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## REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-57343

Title : Human Capital and Stake holder Integration: A Conceptual Framework for 2 Knowledge Acquisition in SMEs.

### Recommendation:

**Accept as it is .....YES.....**

Accept after minor revision.....

Accept after major revision .....

Do not accept (*Reasons below*) .....

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality	✓			
Techn. Quality	✓			
Clarity	✓			
Significance	✓			

Reviewer Id: JPR-148

### Reviewer's Comment for Publication.

The manuscript presents a well-developed conceptual framework linking human capital with stakeholder integration for knowledge acquisition in SMEs. The paper is grounded in relevant theoretical foundations, particularly stakeholder theory and the knowledge-based view of the firm, and effectively integrates them to explain knowledge flows in resource-constrained SME environments. The identification of four stakeholder integration mechanisms—buffering, co-optation, mutual learning, and meta-problem solving—is clearly articulated and logically connected to human capital dimensions.

The manuscript demonstrates strong academic rigor, with a coherent structure, appropriate use of literature, and clear proposition development. The discussion of rural SMEs adds contextual relevance and enhances the practical applicability of the framework. The conceptual model is well-motivated and contributes meaningfully to the literature on SME knowledge management and stakeholder engagement.

Overall, the paper is theoretically sound, clearly written, and offers significant conceptual contribution. It is suitable for publication in its current form without revision.