards to opinion about the statements describing current human resource practices of MSMEs. The suggested two groups are considered as low level opinion and high level opinion.

Table – 3
Cluster Analysis for Opinion About Current Human Resource Practices of MSMEs

Statements	Final Cluster Centers		Mean Square	F value	P Value
	Cluster 1	Cluster 2			
Our organization provides comprehensive training programs for employees.	4	4	0.627	0.450	0.503
Performance appraisals are conducted regularly and fairly.	3	3	45.086	44.206	<0.001**
Employees receive constructive feedback on their performance.	3	3	28.858	26.516	<0.001**
There are opportunities for career development and advancement.	3	4	153.111	207.682	<0.001**
The compensation and benefits offered are competitive.	2	3	114.811	119.580	<0.001**

Our organization has a clear and structured HR policy.	4	4	4.175	5.070	0.025*
The recruitment process in our organization is efficient and effective.	4	3	14.401	19.637	<0.001**
Employee grievances are addressed promptly and effectively.	3	3	29.187	33.110	<0.001**
There is a strong emphasis on maintaining workplace safety.	4	3	1.425	1.369	0.243
The organization promotes a culture of continuous improvement.	3	5	182.155	186.324	<0.001**
Average	2.90	3.50	-	-	-
Frequency	188 (45.85)	222 (54.15)	-	-	-

Source: Primary Data
** Indicates 1 percent level of significance
*Indicates 5 percent level of significance

Table shows that there are 45.85 percent of the respondents are belong to first cluster and 54.15 percent of the respondents are belong to second cluster, which means 45.85 percent of the respondents are having low level opinion with regards to statement of current human resource practices of MSMEs and 54.15 percent of the respondents are having high level opinion with regards to statement of current human resource practices of MSMEs.

It is also observed that p value of statement describing current human resource practices such as performance appraisals are conducted regularly and fairly, employees receive constructive feedback on their performance, there are opportunities for career development and advancement, the compensation and benefits offered are competitive, the recruitment process in our organization is efficient and effective and employee grievances are addressed promptly and effectively are highly significant at 1 percent level of significance.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

The demographic profile of the respondents presents a diverse and predominantly middle-aged, male population with higher education qualifications and a middle-income level. This demographic composition provides a context for understanding the perspectives and behaviors of the surveyed population, especially in areas related to work, financial decisions, and lifestyle choices. The data also highlights areas where there may be disparities, such as gender representation and income distribution, which could be important considerations in further analysis.

The employment particulars of the respondents provide a comprehensive overview of their professional landscape. The data suggests a workforce that is predominantly in the early to mid-career stages, with a strong presence in senior and mid-level positions. Marketing and operations emerge as key departmental areas, reflecting their importance in organizational structures. The mix of full-time, part-time, and contract employment indicates a flexible workforce, catering to different professional and personal needs. Overall, this demographic profile paints a picture of a dynamic and evolving workforce, with a diverse range of experiences and roles within their respective organizations.

This study examines a variety of HR procedures, including hiring and selecting employees, providing training and development, offering benefits and compensation, managing performance,

and implementing employee engagement programs. Every one of these procedures has a significant impact on worker dedication and satisfaction. Effective hiring and selection procedures, for example, guarantee that the right people join the company, and ongoing training and development initiatives support professional development and skill advancement while instilling a sense of value and commitment in staff members. In addition, attractive perks and pay packages are crucial for keeping workers in a market as cutthroat as Coimbatore. Systems for performance management that honour and incentivize worker contributions have the power to greatly increase motivation and morale. Implementing engagement efforts that cultivate a positive organizational culture can increase employee loyalty and decrease turnover intentions. In order to identify best practices and possible areas for improvement, this study will look at these practices in the context of MSMEs in Coimbatore.

The research methodology entails a thorough analysis of the body of knowledge about HR practices and employee retention, as well as the collection of empirical data from MSMEs located in Coimbatore. We'll use surveys, interviews, and case studies to get feedback from HR specialists, employees, and business owners. The goal of this mixed-method approach is to offer a comprehensive understanding of the efficacy of existing HR methods in enhancing employee retention. With this view, it is relevant and opportune to conduct this study on HR strategies for enhancing MSMEs' employee retention, with a focus on the Coimbatore District. This study aims to add to the body of knowledge on MSME management by identifying and evaluating successful HR methods, as well as providing useful advice for Coimbatore business leaders. In the end, improving employee retention through smart HR practices can result in MSMEs that are more successful and resilient, which will promote regional economic growth.

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