

Bridging Workplace Democracy and Supply Chain Integration through High Involvement of Human Resource Practices

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Abstract— Human resource management has taken a sharp turn in 21st century towards high involvement practices. Recruiters are shifting towards such high involvement practices to integrate the business functions with more efficiency especially supply chain. However, such integration seems less effective without a strong democratic culture in organization. This study has determined the impact of workplace democracy on supply chain integration in Thailand's manufacturing sector where democratic practices have been started nourishing in factory areas. Moreover, mediating roles of high involvement HRM practices such as employee incentives, skills and participation have also been analyzed in relationship between workplace democracy and supply chain integration. Data has been collected from Thailand's manufacturing sector and middle management was surveyed through structured questionnaire whose data was then analyzed by applying confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling. Results have highlighted that workplace democracy can significantly enhance supply chain integration while almost all high involvement HR practices were found as significant mediators in relationship between democracy and integration. Originality of this study is there in outcome variable which was supply chain integrity that was never tested before as consequence of democracy or high involvement practices. This study has its implications, limitations and future research directions too.

Key Words: Workplace Democracy, High Involvement HR Practices, Employee Skills, Employee Participation, Employee Incentives and Supply Chain Integration

1. Introduction

Workplace democracy can be defined in different ways, size, color, culture, region, and so many other variables. In workplace democracy, employers asked the employee's different opinions and suggestions. In the past, different employers have caught doing biasness in the name if workplace democracy, on the basis of regional culture and color. Many Organizations have destroyed their market and their production in this way [1]. Bridging workplace democracy is a good way to establish a strong culture in the organizations where rules and regulations are following by everyone. Supply chain integration helped a lot in maximizing the production and deliver the goods to the customer [31-32]. Better supply chain integration always resulted in higher profit and created a positive image of the manufacturing sector in the past [33]. The high involvement if human resource practices were the key factor of the well-established organizations of Thailand. Human resource practices involved employee skills, employee incentives, and employee participation [2; 34]. Bridging the workplace democracy and supply chain integration with the help of the factor human resource practice proved beneficial for most of the manufacturing sectors of Thailand, this also resulted beneficial for the sector in the past.

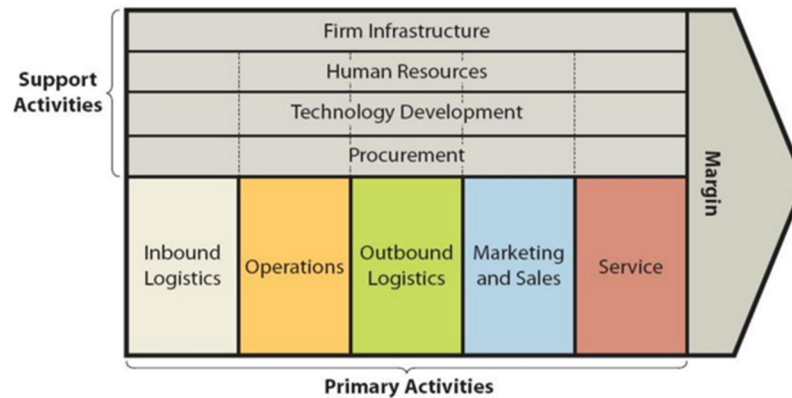


Figure 1: Improvement in supply chain through human resource activities

Figure no. 1 is showing the improvement in supply chain processes through the human resource activities. This study was also conducted in Thailand by gathering data from the manufacturing sectors of Thailand. The study will discuss the impact of workplace democracy on supply chain integration. It will also discuss the mediating role of high involvement of human resource practices including (employee's skills, employee incentives, and employee participation) between bridging the workplace democracy and supply chain integration. This study will investigate and this problem and give findings on the relative topic. In the past, the relation between these variables was positive now this study will define their relationships as well whether they were significant and positive or significant but negative[3]. Bridging the workplace democracy and supply chain integration is a challenge for the whole world around the globe. This problem is not only for Thailand's manufacturing sector. This problem is for probably every company who wants to increase their profit. With the mediating role of human resource practices, this problem must be solved, and the possible suggestion must be given by the researchers. This study will also help the concerned people to understand the problem statement of the topic and the outcomes which will keenly be observed in this paper[4]. This study has the aim to know about the relationship between bridging workplace democracy and supply chain integration, whether there is a positive relationship between these two variables or not. The aim was also to know about the mediating role of high involvement of human resource practices between bridging the workplace democracy and supply chain integration. This study going to happen

in Thailand. The source of data will be the manufacturing sector of Thailand, data will gather from this sector[5]. This study will also help the government in order to maintain and evaluate the performance of the companies which will follow the instruction given by the company regarding this problem. The people related to the manufacturing sector can apply this study in different areas so they can improve their supply chain performance. This study will significantly contribute to the literature. This will enhance the literature material. This study will help people and different sector who have zero knowledge about the role of human resource practices between workplace democracy and supply chain integration. This study will prove significant knowledge about this problem and provide reliable discussion and conclusion about this topic. People can get benefits from this study [6]. The department for the industrial development of Thailand can learn about the importance of supply chain integration and workplace democracy and implement these factors in other sectors as well. In the past, researchers not significantly search the data about this topic, and they were failed in giving a positive solution regarding this problem. They did not state the relationships of different variables clearly. They also did not use the mediating role of HR practices carefully. They did not discuss the problem statement very clear and they did not gave the reliable conclusion about the workplace Democracy and supply chain integration [7]. This study will clearly discuss every aspect and the role of the mediating variable on bridging the workplace democracy and supply chain integration. This study is reliable and knowledgeable, this study

properly defined the problem statement and the different suggestion about the topic.

2. Literature review

2.1. Resource based view and Cultural Theory

Companies are becoming more aware about the implications of supply chain management (SCM) [8] that includes partnerships between customers, suppliers and resource skills. Supply chain integration (SCI) [9] is also considered one of the components of supply chain processing related to organizational performance and firms capabilities. Companies are unable to work without the structural framework of supply chains and this type of structure is known as supply chain network structure (SCNS). SCNS [10] particularly handles and simultaneously deals with Actors, Activates, partnerships and resources that are involved in the making of Supply Chain Framework. According to the theory of cultural values that explains three factors depending upon description, prescription and trend identification which identify the cultural values and norms on whose basis Human Resource Management (HRM) explores the dimensions of SCI. The definitions of three factors of cultural theory [11] usually met the additional requirement regarding the integration of the entire process of supply chain which starts from sourcing to customer to suppliers and through encompassing and embracing the entire process of gaining competitive advantage varying from one company to another. Cultural theory manages and relate to different managerial organizations, manufacturing sectors, multiple business and managerial relationships, within any firm or enterprise. HRM is responsible for establishing democracy [12] in certain workplaces of an organization where it facilitates the employees and apply certain dimensions to the workplace dynamics to enhance relationships regarding supply chain networks and SCI. however, with the managing skill the supply chain gains it importance of the integration of the companies which will particularly produce a positive impact on the success of the whole value chain. HRM practices [13] and applications which includes (training, compensation, evaluation and selection) apart from these practices cultural theory introduces another application of HRM that consists of generating workplace democracy which probably have a significant impact on the supply

chain management along with its qualitative performance that promotes the abilities and capabilities of employees that, might consists of customer satisfaction, on-time delivery, and accuracy in employee performance. Resource based view (RBV) supports supply chain management and SCI [14] while; it enables the material and information flow from employees to the suppliers and then further to the customers, to achieve positive outcomes as well as feedbacks.

2.2. Workplace democracy Relationship with Supply Chain Integration

According to HRM practices and HRM related studies [15], authors of the study try to evaluate the performance of the employees working in companies and firms, where the company's environment and workplace implements democratic rules and regulation to promote high quality productivity skills with the help of resources, actors and certain activates, that supports the workplace democracy along with SCI. cultural theory and resource based view bridges a gap between workplace democracy [16] and SCI implementations. The rise in outsourcing depends upon the facility of IOT at global level because only highly specialized organizations have made it necessary for companies to integrate with their supply chain partners exclusively to gain competitive advantage as well as beneficial outcomes. Implementation of SCI in the democratic workplace is the sole choice of human resource that attributes [17] the integration structure with supply chain framework. Due to the increase in the dynamic and complex working environment RBV enhances the association of workplace democracy with the integration of supply chain. Furthermore, tools and techniques that are related to SCI usually rely upon the behaviors and attitudes of human working in a similar environment, which depends on the implications of workplace democracy that caters the need and requirements of employees. It is considered one of the top most priorities that emerge [18] from the HRM practices to achieve sustainable growth by getting hold of more human capital. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Workplace democracy has a significant impact on supply chain integration

2.3. Mediating Role of Employee skills between Workplace democracy and Supply chain integration

According to researchers [19], who develops theoretical and conceptual based concepts to explain the employee skills and employee performance as a resource to the supply chain framework, therefore employee skills act as a mediator between two variables that consists of workplace democracy and SCI. Employee skill is an approach that pay great attention on marketing, increasing product and services value, enhancing product development and ensuring great deal of customer service by looking forward to the workplace democracy within an organization. Employee skills however, produce a positive impact [20] on a company's overall performance that often leads a company to offer greater operational efficiency by the hands of the employees to integrate supply chain in more appropriate way. Workplace democracy controls and integrates performance measurements which are considered the most significant tool for the managers of the same workplace who implements democracy within the same organization, these measurements or metrics monitors organizational process to gain desirable supply chain outcomes. Workplace democracy reacts to multiple changes of flexibility in the market environment that has been increasingly necessary for business organization. Performance measurement provides necessary information to companies with the help of workplace democracy [21] and integration of supply chain within the working environment. Workplace democracy also facilitates decision making process to make organizational performance more successful while integrating customer's expectations and customers values that significantly pay attention to employee skills. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Employee skills has a significant mediating role between the relationship of workplace democracy and SCI

2.4. Mediating Role of Employee Incentives between workplace democracy and supply chain integration

As per recent studies [22], that explains the concepts of employee incentives implementation under the roof of similar workplace which particularly follows the policies and reforms of democracy to support the

SCI along with SCM. Though incentives of employee are implemented into the work field due to HRM practices in SCI and SCM field which is gaining worldly recognition, however there are many empirical evidences that promotes the function of SCI in the workplace where democracy is followed by the employees [23], therefore democracy is considered one of the most important incentive at the employee level. Employees are encouraged and motivated because of their understanding, increasing experiences, and self-esteem that are only developed in an individual through integration of supply chain process. Nevertheless, SCI highlights building close relationships with supply chain partners, and collaborative work forces, which increases the efficiency of employee working abilities and also raises their business performance. Cultural theory [12] integrates the emotions of satisfaction, confidence and partnership with an employee that works in a place where democracy rules are followed. RBV believes that SCI rely upon the values and framework of human resources that succeeds within the given time frame of employee incentives. However, SCI and HRM are considered as the driver's that accelerate the perspectives of human achievement and integrate motivation in employee so that they can work effectively and efficiently. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Employee incentives have a significant mediating role between the relationship of workplace democracy and SCI.

2.5. Mediating Role of Employee participation between Workplace democracy and Supply chain integration

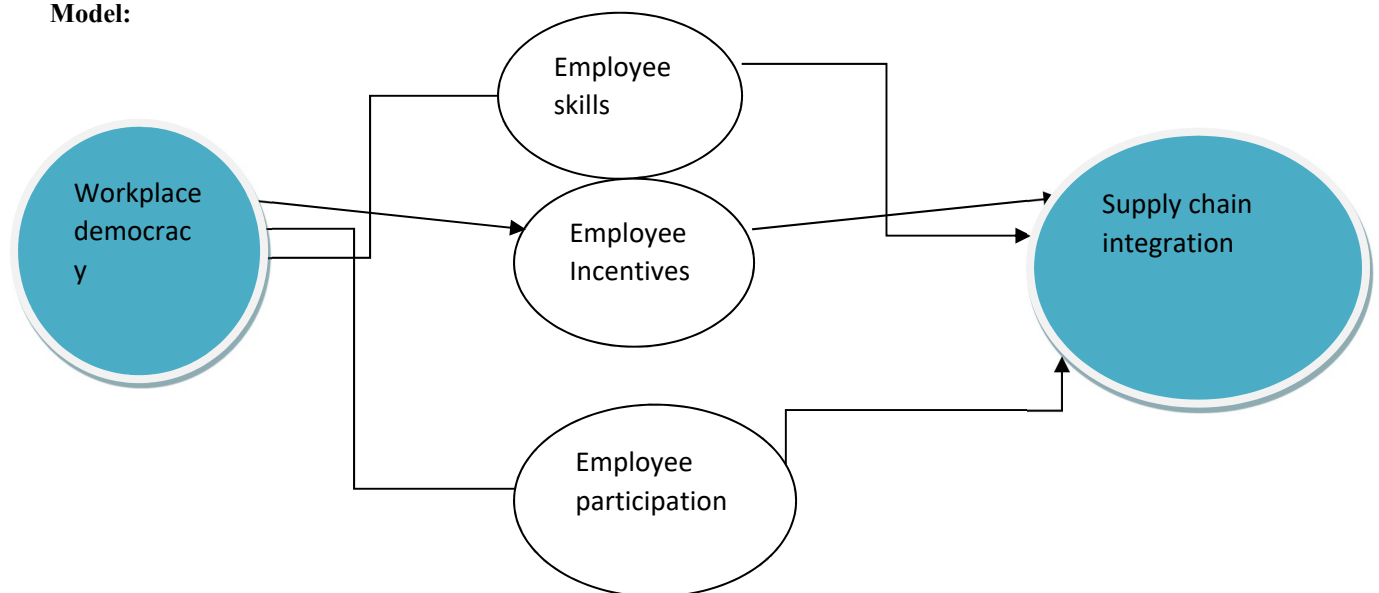
Cultural theory explores the importance of employee performance and employee participation within the workplace that follows democracy [24] to further promote SCI. Employee create value directly and interact closely with supply chain partners because it is equally important for employee to focus on partnership developed by supply chain and HRM influence. HRM practices are bundled when they positively influence SCI and enhance human practices. Employee participation develops the business strategies and forces to improve employee behavior and employee performance. However, HRM abilities [25] are considered the set of practices that employee skills, employee values, employee

incentives and achievement and employee participation at the workforce level. Employee participation is equivalent to employee development which companies had widely adopted to the fierce competition of talent. Various scholars suggested the formation of link between workplace democracy and SCI with the mediating role of employee participation to face certain challenges and provide solutions to those challenges faced by the company. Employee participation plays its role as a contributor that contributes in the building of relationships between SCI and HRM, perhaps which also facilitates supply chain issues regarding business

management and employ control. Employee participation [26] results in improving flexibility of manufacturers and manufacturing sector in supply chains. Employee participation also helps in team formation and implantation of democracy and equity sharing and values with an organization. HRM and SCI [27] both collectively highlight the performance of manager's in logistics and SCM context. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Employee participation has a significant mediating role between the relationship of workplace democracy and SCI.

Model:



3. Research methodology

3.1. Population and sampling

This study has been conducted in order to observe the impact of high involvement HRM practices in relationship among workplace democracy and supply chain integration. As the study about the impact of workplace democracy on SCI has already been conducted but this relationship has not been integrated with the HRM practices. Now, researcher has been selected the Thailand for observing the impact of this specific study. Data has been collected from three manufacturing industries of Thailand such as automotive, electronics and textile industries. These respective industries have been selected as they were in transition stage and experience high competition. The sample has been selected from these industries by using stratified random sampling technique in order to maintain balance among three

industries. Researcher selected the sample size according to the idea of (Klein, 2015), which elaborate that number of questions*10 provide with the accurate sample size. Sample size has been calculated is 760, among which the questionnaire has been distributed. Researcher has been collected only 654 valid responses after deleting all the irrelevant and invalid responses.

3.2. Data collection procedures

Questionnaire has been used by researcher for primary data collection because data collected is in numeric form which can easily be analyzed by researcher. Questionnaire has been written originally in English then it converted into local language by native speaker and with the help of back translation method, questionnaire again translated into English for accurate evaluation. Further, researcher conducted

pilot study in which 20 respondents verified that whether all the items easily understandable or difficult to understand. Researcher used online questionnaire technique in which he or she e-mail the questionnaire and responses have been collected online.

3.3. Analysis of validity, reliability and common bias

Reliability has been assessed by SPSS and criteria to examined that includes (1) composite reliability which has to be greater than 0.70 because it indicates satisfactory level of internal consistency and (2) Cronbach's α which has to be greater than 0.70 because it ensures that desirable level of items reliability achieved. Validity has been assessed by AMOS; convergent validity assessment has been examined by three criteria which includes (1) items loading λ and its threshold range is greater than 0.70, (2) composite constructs reliability and its range is greater than 0.80 and (3) average variance extracted which has to be greater than 0.50 because its values were greater at above 0.50. Coming towards discriminant validity, as per [21] square root of AVE has to be exceed when compared with inter-correlation coefficients of the remaining constructs.

Every study has independent and dependent variables which have to be interpreted by using different factors or measures if same measures used by the respondent for interpretation of both the variables then the risk of common bias has been compounded. This study involves both dependent and independent variables such as workplace democracy (IDV), high involvement HRM practices (IDV) and supply chain integration (DV). For testing the presence or absence of risk of common bias Harman's single factor test has been used by researcher. In this test, researcher examined whether all the items of this study accounted for by single factor or by different factors. According to results, 91% of variance interpreted by factor solution and 16% of variance interpreted by one factor. Consequently, risk of common bias is not present in this study as the different factor used for accounting of most of constructs.

3.4. Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis testing has been done through structure equation model which runs on AMOS. Path analysis approach has been used to test the structure path

model under SEM. In this research study, SEM tried to see the impact of work democracy on supply chain integration, in mediating role of high involvement HRM practices. Path analysis has been performed in two steps, first one is to checked the standardization of path and second one is to check the significance of influenced path. After this analysis, researcher report which hypotheses have been acceptor or which are rejected.

3.5. Measures

WD was measured with the scale developed by [21] with the help of five items that were taken on a five-point Likert scale. Then ES and EI were assessed by the scale developed by the researcher Schroeder (2001) and here four items were taken on a five-point Likert scale and were assessed. EP was measured by a scale developed by [22], four items were taken and measured on a five-point Likert scale. Finally, SCI was measured by the scale developed by [23] and five items were taken which were measured on a five-point Likert scale.

4. Empirical Findings

4.1. Demographics

This study was conducted in Thailand. The data was collected from manufacturing sector of Thailand. Three manufacturing industries were considered for this study electronic industry, machinery industry and transportation industry. The information from this sector was gathered through a survey tool, questionnaire. It is the necessity to run the test in order to check the reliability, normality and validity of the data. In account for this the profile of the respondents are checked through the frequency distribution. The data was collected from 300 people and out of which 41.6% were male and 58.6% were female. 7.1% were graduated, 48.8% were post graduated, 41.0% were master's degree holder, 3.1% were other degree holders. 86.3% of respondent were between 21 to 30 years old. 13% of the responded were between 31 to 40 years. 2.8% of the people were between 41 to 50 years, and 6% were of age 50 plus.

4.2. Descriptive statistics

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	N Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic	Skewness Statistic	Std. Error
SCI	324	1.00	5.00	3.4387	1.18390	-.586	.135
WPD	324	1.00	7.25	3.5818	1.09692	-.718	.135
ES	324	1.00	5.00	3.3910	1.12128	-.406	.135
EP	324	1.13	5.00	3.5158	1.07928	-.723	.135
EI	324	1.00	5.75	3.3881	1.06667	-.231	.135
Valid N (listwise)	324						

Above table of descriptive statistics is showing that there is no outlier in given data because maximum values are in threshold range of 5 point likert scale as skewness value is between -1 to 1 which is threshold

range of normality assumption so, the data is normal and valid, it is also valid to go for further testing.

4.3. Rotated Component Matrix

Table 2. Rotated Component Matrix

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
SCI1			.783		
SCI2			.833		
SCI3			.851		
SCI4			.863		
SCI5			.847		
SCI6			.885		
SCI7			.869		
WPD1				.693	
WPD2				.766	
WPD3				.840	
WPD4				.837	
WPD5				.612	
WPD6				.800	
WPD7				.791	
WPD8				.808	
ES1	.828				
ES2	.866				
ES3	.871				
ES4	.868				
ES5	.876				
ES6	.889				
ES7	.852				
ES8	.826				
EP1		.794			
EP2		.836			
EP3		.860			
EP4		.800			
EP5		.722			
EP6		.822			
EP7		.857			
EP8		.796			
EI1					.687
EI2					.717
EI3					.775
EI4					.688

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

A. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Above table of rotated component matrix is showing almost all the indicators are showing factor loading more than 0.7, it means all the indicators are eligible to added in further hypothesis testing, because all the factor loading are in suitable threshold level and all are in suitable and valid sequence and range. Moreover, there is no cross loading in data shown in the RCM and data is good to go for further testing techniques.

4.4. Convergent and discriminant validity

Validity master sheet was used to confirm the convergent and discriminant validity of the research model variables. Discriminate validity provided the discrimination between variables while the convergent validity was measured with the help of composite reliability and average variance extracted. Following are the results of both validities:

Table 3: Convergent and discriminant validity

	CR	AVE	MSV	Maxr(H)	ES	WPD	EI	SCI	EP
ES	0.967	0.788	0.518	0.969	0.888				
WPD	0.944	0.681	0.308	0.981	0.480	0.825			
EI	0.892	0.673	0.518	0.984	0.720	0.555	0.821		
SCI	0.967	0.808	0.336	0.989	0.353	0.549	0.338	0.899	
EP	0.948	0.697	0.336	0.991	0.375	0.480	0.374	0.580	0.835

The results of convergent and discriminant validity show that the overall model is a good fit because the composite reliability of each variable is more than 70% and average variance extracted is more than 50% while the discriminant validity shows that loading of each variable discriminates from others. Every variable has maximum loading with itself as

compared to with others, so these validities prove the authenticity of collected data.

4.5. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis is a test which is used to confirm the fitness of hypothetical model before structural equation modeling.

Table 4. CFA

Indicators	Threshold range	Current values
CMIN/DF	Less or equal 3	2.209
GFI	Equal or greater .80	.831
CFI	Equal or greater .90	.950
IFI	Equal or greater .90	.950
RMSEA	Less or equal .08	.061

Current results are showing that, CMIN is less than 3, GFI is more than .80, CFI is greater than .90, IFI is greater than .950 and RMSEA is lesser than 0.061.

So, data is in valid range and is good to go. Following is the screenshot of CFA:

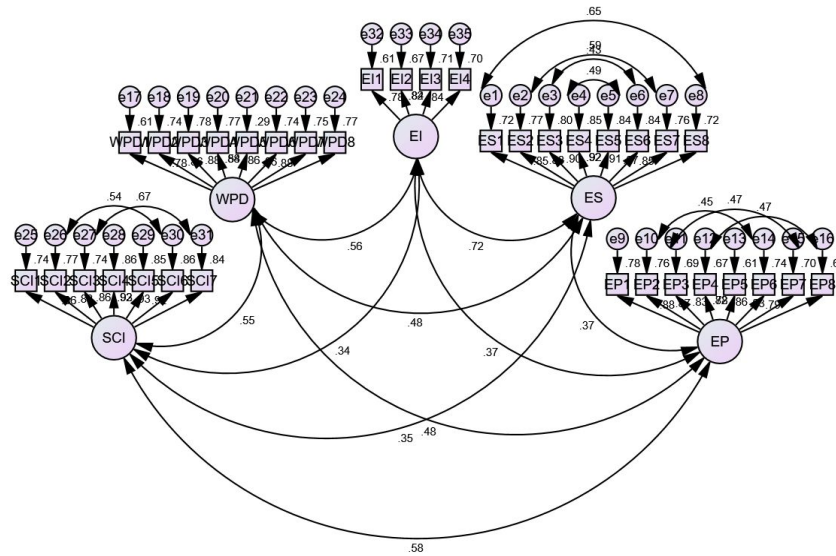


Figure 2: CFA

4.6. Structural equation modeling

Table 5. SEM

Total effect	WPD	EP	EI	ES
EP	.430***	.000	.000	.000
EI	.515***	.000	.000	.000
ES	.494***	.000	.000	.000
SCI	.519***	.337***	-.122	.404***
Direct effect	WPD	EP	EI	ES
EP	.430***	.000	.000	.000
EI	.515***	.000	.000	.000
ES	.494***	.000	.000	.000
SCI	.237***	.337***	-.122	.404***
Indirect effect	WPD	EP	EI	ES
EP	.000	.000	.000	.000
EI	.000	.000	.000	.000
ES	.000	.000	.000	.000
SCI	.282***	.000	.000	.000

The results of structural equation modeling are showing that the impact of workplace democracy on employee participation is 43%. It means that if there is increase in workplace democracy then there will 43% increase in employee participation. This impact is significant and positive. It is showing that the impact of workplace democracy on employee incentive is 51.5%, that means if there is 1 % percent

change in workplace democracy, that change will cause 51.5% change in employee incentive, and this impact is significant and positive. The impact of workplace democracy on employee skill is 49.4%. It means that if there is 1% change in workplace democracy then it will cause 49.4% change in employee skills. The impact is significant and positive. The impact if workplace democracy on

supply chain integration is 51.9%. That means that the change of 1% in workplace democracy will cause 51.9% change in supply chain integration. This table is also showing the impact of employee participation on supply chain integration is 33.7%. This impact is positive and significant. It means that the change of 1% in employee participation will cause 33.7% change in supply chain integration. The impact of employee incentive on supply chain integration is -12.2%. This impact is negative. The impact of employee skill on

supply chain integration is 4.04%. The impact is significant and positive. However, the direct effect in this take is showing the impact of WPD on EP is 43% which significant and positive. The impact of WPD on EI is 51.1% and positive. Impact of WPD on ES is 49.4% this impact is also significant and positive, the direct effect of WPD on SCI is 23.7% and this impact is also significant and positive. The indirect impact of WPD on SCI is 28.2%, significant and positive. There is no impact of WPD on EP, EI, and ES.

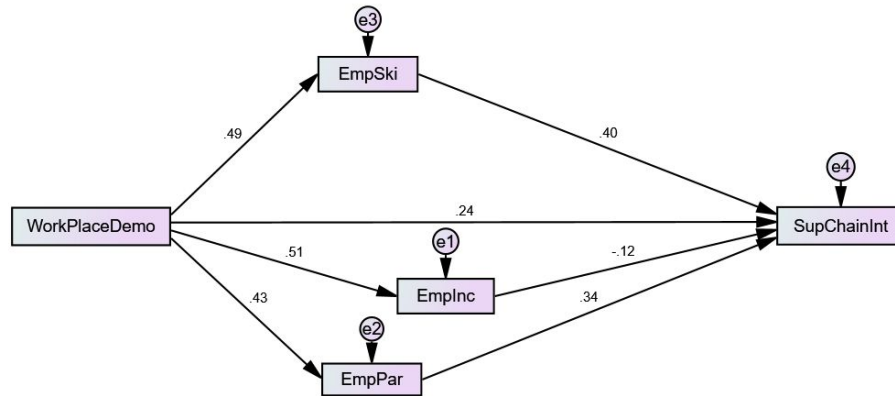


Figure 3: SEM

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion

The aim of this study was to get awareness of the relationship between Workplace Democracy (WD) and Supply Chain Integration (SCI) [28]. This study was also aimed to know the mediating role of High Involvement of Human Resource Management practice between WD and SCI. The high involvement of HRM practices consisted of these aspects, Employee Skills (ES), Employee Incentives (EI), and Employee Participation (EP). This study has conducted a hypothesis test. The very first hypothesis suggested that the significant impact of WD on SCI. This hypothesis is accepted. Baofeng, (School of Management, Xi'an Jiaotong University, Xi'an, China) suggested that the results showed improved internal integration and external integration caused by the significant impact of WD on SCI. That research also identified the increased performance of the organization due to its positive impacts. The second hypothesis recommended that the role of ES positively mediates between WD and SCI [29]. This hypothesis is also accepted. According to the "Haozhe Chen" research who stated in that research the positive mediating role of ES which interlinked

the WD and SCI. That research concluded the overall relevancy of involvement of human resource practices between WD and SCI improved the company's performance. Next hypothesis suggested that the role of EI between WD and SCI was mediating and significant. This hypothesis is accepted. In another research "Xian do Zhao" examined the HRM practices which positively affect the SCI and stated that the better-linked workforce always enhanced the capabilities of any organization. The last hypothesis was stated that the EP significantly mediates between WD and SCI. This hypothesis is also considered. "Zhaojun Han" inspected the different effects of high involvement of HRM practices on WD and SCI and suggested that the SCI involves three types of integration, Internal Integration (II), Customer Integration (CI), and Supplier Integration (SI). The research showed results that, through the significant role of EP proved beneficial for the company[30].

5.2. Conclusion

The intention of this study was to know about the affiliation and impact of WD on SCI. The purpose of this research was also to know the High involvement

of HRM practice between WD and SCI. This study took place in Thailand. In this task, data was collected from three manufacturing industry, the machinery, electronics, and transportation industries. The sample was 300 people from these industries. Data was composed through a questionnaire. The impact of WD on SCI was significant and the Practices of HRM and their high involvement played the vital and positive mediating role between WD and SCI.

5.3. Implications of the Study

This research effectively contributed to literature. This research has significantly increased the data on the internet. Literature material expanded through this research. The researcher can get knowledge about the positive impact of WD on SCI. They can have deep insight into the role of HRM practices between WD and SCI. Governmental strategies can be made and implemented for the betterment of this sector. If the HRM practices are used in Supply Chain integration, then there will be a positive change in the company's performance.

5.4. Limitations and Future Research Indications

This study took place in Thailand, people can do this research outside Thailand. Future researchers can take the decision from this research. The data was gathered from 300 people from different industries, machinery industries, electronic industries, and transportation industries. The tool for data collection was questionnaire the future researchers can use modern techniques and tools for data collection. The study was done in a limited sector, they can expand the research and study the other manufacturing industries than these.

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