

## ARTICLE

# Strategic Human Resource Management and Organisational Performance: The Mediating Role of Firm–Employee Relationship—A Case Study on Movit Products

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices on organisational performance, with particular emphasis on the mediating role of firm–employee relationships at Movit Products Limited, Uganda. A convergent parallel mixed-methods design was adopted, combining quantitative data from a survey of 210 respondents with qualitative data from key informant interviews. Quantitative data were analysed using IBM SPSS (Version 26.0), while qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between SHRM practices and organisational performance ( $r = 0.513$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Multiple regression analysis identified training and development, together with employee participation and communication, as the strongest predictors of both organisational performance and firm–employee relationships, whereas job performance strategies, wellness programmes, and leadership development had insignificant effects. Mediation analysis using Hayes' PROCESS Macro (Model 4) demonstrated that firm–employee relationships fully mediated the relationship between SHRM and organisational performance. The direct effect of SHRM became non-significant ( $\beta = 0.109$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), while the indirect effect through firm–employee relationships remained significant ( $\beta = 0.457$ , 95% CI [0.276, 0.602]). Qualitative findings corroborated these results, showing that effective communication, employee recognition, and continuous training strengthened trust, commitment, and employee satisfaction, leading to improved productivity, product quality, and customer satisfaction. The study concludes

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that SHRM contributes to organisational performance primarily by fostering strong firm–employee relationships and recommends prioritising employee development and participatory communication to achieve sustainable organisational success.

**Keywords:** Strategic Human Resource Management; Firm–Employee Relationships; Organisational Performance; Media-tion; Mixed Methods; Uganda

## 1. Introduction

In today's increasingly competitive business environment, organizations are under growing pressure to improve performance while responding to rapid technological change, globalization, and evolving workforce expectations. Increasingly, organizations are recognizing that sustainable success depends not only on financial resources or technological capabilities but also on how effectively they manage and develop their people. Employees are no longer viewed simply as operational resources; rather, they are strategic partners whose knowledge, skills, commitment, and engagement play a central role in achieving organizational goals<sup>[1]</sup>. This reality is particularly evident in manufacturing firms, where organizational performance depends heavily on the ability to build a skilled, motivated, and committed workforce.

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) has therefore become an essential management approach that aligns human resource practices with broader organizational objectives to improve productivity, innovation, efficiency, and competitiveness<sup>[2–4]</sup>. This perspective is strongly supported by the Resource-Based View (RBV), which argues that organizations gain sustainable competitive advantage by developing valuable resources that competitors cannot easily imitate<sup>[5,6]</sup>. Among these resources, human capital stands out as one of the most important. Employees possess unique knowledge, experience, and capabilities that, when effectively managed through strategic recruitment, continuous training, performance management, and employee development, become a source of long-term organizational success<sup>[7,8]</sup>. From this viewpoint, SHRM is more than a set of HR activities; it is a strategic investment that enables organizations to build capabilities that support superior performance<sup>[9,10]</sup>.

Previous studies have consistently reported a positive association between Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices and organisational performance<sup>[11,12]</sup>.

However, there is less agreement regarding the mechanisms through which this relationship occurs. While some researchers argue that SHRM enhances performance primarily by improving employee knowledge, skills, and capabilities, others suggest that its effectiveness depends on the quality of the relationship between employees and the organisation, including trust, commitment, communication, and perceived organisational support<sup>[1,13]</sup>. These differing perspectives suggest that SHRM practices alone may not be sufficient to improve organisational performance unless they also strengthen positive firm–employee relationships. Social Exchange Theory provides a useful explanation for this process by proposing that employees tend to reciprocate favourable organisational practices with higher levels of trust, commitment, engagement, and discretionary effort<sup>[14]</sup>. When employees perceive that their organisation values their contributions, invests in their development, and genuinely cares about their well-being, they are more likely to respond positively, thereby strengthening firm–employee relationships and contributing to improved organisational performance<sup>[15,16]</sup>.

This relationship has received increasing attention in recent years. Studies have shown that trust, organizational support, employee commitment, and effective communication strengthen employee engagement and improve organizational outcomes<sup>[8,15,17]</sup>. Organizations that foster positive relationships with their employees are generally better positioned to retain talent, encourage collaboration, and improve service delivery. Nevertheless, evidence also suggests that simply introducing SHRM practices does not automatically lead to better performance. The effectiveness of these practices often depends on whether they strengthen the relationship between employees and the organization.

This challenge is particularly relevant within Uganda's manufacturing sector, where organizations continue to invest in recruitment, training, and employee development while

simultaneously facing challenges such as employee turnover, declining productivity, and inconsistent employee engagement<sup>[13,18]</sup>. Although previous studies have established a direct relationship between SHRM and organizational performance, relatively few have examined how SHRM practices translate into improved performance, particularly through the quality of organization–employee relationships. This gap is even more evident within manufacturing firms in developing economies, where contextual factors may shape the effectiveness of HR strategies.

Drawing on the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Social Exchange Theory (SET), this study proposes that Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices are associated with organisational performance both directly and indirectly through firm–employee relationships. The Resource-Based View suggests that strategically managed human resources constitute valuable organisational assets that enhance performance, while Social Exchange Theory posits that supportive HR practices strengthen trust, commitment, and reciprocity between employees and the organisation, thereby improving organisational outcomes. Accordingly, the study tested the following hypotheses:

**H1.** *Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices are positively associated with organisational performance.*

**H2.** *Firm–employee relationships are positively associated with organisational performance.*

**H3.** *Firm–employee relationships mediate the relationship between Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices and organisational performance.*

This study contributes to the Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) literature by examining how firm–employee relationships influence the association between SHRM practices and organisational performance within the Ugandan manufacturing sector. While previous studies have established that SHRM is associated with improved organisational outcomes, relatively few have explored the role of firm–employee relationships as the mechanism through which these practices translate into better performance, particularly in developing-country contexts. By combining quantitative and qualitative evidence through a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of how SHRM practices are

experienced within organisations.

In addition, the findings identify employee participation and communication, together with training and development, as the SHRM practices most strongly associated with both firm–employee relationships and organisational performance, offering practical insights for managers seeking to improve organisational effectiveness.

## 2. Materials and Methods

This study adopted a pragmatic research philosophy and employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, which enabled the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data concurrently before integrating the findings during interpretation<sup>[19]</sup>.

Movit Products Limited employs approximately 970 staff across its manufacturing facilities, distribution centres, regional offices, and corporate headquarters. However, this study was conducted at the company headquarters, where Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) policies are formulated and coordinated. The headquarters had an accessible population of 210 employees, comprising top management, human resource personnel, departmental managers, supervisors, and operational staff. Given the relatively small population, a census sampling approach was adopted for the quantitative component, allowing all 210 employees to participate. For the qualitative component, purposive sampling was used to select 25 key informants from top management, the Human Resource Department, and departmental managers based on their knowledge and experience of SHRM practices.

Quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire, while qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was developed from established SHRM literature and adapted to the context of Movit Products Limited. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

To ensure the quality of the data collection instruments, the questionnaire and interview guide were reviewed by the research supervisor and experts in Human Resource Management and research methodology to assess their clarity, relevance, and content validity. Their recommendations informed minor revisions before the instruments were admin-

istered. In addition, a pilot test was conducted among respondents with characteristics similar to those of the study population to identify ambiguous questions and improve the wording of the items. The final questionnaire consisted of structured five-point Likert scale items measuring SHRM practices, firm–employee relationships, and organisational performance, while the interview guide was designed to obtain deeper insights into the experiences and perceptions of key informants.

SHRM was measured using five dimensions: job performance strategies, employee wellness, leadership development, employee participation and communication, and training and development. Firm–employee relationships were assessed using employee satisfaction, trust and communication, organisational commitment, and workplace culture, while organisational performance was measured through financial performance, operational performance, productivity, and quality performance.

Composite mean scores were computed for each construct and used in subsequent analyses. Before data collection, the questionnaire was reviewed by the research supervisor and subject experts to establish content validity. However, internal consistency reliability statistics such as Cronbach's alpha were not computed and are acknowledged as a limitation of the study.

Quantitative data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 26.0). Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were generated to

summarise the data, while Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analyses were performed to examine the relationships among the study variables. The mediating role of firm–employee relationships was tested using Hayes' PROCESS Macro (Model 4) with 5,000 bootstrap resamples to estimate the indirect effect and generate bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals. Qualitative interview data were analysed thematically, and the findings from both components were integrated during interpretation to provide a comprehensive understanding of the study.

### 3. Results

The study engaged 210 respondents with diverse demographic characteristics, as presented in **Table 1**. Slightly more than half of the respondents were male (54.3%), while females accounted for 45.7%. Most respondents were aged between 30–39 years (36.7%), followed by those aged 40–49 years (27.6%), indicating a relatively experienced workforce. Regarding educational attainment, the majority held a bachelor's degree (62.4%), followed by diploma holders (18.6%) and master's degree holders (10.0%). Most respondents (62.4%) had worked for the organisation for 1–4 years, suggesting substantial familiarity with organisational practices. In terms of employment position, respondents comprised one Chief Executive Officer (0.5%), Human Resource Managers (34.3%), Department Managers (32.9%), and employees occupying other positions (32.4%).

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of respondents.

| Category            | Variable           | N (210) | %    |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------|------|
| Gender              | Male               | 114     | 54.3 |
|                     | Female             | 96      | 45.7 |
| Age                 | Below 20 years     | 17      | 8.1  |
|                     | 20–29 years        | 50      | 23.8 |
|                     | 30–39 years        | 77      | 36.7 |
|                     | 40–49 years        | 58      | 27.6 |
|                     | 50–59 years        | 6       | 2.9  |
|                     | 60+ years          | 2       | 1.0  |
|                     | Certificate        | 15      | 7.1  |
| Education           | Diploma            | 39      | 18.6 |
|                     | Bachelor's degree  | 131     | 62.4 |
|                     | Master's degree    | 21      | 10.0 |
|                     | Others             | 4       | 1.9  |
| Period of Service   | Less than 1 year   | 32      | 15.2 |
|                     | 1–4 years          | 131     | 62.4 |
|                     | 5 years and above  | 47      | 22.4 |
|                     | CEO                | 1       | 0.5  |
| Employment Position | HR Manager         | 72      | 34.3 |
|                     | Department Manager | 69      | 32.9 |
|                     | Others             | 68      | 32.4 |

Source: Field data (2025).

### 3.1. Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) Practices at Movit Products Limited

Employees generally reported positive perceptions of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices at Movit Products Limited (Table 2). Job performance strategies received the highest mean rating ( $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ),

with over 90% of respondents either agreeing (52.9%) or strongly agreeing (38.1%) that these strategies support organisational performance. Leadership development initiatives ( $M = 4.20$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ) and employee participation and open communication ( $M = 4.19$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ) were also highly rated, indicating that employees perceive these practices as important components of the organisation's human resource management system.

**Table 2.** Summary of responses about SHRM practices at Movit Products Limited.

| Response                                                                                               | Mean   | S. Dev  | SA            | A              | N            | D        | SD           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------|---------------|----------------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| Job performance strategies enhance overall organisational performance at Movit Products Limited.       | 4.2190 | 0.82984 | 80<br>(38.1%) | 111<br>(52.9%) | 9 (4.3%)     | 5 (2.4%) | 5 (2.4%)     |
| Employee wellness programs contribute to improved organisational productivity and efficiency.          | 4.1048 | 0.84064 | 64<br>(30.5%) | 120<br>(57.1%) | 16<br>(7.6%) | 4 (1.9%) | 6 (2.9%)     |
| Leadership development initiatives improve organisational performance by fostering skilled leadership. | 4.2048 | 0.90240 | 84<br>(40.0%) | 105<br>(50.0%) | 8 (3.8%)     | 6 (2.9%) | 7 (3.3%)     |
| Employee participation and open communication positively impact workplace engagement and productivity. | 4.1905 | 1.04991 | 97<br>(46.2%) | 87<br>(41.4%)  | 6 (2.9%)     | 9 (4.3%) | 11<br>(5.2%) |
| Training and development programs enhance employee competencies and organisational success.            | 4.1333 | 0.81923 | 62<br>(29.5%) | 132<br>(62.9%) | 4 (1.9%)     | 6 (2.9%) | 6 (2.9%)     |

Source: field data (2025).

Similarly, respondents expressed favourable perceptions of employee wellness programmes ( $M = 4.10$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ) and training and development initiatives ( $M = 4.13$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ). Training and development recorded particularly high levels of agreement, with 62.9% of respondents agreeing and 29.5% strongly agreeing that these programmes enhance employee competencies and organisational success. Overall, the quantitative findings suggest that SHRM practices are well established within Movit Products Limited and are widely perceived by employees as supporting both workforce effectiveness and organisational performance.

The qualitative findings complemented the survey results by providing practical insights into how these SHRM practices are implemented across the organisation. Managers consistently described training and development, employee participation, leadership development, employee wellness, and reward systems as integral elements of Movit's HR strategy.

Training and development emerged as one of the most frequently discussed practices. Managers explained that continuous learning enables employees to acquire new technical and professional skills while keeping pace with changing organisational needs. As one manager observed,

*"We regularly conduct training sessions to ensure that employees acquire the latest skills, especially in production and customer service"*  
(Male, Respondent 3).

Employee wellness was also viewed as an important aspect of the company's HR strategy. Participants reported that initiatives such as health checks, counselling services, and employee support programmes contribute to employee well-being and are perceived to be associated with improved attendance and productivity. One respondent noted,

*"The company has introduced wellness initiatives such as health checks and counselling services, and this has reduced absenteeism"*  
(Female, Respondent 6).

Managers further emphasised the importance of developing future leaders through mentoring and succession planning. One participant explained,

*"We identify employees with leadership potential and mentor them so that they can take on bigger roles in the future"* (Male, Respondent 1).

Similarly, employee participation and communication were described as central to maintaining employee engagement. Managers indicated that employees are encouraged to contribute ideas during departmental meetings and participate in organisational decision-making where appropriate. As one respondent stated,

*“Employees are encouraged to share their ideas, especially during departmental meetings, and sometimes their suggestions are implemented”* (Female, Respondent 4).

Recognition and reward systems also featured prominently in the interviews. Managers explained that both financial incentives and non-financial recognition encourage employees to exceed routine job expectations. For example,

*“Performance bonuses and recognition awards encourage staff to go beyond their normal duties”* (Male, Respondent 2).

Both the quantitative and qualitative findings present a consistent picture of SHRM implementation at Movit Products Limited. While the survey results indicate generally

favourable employee perceptions of SHRM practices, the interviews explain how these practices are translated into everyday organisational processes. In particular, training and development, together with employee participation and communication, emerged consistently across both datasets as important features of the organisation’s human resource management approach.

### 3.2. Organisational Performance at Movit Products Limited

Employees generally perceived organisational performance at Movit Products Limited positively across the four performance dimensions assessed (**Table 3**). Organisational quality performance received the highest rating ( $M = 4.27$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ), with 87.2% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that HR practices had contributed to improved quality outcomes. Stable financial performance was also positively perceived ( $M = 3.82$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ), while operational performance ( $M = 3.69$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ ) and productivity ( $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ ) received comparatively lower, though still favourable, ratings.

**Table 3.** Summary of responses about organisational performance at Movit Products Limited.

| Response                                                                                         | Mean   | S. Dev  | SA            | A              | N             | D             | SD           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Movit Products Limited has achieved stable financial performance due to effective HR strategies. | 3.8238 | 0.99876 | 45<br>(21.4%) | 118<br>(56.2%) | 21<br>(10.0%) | 17<br>(8.1%)  | 9 (4.3%)     |
| Operational performance in terms of output quality and efficiency has improved significantly.    | 3.6857 | 1.25133 | 65<br>(31.0%) | 71<br>(33.8%)  | 36<br>(17.1%) | 19<br>(9.0%)  | 19<br>(9.0%) |
| High productivity levels at Movit Products Limited contribute to increased revenue growth.       | 3.6143 | 1.18151 | 44<br>(21.0%) | 102<br>(48.6%) | 19<br>(9.0%)  | 29<br>(13.8%) | 16<br>(7.6%) |
| Organisational quality performance has been enhanced through better HR practices.                | 4.2667 | 0.70224 | 85<br>(40.5%) | 98<br>(46.7%)  | 25<br>(11.9%) | 2 (1.0%)      | 0 (0%)       |

Source: field data (2025).

Although respondents generally viewed organisational performance positively, the relatively larger standard deviations for operational performance and productivity indicate greater variation in employees’ experiences across departments. Overall, the quantitative findings suggest that employees perceive Movit Products Limited as performing particularly well in maintaining product quality and financial stability, while recognising opportunities to strengthen operational efficiency and productivity.

The qualitative findings complemented the survey results by explaining how managers perceive Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices to be associated with organisational performance. Across the interviews, six recurring themes emerged: financial stability, operational

efficiency, productivity, quality improvement, market competitiveness, and customer satisfaction.

Managers consistently associated effective HR practices with improved financial performance through better workforce planning, employee engagement, and efficient resource utilisation. As one participant explained,

*“Because of strong HR strategies, we have been able to keep our finances stable, especially in terms of revenue growth and cost management”* (Male, Respondent 5).

Operational efficiency was similarly described as benefiting from investments in employee training and motivation. One manager observed,

*“Our operations have become more streamlined, production delays are fewer now because employees are better trained and motivated” (Female, Respondent 3).*

Several respondents also reported improvements in employee productivity, noting that enhanced workforce capabilities enabled teams to accomplish more within existing production schedules. For example,

*“The productivity of our teams has increased, and this is evident in the higher volumes we can produce within the same timelines” (Male, Respondent 7).*

Quality improvement emerged as one of the strongest themes during the interviews, closely reflecting the quantitative findings where quality recorded the highest mean score. Managers attributed improvements in product quality to continuous employee training, stronger supervision, and greater employee commitment. One respondent stated,

*“Customer complaints about product quality have reduced significantly, which shows our quality performance has improved” (Female, Respondent 4).*

Beyond internal performance, respondents also described positive effects on the organisation’s market position and customer experience. Managers reported that consistent product quality and continuous innovation had strengthened Movit’s competitiveness, while satisfied employees were perceived to deliver better customer service. As one manager remarked,

*“Our products are now more competitive in the market because of the consistency in quality and innovation” (Male, Respondent 6).*

Another explained,

*“Happy employees deliver better services, and this is reflected in the positive feedback we get from customers” (Female, Respondent 2).*

Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative findings provide complementary evidence that employees and managers perceive SHRM practices to be closely associated with organisational performance. While the survey identified quality performance as the strongest organisational outcome, the interviews helped explain how investments in employee development, motivation, and engagement are perceived to contribute to financial stability, operational efficiency, productivity, competitiveness, and customer satisfaction.

### 3.3. Firm–Employee Relationship (FER) at Movit Products Limited

Employees generally reported positive perceptions of the firm–employee relationship at Movit Products Limited across the four dimensions assessed (**Table 4**). Employee satisfaction received the highest rating ( $M = 4.09$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ), with 80.0% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that satisfaction enhances job commitment and reduces turnover. Trust and open communication between employees and management were also positively rated ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ), suggesting that respondents perceive collaborative working relationships as an important feature of the organisation.

Similarly, organisational commitment ( $M = 3.97$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ) and workplace culture ( $M = 3.88$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ) were rated positively, indicating that employees associate these factors with higher engagement, innovation, and organisational growth. Although responses were generally favourable, the variation observed across the four indicators suggests that employees’ experiences of the organisation–employee relationship are not entirely uniform across departments. Overall, the quantitative findings indicate that respondents perceive firm–employee relationships at Movit Products Limited as generally positive and supportive of employee engagement.

**Table 4.** Summary of responses on firm–employee relationship at Movit Products Limited.

| Response                                                                                           | Mean   | S. Dev  | SA            | A              | N             | D            | SD           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------|---------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Employee satisfaction improves job commitment and reduces turnover at Movit Products Limited.      | 4.0857 | 1.08592 | 91<br>(43.3%) | 77<br>(36.7%)  | 22<br>(10.5%) | 9 (4.3%)     | 11<br>(5.2%) |
| Trust and open communication between employees and management enhance teamwork and collaboration.  | 3.9429 | 0.91587 | 49<br>(23.3%) | 127<br>(60.5%) | 13<br>(6.2%)  | 15<br>(7.1%) | 6 (2.9%)     |
| A strong organisational commitment among employees leads to increased productivity and engagement. | 3.9714 | 1.17353 | 84<br>(40.0%) | 77<br>(36.7%)  | 24<br>(11.4%) | 9 (4.3%)     | 16<br>(7.6%) |
| A positive workplace culture fosters innovation and organisational growth.                         | 3.8762 | 1.00425 | 51<br>(24.3%) | 115<br>(54.9%) | 21<br>(10.0%) | 13<br>(6.2%) | 10<br>(4.8%) |

Source: field data (2025).

The qualitative findings complemented the survey results by providing deeper insights into the organisational practices that managers believe strengthen relationships between the organisation and its employees. Across the interviews, five interrelated themes emerged: recognition and appreciation, communication transparency, career growth opportunities, teamwork, and conflict management.

Recognition and appreciation were consistently described as important practices for sustaining employee motivation and organisational commitment. Managers explained that both financial incentives and simple expressions of appreciation contribute to employees feeling valued within the organisation. As one respondent stated,

*“When employees are recognised for their effort, even with small tokens or verbal appreciation, they feel motivated to stay committed”* (Male, Respondent 2).

Another manager added,

*“Sometimes just saying ‘thank you’ after a hard day makes a big difference. People feel seen and valued”* (Female, Respondent 6).

Communication transparency also emerged as a central feature of positive firm–employee relationships. Participants indicated that openly communicating organisational decisions, promotions, and policy changes helps build trust and minimise uncertainty among employees. One respondent explained,

*“We make it a point to share important updates openly, especially about promotions and salary changes, so that employees do not feel left in the dark”* (Female, Respondent 5).

Similarly, another manager observed,

*“When decisions are explained clearly, employees accept them even if they are not fully happy, because they know the process was fair”* (Male, Respondent 1).

Managers further highlighted the importance of career development opportunities in strengthening employee commitment. Training, mentoring, and internal promotion were viewed as clear signals that the organisation invests in its workforce. As one participant noted,

*“Employees remain loyal here because they see clear career paths, whether through training or internal promotions”* (Male, Respondent 7).

Another explained,

*“When staff see that hard work can lead to promotion, they work harder and stay longer”* (Female, Respondent 3).

The interviews also underscored the value of teamwork and a supportive organisational culture. Managers described Movit as promoting collaboration across departments and encouraging employees to support one another beyond their formal responsibilities. One respondent remarked,

*“We promote teamwork and ensure departments work closely together, and this has created a supportive environment”* (Female, Respondent 8).

While another described the organisation as

*“Like family. People help each other even outside their official duties”* (Male, Respondent 4).

Finally, effective conflict management emerged as another important theme. Managers indicated that resolving workplace disagreements fairly and promptly helps maintain trust and positive working relationships. As one participant explained,

*“Sometimes conflicts arise, but management ensures they are resolved fairly and quickly so that trust is not lost”* (Male, Respondent 4).

Another added,

*“We make sure that no one feels sidelined when there is a problem. Every side is listened to”* (Female, Respondent 9).

The quantitative and qualitative findings indicate that firm–employee relationships at Movit Products Limited extend beyond formal HR policies to include everyday organisational interactions characterised by recognition, transparent communication, career development, teamwork, and fair conflict resolution. These relational practices were consistently described by managers and complement the positive em-

employee perceptions observed in the survey, providing a richer understanding of how trust, commitment, and engagement are fostered within the organisation.

### 3.4. Association between Strategic Human Resource Management Practices and Organisational Performance

Descriptive statistics indicated generally high perceptions of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM)

practices ( $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ) and moderately high perceptions of organisational performance ( $M = 3.87$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ).

Pearson's correlation analysis (see **Table 5**) revealed a moderate, positive, and statistically significant association between SHRM practices and organisational performance ( $r = 0.513$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that respondents who reported stronger SHRM practices also reported better organisational performance.

**Table 5.** Correlation of SHRM and organisational performance.

| Correlations Variable    | Statistic           | SHRM    | Organisation Performance |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------|--------------------------|
| SHRM                     | Pearson Correlation | 1       | 0.513**                  |
|                          | Sig. (2-tailed)     |         | 0.000                    |
|                          | N                   | 210     | 210                      |
| Organisation Performance | Pearson Correlation | 0.513** | 1                        |
|                          | Sig. (2-tailed)     | 0.000   |                          |
|                          | N                   | 210     | 210                      |

Note: \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regression analysis shown in **Table 6** further demonstrated that SHRM was a significant predictor of organisational performance ( $R^2 = 0.263$ ,  $F(1,208) = 74.253$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), explaining 26.3% of the variation in organisational performance. These findings suggest that SHRM practices are positively associated with organisational performance

at Movit Products Limited, although a substantial proportion of the variation is attributable to factors beyond the variables examined in this study. Accordingly, Hypothesis 1 was supported. The contribution of individual SHRM practices to organisational performance is presented in Section 3.7.

**Table 6.** Regression analysis of SHRM and organisational performance.

| Model Summary |                    |          |               |            | Change Statistics |          |     |     |               |
|---------------|--------------------|----------|---------------|------------|-------------------|----------|-----|-----|---------------|
| Model         | R                  | R-Square | Adj. R-Square | Std. Error | R-Square Change   | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change |
| 1             | 0.513 <sup>a</sup> | 0.263    | 0.260         | 0.58518    | 0.263             | 74.253   | 1   | 208 | 0.000         |

Note: <sup>a</sup> Predictors: (Constant), SHRM.

### 3.5. Association between Firm–Employee Relationship and Organisational Performance

Descriptive statistics showed positive employee perceptions of both firm–employee relationships ( $M = 3.97$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ) and organisational performance ( $M = 3.87$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ). Pearson's correlation (see **Table 7**) analysis demonstrated a strong, positive, and statistically significant association between firm–employee relationships and organisational performance ( $r = 0.635$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that respondents who perceived stronger relationships with the organisation also reported higher levels of organisational performance.

According to **Table 8**, regression analysis showed that firm–employee relationships significantly predicted organisational performance, accounting for 40.4% of the variation in organisational performance ( $R^2 = 0.404$ ). Compared with SHRM alone, firm–employee relationships explained a larger proportion of the variation in organisational performance, highlighting the importance of employee trust, communication, satisfaction, and commitment within the organisation. Based on these findings, Hypothesis 2 was supported, indicating a significant positive association between firm–employee relationships and organisational performance.

**Table 7.** Firm–employee relationship and organisational performance.

| Correlations               |                     |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Variable                   | Statistic           | Firm–Employee Relationship | Organisation Performance |
| Firm–Employee Relationship | Pearson Correlation | 1                          | 0.635**                  |
|                            | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                            | 0.000                    |
|                            | N                   | 210                        | 210                      |
| Organisation Performance   | Pearson Correlation | 0.635**                    | 1                        |
|                            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | 0.000                      |                          |
|                            | N                   | 210                        | 210                      |

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 8.** Regression analysis of FER and organisational performance.

| Model Summary |                    |          |                   |                            |
|---------------|--------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Model         | R                  | R-Square | Adjusted R-Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
| 1             | 0.635 <sup>a</sup> | 0.404    | 0.401             | 0.52647                    |

Note: <sup>a</sup> Predictors: (Constant), Firm–Employee Relationship.

### 3.6. Mediating Role of Firm–Employee Relationships

Mediation analysis was conducted using Hayes' PROCESS Macro (Model 4) with 5,000 bootstrap samples to determine whether firm–employee relationships mediate the association between Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices and organisational performance. The results showed that SHRM was positively associated with firm–employee relationships ( $B = 0.8545, p < 0.001$ ), while firm–employee relationships were positively associated with organisational performance ( $B = 0.5352, p < 0.001$ ).

After firm–employee relationships were included in the model, the direct association between SHRM and organisational performance was no longer statistically significant ( $B = 0.1090, p = 0.213$ ), whereas the indirect effect remained statistically significant ( $B = 0.4573, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.2757, 0.6023]$ ). Because the bootstrap confidence interval for the indirect effect did not include zero and the direct effect became non-significant, the findings indicate that firm–employee relationships fully mediate the association between SHRM practices and organisational performance. Accordingly, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

### 3.7. Key SHRM Strategies Associated with Firm–Employee Relationships and Organisational Performance

Multiple regression analysis was performed to identify the SHRM practices most strongly associated with organisational performance and firm–employee relationships.

The results showed that training and development ( $\beta = 0.405, p < 0.001$ ) and employee participation and open

communication ( $\beta = 0.212, p = 0.002$ ) were the only SHRM practices that significantly predicted organisational performance (see **Table 9**). These findings suggest that employees who experience greater opportunities for learning, participation, and open communication also report higher levels of organisational performance.

A similar pattern was observed when firm–employee relationships were examined as the outcome variable. Training and development ( $\beta = 0.570, p < 0.001$ ) together with employee participation and communication ( $\beta = 0.688, p < 0.001$ ) again emerged as the strongest predictors, indicating that these practices are closely associated with employee trust, satisfaction, commitment, and the overall quality of the firm–employee relationship. In contrast, job performance strategies, employee wellness programmes, and leadership development initiatives were not statistically significant predictors in either regression model.

The findings indicate that although SHRM practices are positively associated with organisational performance, this relationship is driven primarily by practices that promote employee development and meaningful employee involvement. The convergence of the quantitative findings with the qualitative evidence suggests that training and development, together with employee participation and open communication, are the SHRM practices most consistently associated with stronger firm–employee relationships and better organisational performance at Movit Products Limited.

The integration of the quantitative and qualitative findings indicates that SHRM practices are positively associated with organisational performance through stronger firm–employee relationships. The quantitative results identified

training and development, alongside employee participation and communication, as the strongest predictors, while the

qualitative findings explained how these practices strengthen trust, commitment, and employee engagement.

**Table 9.** Multiple regression analysis of key SHRM strategies that enhance OP.

| Model | Predictor                                                                                              | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients |       | <i>t</i> | Sig.  | Lower Bound |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------|----------|-------|-------------|
|       |                                                                                                        | B                           | Std. Error                | Beta  |          |       |             |
| 1     | (Constant)                                                                                             | 1.518                       | 0.279                     | —     | 5.442    | 0.000 | 0.968       |
|       | Job performance strategies enhance overall organisational performance at Movit Products Limited.       | 0.050                       | 0.080                     | 0.060 | 0.622    | 0.535 | −0.108      |
|       | Employee wellness programs contribute to improved organisational productivity and efficiency.          | 0.030                       | 0.052                     | 0.038 | 0.582    | 0.561 | −0.073      |
|       | Leadership development initiatives improve organisational performance by fostering skilled leadership. | 0.013                       | 0.056                     | 0.018 | 0.238    | 0.812 | −0.097      |
|       | Employee participation and open communication positively impact workplace engagement and productivity. | 0.137                       | 0.045                     | 0.212 | 3.074    | 0.002 | 0.049       |
|       | Training and development programs enhance employee competencies and organisational success.            | 0.336                       | 0.070                     | 0.405 | 4.773    | 0.000 | 0.197       |

## 4. Discussion

The study established that SHRM practices were positively associated with multiple dimensions of organisational performance, including financial stability, productivity, quality performance, competitiveness, and customer satisfaction. This finding reinforces the growing recognition that human resource practices are not merely administrative tools but strategic mechanisms that shape organisational outcomes. However, the effect on operational efficiency appeared less consistent, with mixed perceptions among respondents, suggesting that while SHRM contributes broadly to performance, its influence may vary across specific organisational functions and contexts.

The finding that SHRM strengthens financial stability aligns with Boon<sup>[8]</sup> and Ishaque et al.<sup>[20]</sup>, who argue that HR systems improve profitability by reducing turnover and enhancing workforce efficiency. In the context of Movit Products Limited, this relationship can be understood through the ability of SHRM practices to minimise recruitment costs, stabilise workforce dynamics, and enhance employee productivity. When employees are well-trained and retained, organisations can reduce operational disruptions and main-

tain consistent output, thereby contributing to financial sustainability<sup>[2,7,8]</sup>. This suggests that SHRM serves as a cost-control and value-creation mechanism simultaneously.

In terms of productivity, the study showed that SHRM practices enhanced output within existing timelines. This finding resonates with Uysal<sup>[9]</sup>, who links strategic human capital development to agility and performance. It also supports Mello<sup>[21]</sup>, who argues that productivity gains are a direct consequence of investments in training, engagement, and performance management systems. In practice, this implies that organisations that invest in building employee capabilities and motivation are able to achieve more output without necessarily increasing resources<sup>[22,23]</sup>. At Movit, this is reflected in improved work efficiency and the ability of employees to meet production targets more consistently, indicating that SHRM contributes to optimising workforce potential.

Quality performance emerged as the strongest dimension, with HR practices reducing complaints and raising product standards. This is strongly aligned with Kasekende et al.<sup>[13]</sup>, who argues that well-implemented HR practices enhance competence and motivation, which directly translate into improved quality<sup>[4,24]</sup>. Similarly, underscore the

role of organizational commitment in sustaining quality standards. The strong emphasis on quality at Movit suggests that employees who are well-trained, engaged, and committed are more attentive to detail and more invested in delivering high-quality outputs. This reinforces the idea that quality is not only a technical outcome but also a behavioral one shaped by HR practices.

Market competitiveness was also significantly enhanced, particularly through innovation and consistent quality. This finding reflects Barney's (1991)<sup>[5]</sup> Resource-Based View (RBV) argument, and Saks<sup>[6]</sup>, who positions human capital as the foundation of sustainable competitive advantage<sup>[10]</sup>. In this regard, SHRM enables organisations to develop unique internal capabilities that competitors find difficult to replicate. At Movit, the ability to maintain consistent product quality and adapt to market demands appears to stem from a workforce that is both skilled and aligned with organisational goals. This demonstrates how SHRM contributes not only to internal efficiency but also to external positioning in the marketplace.

Customer satisfaction was reported as a positive outcome of SHRM, with employees' enhanced experience translating into improved service delivery. This aligns with Karman<sup>[4]</sup> and De Prins et al.<sup>[15]</sup>, who highlight the connection between employee experience and customer outcomes. When employees feel supported, valued, and engaged, they are more likely to exhibit positive work behaviors that directly influence customer interactions. At Movit, this relationship is evident in the way improved employee morale and commitment translate into better customer service, reinforcing the service-profit chain perspective.

The only area of partial alignment was operational efficiency, where mixed results were observed. While De Prins et al.<sup>[15]</sup> and Mello<sup>[21]</sup> associate high-performance work systems with streamlined processes, Ludwikowska<sup>[25]</sup> cautions that over-standardisation may reduce flexibility, and Li et al.<sup>[26]</sup> and Bryant and Merritt<sup>[27]</sup> warn that implementation challenges can hinder efficiency gains. This helps explain the variability observed in Movit's case, where operational efficiency improvements were present but unevenly experienced. It suggests that while SHRM provides a framework for efficiency, its outcomes depend heavily on how consistently and effectively practices are implemented across departments.

The mediation analysis revealed that firm–employee re-

lationships fully mediated the link between SHRM practices and organisational performance. While SHRM appeared to directly predict performance initially, the effect disappeared once firm–employee relationships were introduced, indicating that HR strategies exert influence primarily through relational mechanisms<sup>[16,17]</sup>. This finding highlights the central role of human relationships in translating HR policies into tangible outcomes, suggesting that the effectiveness of SHRM depends not only on what practices are implemented but also on how they are experienced by employees.

The finding that SHRM enhances firm–employee relationships aligns with Mello<sup>[21]</sup>, who emphasises person–organisation fit as crucial in shaping employees' perceptions of HR practices. Kasekende et al.<sup>[13]</sup> similarly argues that SHRM practices are more effective when employees perceive alignment with organisational culture and values. In the case of Movit, HR practices such as training, communication, and participation appear to strengthen trust and commitment, thereby improving the overall relational climate within the organisation.

Firm–employee relationships were found to significantly enhance performance, aligning with Cachón-Rodríguez et al.<sup>[16]</sup>, who demonstrate that organisational support reduces turnover and absenteeism, and Li et al.<sup>[26]</sup>, who position commitment as the key mediator between HR practices and organisational outcomes. Li et al.<sup>[26]</sup> further argues that trust and engagement directly raise performance, a mechanism clearly reflected in Movit's context. This underscores the idea that performance is not solely driven by systems and structures, but also by the quality of relationships within the organisation.

The absence of a significant direct effect of SHRM on performance once relationships were controlled is consistent with De Prins et al.<sup>[15]</sup> and Bryant and Merritt<sup>[27]</sup>, who contend that HR practices yield results indirectly through commitment and engagement. Igbomor<sup>[1]</sup> also stresses that relational processes such as collaboration and knowledge sharing mediate SHRM's impact. This finding is particularly important as it shifts attention from viewing HR practices as standalone drivers of performance to understanding them as enablers of relational dynamics that ultimately drive organisational outcomes.

Regression results highlighted two SHRM practices, employee participation and communication, and training and

development, as the strongest predictors of both organisational performance and firm–employee relationships. Other practices, such as job performance strategies, wellness programmes, and leadership development, did not emerge as significant predictors in this context. This suggests that not all HR practices contribute equally to performance and relationships, and that some practices have more immediate and visible impacts than others.

The centrality of employee participation and communication aligns with Kaufman et al.<sup>[28]</sup>, who underscores participatory dialogue as essential for engagement, trust, and collaboration. Similarly, Uysal<sup>[9]</sup> argues that communication and inclusion in decision-making build commitment, which in turn drives organisational outcomes. At Movit, open communication and employee involvement appear to strengthen both performance and relational bonds, highlighting the importance of creating inclusive organisational environments.

Training and development also showed strong predictive power, aligning with Hamadamin and Atan<sup>[29]</sup>, who emphasise continuous learning as vital for equipping employees with adaptive skills, and Karman<sup>[4]</sup> and Li et al.<sup>[26]</sup>, who link training to employee commitment and job satisfaction. This alignment supports the RBV argument that skill development provides firms with distinctive, inimitable capabilities. In this context, training serves as both a performance driver and a relationship-building tool, as employees feel valued when organisations invest in their growth.

In contrast, job performance strategies showed no significant impact, which only partially aligns with Ishaque et al.<sup>[20]</sup>, who acknowledges the value of performance management but notes its effectiveness hinges on fairness and developmental focus. Similarly, Boon<sup>[8]</sup> cautions that performance systems may fail if overly rigid or disconnected from broader engagement practices. Movit's result suggests that performance systems may exist but may not yet be effectively integrated into the broader SHRM framework to drive meaningful outcomes.

Employee wellness programmes also showed no significant effect, diverging from Ishaque et al.<sup>[20]</sup> and Hans<sup>[17]</sup>, who stress organisational support as central to commitment and satisfaction. This may suggest that wellness initiatives at Movit are either not sufficiently visible, not well integrated into daily operations, or their effects are more long-term and less immediately measurable.

Leadership development initiatives similarly showed no significant results, which contrasts with Uysal<sup>[9]</sup>, who regarded leadership capacity as integral to SHRM. One explanation may be that leadership development impacts are realised over longer horizons, making them less evident in short-term performance measures<sup>[5,30]</sup>. Movit's case, therefore, reflects a temporal misalignment rather than a theoretical contradiction, indicating that some SHRM practices require time before their full impact becomes visible.

## 5. Practical Implications

The findings of this study have important practical implications for managers and human resource practitioners, particularly within the manufacturing sector. The results suggest that organisations are more likely to achieve better performance when they invest in SHRM practices that encourage employee participation, open communication, and continuous training and development. These practices not only strengthen employees' knowledge and skills but also foster trust, commitment, and a stronger relationship between employees and the organisation. Managers should therefore view SHRM as a strategic function that goes beyond routine administrative activities and focus on creating a work environment where employees feel valued, involved, and supported. Strengthening firm–employee relationships may help organisations realise greater benefits from their HR investments and improve overall organisational performance.

## 6. Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings.

The study was conducted at the headquarters of a single manufacturing organisation, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to other organisations or industries.

The cross-sectional design captured employees' perceptions at one point in time and therefore does not allow changes in relationships over time to be examined.

Organisational performance was measured using employees' perceptions rather than objective organisational performance indicators.

Future research could address these limitations by conducting longitudinal studies, including organisations from different sectors and geographical locations, and incorporating objective measures of organisational performance to

provide a broader understanding of the relationship between SHRM practices, firm–employee relationships, and organisational performance.

## 7. Conclusions

Evidence showed that SHRM practices contributed positively to financial stability, productivity, quality, competitiveness, and customer satisfaction, aligning with the Resource-Based View (RBV) perspective. However, improvements in operational efficiency were uneven, indicating that not all benefits of SHRM are equally realised.

Firm–employee relationships are the critical mediating mechanism.

The mediation analysis confirmed that SHRM influences performance primarily through employee relationships. This finding reinforces recent scholarship by Teo et al.<sup>[31]</sup> that relational pathways, rather than direct HR–performance links, drive sustainable organisational outcomes.

Participation/communication and training/development are the most impactful SHRM strategies.

Regression results identified these practices as the strongest predictors of both firm–employee relationships and organisational performance. This highlights that strategies promoting trust, dialogue, and continuous learning are more effective than traditional performance management or wellness programmes in Movit’s current context.

## Author Contributions

A.K. conceptualized the study, conducted the research as part of her Master of Business Administration degree at Cairo University, collected and analyzed the data, interpreted the findings, and prepared the original manuscript draft. G.M.S., affiliated with the Faculty of Commerce at Cairo University, supervised the research process, provided academic guidance and methodological oversight, reviewed the manuscript critically, and contributed to the refinement of the final version for publication. Both authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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## Institutional Review Board Statement

This study formed part of the requirements for the award of a Master of Business Administration degree at Cairo University. Under the applicable institutional procedures for this category of research, formal ethical approval was not required, and therefore no protocol code was issued. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from Movit Products Limited.

## Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study. This study adhered to established ethical research standards. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents before data collection. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity throughout the study, and no identifying information was disclosed. The study did not involve any form of harm or risk to participants. All data were used strictly for academic purposes.

## Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript. The research was con-

ducted independently, and there are no financial, personal, or professional relationships that could have influenced the study's design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, or reporting of the findings.

## AI Use Statement

An artificial intelligence (AI) tool, specifically ChatGPT, was used in a limited capacity during the preparation of this manuscript, solely for language refinement. The authors retained full responsibility for the content, interpretation of results, and overall integrity of the manuscript. All data analysis, findings, and conclusions presented in this study are the original work of the authors.

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