Original Research Article

The Adoption of e-HRM: The View of a Telecommunications Company in Zimbabwe

Abstract

The 21st-century has witnessed the catalytic effect of Information Technology (IT) in organisational operations through increased efficiency and effectiveness. Technology's disruptive effect has not sparred human resources management; thus, this study investigates the adoption of electronic Human Resources Management (e-HRM) by a telecommunications-based organisation in Zimbabwe. The study utilised a quantitative case design to investigate the adoption of e-HRM by a telecommunications organisation in Zimbabwe using a questionnaire targeting its 130 managers and supervisors. In meeting the study's objective, factor analysis using principal component analysis and varimax rotation was conducted. The results show that the three constructs had a direct impact on the adoption of e-HRM. The respondents agreed that e-HRM had automated employee records and improved communication between employees and managers, increasing efficiency. Identified benefits from the results include lowering administrative costs, delivering state of the art HRM services, enabling HR staff more time to focus on strategic matters, increasing HRM effectiveness and efficiency, and facilitating the scouting of the best talent globally. The respondents noted that aligning e-HRM processes to the HRM function was challenging, fearing changing how employees and HRM staff performed their work. Respondents agreed that confidentiality and security of personal records were vital as employee records could be hacked. The study generates new knowledge for benchmarking as Zimbabwean organisations endeavour to embrace e-HRM. The study contributes literature on e-HRM adoption, which appears scant in developing countries such as Zimbabwe. More research on e-HRM adoption in developing countries provides practical and theoretical implications for the HRM practice and the research community. Future studies could involve several organisations for more generalisability of the results.

Keywords: Information Technology, e-HRM, strategic HRM, factor analysis, performance

1.0 Introduction and background

The turn of the century has seen Information Technology (IT) becoming a buzzword in organisations, transforming organisational processes (CapGemini Consulting, 2017). IT influences human resources management (HRM) from planning, recruitment, management, training, compensation and maintenance functions (Sohail, Hussain, & Riaz, 2020). Organisations should develop strategies and competencies that enable them to compete in the knowledge economy. Al-Harazneh and Sila (2021) recognised that organisations are increasingly implementing electronic human resources management (e-HRM) to improve their HRM practice. Globally, organisations have implemented e-HRM over the last two decades (Sabrina, 2014). However, its implementation in developing countries such as Zimbabwe is still at the infancy stage.

Organisation A is one of the blue chip firms in Zimbabwe, a leader in new technology adoption and implementation within the mobile telecommunications sector (Changunda, 2021). Telecommunications organisations in Zimbabwe benchmark with other regional telecommunications giants such as MTN, Globacom, Airtel, and Etisalat, who have embraced e-HRM as a strategic tool for competitive advantage (Francis, 2013). By adopting e-HRM, organisation A will use electronic personnel files and offer self-service, cloud solutions, reducing the HRM department's workload.

Monsen (2018) asserts that the success of renowned companies such as Apple, Nike, Disney, Amazon and Google, among others, was partly accredited to the adoption of e-HRM. This view was upheld by Fedorova et al. (2019), who alluded that embracing e-HRM incredibly improves human resources productivity. E-HRM creates efficiency and effectiveness, thereby improving service quality for the enterprise (Ruël, Bondarouk, & Looise, 2004). The adoption of e-HRM reduces costs across several HRM processes such as planning, recruitment, training, appraisals, industrial relations and many others (Findikli & Rofcanin, 2016).

Even though business organisations may not have absolute control over their human resources, the technological revolution of the 21st-century has endowed them with tools and techniques for effectively managing this vital resource. According to Masum, Kabir and Chowdhury (2015),

this has given rise to e-HRM as HRM practices affect the performance and behaviour of the employees on whom companies rely on to achieve business success.

Since the dawn of the 21st-century, which Larkin (2017) described as the IT era, organisations have been upbeat with incorporating Information Communication Technology (ICT) in their work processes through different tools and techniques. This has also seen HRM evolving from a maintenance function to a source of sustainable competitive advantage (Fedorova et al., 2019). Although e-HRM gained prominence in the 21st-century, the term e-HRM first came into use in the 1990s when e-commerce started dominating the business world (Martinson & De Leon, 2018). Jones and Wynn (2021) note that technological advancements and integration in business have made the "paperless office" a reality while creating a real-time information-based interactive work environment. Thus e-HRM refers to conducting human resource transactions using Internet-based technology (Nikolić, Cvetković, & Zečević, 2020).

The expectation is that HRM departments using ICTs will be liberated from the administrative shackles and focus more on developing intellectual and social capital for managing human capital (Hermann, Pentek, & Otto, 2016). E-HRM enables HRM functions such as information services and HRM applications to be accessible at any time by the employees, managers and HR professionals (Bondarouk, Parry, & Furtmueller, 2017). The e-HRM system offers employees flexibility by allowing them to control their personal information through updating records and decision making. It also allows managers to access information and make decisions without consulting the HRM department (Marler& Parry, 2015).

E-HRM is an electronic way of implementing HRM strategies, policies, and practices through conscious and directed support through the full use of technology (Poisat & Mey, 2017). It is viewed as a business solution designed for HRM professionals and executive managers to manage the workforce. E-HRM enables employees to participate and keep track of relevant information (Bondarouk, Parry, & Furtmueller, 2017). Innovating on technological usage has enabled organisations to effectively manage many HRM processes (Panayotopoulou, Galanaki, & Papalexandris, 2010). Hermann et al. (2016) applauded the adoption of e-HRM as it enabled companies to be transparent and offer employees leeway for work-life balance.

The COVID-19 outbreak is promoting remote work. The thrust to automate operations to improve operational efficiency has seen organisations in developed countries adopting environmentally friendly systems. Despite a surge in the usage of e-HRM and its potential impact on business performance, very few studies investigate the adoption and impact on Zimbabwean organisations. The research is motivated by Bondarouk et al. (2017), who concluded that more theoretical and methodological underpinning to understand better and determine if organisations could achieve their goals through e-HRM adoption. The study's objective is to investigate the adoption of e-HRM on a Zimbabwean telecommunications operator's HRM practices.

2.0 Literature review

2.1 An overview of Human Resources

Human Resource Management started from the Labour Relations Management (1890-1939) and stretched to Personnel Management (1945-1979) (Barman & Das, 2018). It earlier viewed human capital as a cost to the organisation; as a result, managers at that time approached personnel management with the eye of reducing employee-related costs by strictly emphasising performance outcomes (Chytiri, 2019).

For instance, Armstrong (2006) defined HRM as an employment management approach to achieve competitive advantage by deploying the right workforce using various cultural, structural, and personnel techniques. Zhao et al. (2012) and Marler and Parry (2015) defined HRM as a strategic approach to managing employment relations that emphasises leveraging the employees' capabilities to achieve a competitive advantage. Ekwoaba, Ikeije and Ufoma (2015) defined it as a people management function ensuring that organisations are staffed with the right qualified and skilled personnel and are rightfully remunerated and involved in teamwork and performance management.

The emergence of the knowledge economy has seen almost every function of organisations digitally transforming in line with the fourth industrial revolution (Nwaiwu, 2018; Strohmeier, 2020). Verina and Titko (2019) opined that the digitalisation of the HRM function entails instilling a change management culture as an overarching strategy. Strohmeier (2020) described e-HRM as the process of optimising electronic systems such as SMAC (social, mobile, analytics

and cloud) technologies to optimise the function of human resources. Amladi (2017) defined e-HRM as a tectonic shift in the HRM function. E-HRM entails the overall digital transformation of the HRM function, which is driven by technological advancement (De Alwis, 2010).

As noted by Chakraborty and Mansor (2013), there is a need for modern-day organisations to embrace new HRM technology to align their HRM functions to the new world order. This opinion suggests that embracing digital technology in managing HRM has emerged as a strategic tool for surviving the global pressures. Indara and Muathe (2017) contended that human capital and information are major workplace factors that drive business performance. E-HRM involves using web-based systems to manage the human resource functions, tactics, and policies (Foiji, Hoque, & Khan, 2019; Sharma & Shukla, 2013). Kaur (2013) and Marler and Parry (2015) report that e-HRM makes firms more efficient and effective by reducing paperwork while increasing accuracy and precision.

Ahmer (2013) observed that business organisations have embraced and fused e-HRM with Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) as a strategic means of meeting the HRM needs of both the internal and external stakeholders. Even though De Alwis (2010) and Amladi (2017) found the adoption of e-HRM as a reflection of the technological alertness of the firm, Masum and Kadar (2015) classified adoption factors into three distinct levels; the individual, the organisational and the technological. On the contrary, Richter et al. (2019) identified users' perception, attitude, motivation, and intentions as determinants of e-HRM adoption. Hassan, Iqbal, & Habibah (2020) observed how the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) affected e-HRM adoption through attributes such as ease of use, attitude, and users' perception.

Delorme and Arcand (2010) echoed that user attributes and their ease of interaction with IT significantly influence the adoption of any technological invention. According to Ahmer (2013), the attitude of senior personnel towards adopting new technology determines its adoption. Additionally, Masum and Kadar (2015) identified organisational factors such as the firm's size, technical skills and competencies possessed by the workforce. Guetal (2019) also identified top management's commitment as a significant factor in adopting new technology, such as e-HRM. Bondarouk et al. (2017) concluded that financial support was another major organisational enabler when adopting e-HRM.

According to Troshani, Jerram and Hill (2011), the adoption of new technology can be hampered by barriers such as innovation complexity and the compatibility of new technology with legacy systems. Masum and Kadar (2015) identified some environmental factors that influenced the adoption of e-HRM, such as the competitive environment that exert enormous pressure on the need to adopt or not to adopt e-HRM.

2.2 Global e-HRM adoption

Developed countries are always leading in technology adoption. Poisat and Mey (2017) pointed out that nearly 70 percent of European companies used the Internet or intranet to deliver HRM services. Scholars revealed e-HRM adoption in China was low due to the lack of infrastructure and well-trained personnel and cultural dynamics between the West and management practices by the Chinese (Ma & Ye, 2015). Though the implementation of e-HRM is dependent on the financial and technical resources of an enterprise, Waheed et al. (2020) observed that Small and Medium Enterprises in the United Kingdom had adopted e-HRM like large enterprises. An earlier study by Parry & Tyson (2011) in the United Kingdom revealed that organisations reduced costs associated with training and recruitment through adopting an e-HRM. Another study in Germany covering HR managers from the top 1000 firms revealed that e-HRM enabled organisations to optimise on scarce resources through the efficient filling of vacancies, retaining staff and employer branding (Laumer, Eckhardt, & Weitzel, 2010).

A study covering HR specialists from service industries in Turkey revealed that e-HRM had lowered management costs, and improved acquisition and access to employment data (Fındıklı & Bayarçelik, 2015). Mago (2016) concluded that 82% of human resources activities in India were conducted over the intranet and Internet, while close to half of Srilankan companies allocated 5% of their budget to e-HRM development. A study conducted in Bangladesh shows that a few large corporations had adopted e-HRM, with most organisations struggling to implement e-HRM due to technical difficulties and resistance from employees (Anjum & Islam, 2020).

Many countries in Africa are experiencing challenges with e-HRM adoption. A Tanzanian study revealed that many organisations lacked resources to implement e-HRM systems, had limited knowledge and accessibility and connectivity challenges (Shah, Michael, & Chalu, 2020). A study conducted in Ghana revealed that two-thirds of organisations had not implemented e-

HRM, 39% of the respondents indicated that they were not ready to adopt e-HRM, while 53% of the respondents showed readiness to adopt e-HRM (Nyame & Boateng, 2015). Many organisations in South Africa have adopted e-HRM systems for most HR practices such as recruitment, training and record keeping. Scholars revealed that over 75% of South African companies had adopted e-HRM (Ukandu, Iwu, & Allen-lle, 2014). A recent study in Zimbabwe revealed that organisations failed to embrace e-HRM due to lack of technical expertise, insufficient financial and technological resources and lack of management support (Denver, Gibson, Tonderayi, & Severino, 2018).

3.0 The impact of e-HRM on business performance

It was observed that businesses that have embraced digital technology are more powerful (Jones & Wynn, 2021). There is always a vast performance difference between firms that adopted e-HRM and those that did not (Adeniji, Osibanjo, & Abiodun, 2013). Digitalisation links the firm with the global community, enabling it to compete for effective and competent human resources. Furthermore, the adoption and usage of digital technology in HRM has enabled companies to attract, retain and motivate a talented young workforce (Jameel, Abdul- Karem, & Mahmood, 2017).

The primary function of HRM, according to Armstrong (2014), is the acquisition and retention of talent. Talent management is a significant differentiator and a business builder (Kumar, 2016). Talented employees are heavily sought after in the global employment market. What makes e-HRM effective for talent management, according to Aggarwal et al. (2017), is that it can enhance collaboration between employees and all the organisational stakeholders. Organisations are designing systems for compensation and awarding benefit packages for their employees through ICT based systems, ensuring that compensation information is centrally accessible on time (Umar, Yammama, & Shaibu, 2020). e-Learning is an innovative approach for enhancing the acquisition of additional skills or competencies of employees to increase their performance and productivity (Cunningham, 2007).

4.0 Methods

The study utilised a quantitative case study design to investigate the adoption of e-HRM by a telecommunications organisation in Zimbabwe. The anonymity and confidentiality of the organisation shall be maintained by referring to it as organisation A. The study implemented a questionnaire-based survey targeting 130 managers and supervisors from July to September 2021. This study measured three constructs and was divided into four categories. The first category deals with the demographic and work experience information of the respondents. The other sections include questions measuring respondents' views regarding e-HRM adoption, perceived benefits of adopting e-HRM, and challenges of adopting e-HRM by organisation A.

A 38-item questionnaire using a 5 point Likert scale instrument was developed where "1" represented "strongly disagree" to "5", which represented "strongly agree". The questionnaire utilised closed and open-ended questions. From the 130 questionnaires distributed to the respondents, 107 were completed, giving a response rate of 82.31 percent. The questionnaire was distributed online due to restrictions in movement and physical contact induced by the COVID-19 lockdown.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 26, was used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics were calculated to meet the study's objective. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test were performed to determine the suitability of the data to conduct factor analysis. The study conducted factor analysis using principal component analysis and varimax rotation. The reliability of the instrument was calculated.

5.0 Results

5.1 The demographic profile of the respondents

The respondent's demographic profile depicts that the majority (69 percent) of the respondents were male, while females constituted 31 percent. Regarding the age of the respondents, the majority, 42 (39.25 percent), are in the age group 20-30 years, followed by 28 (26.16 percent) in the age group 31-40 years, those in the 41-65 years age group were 32 (29.91 percent), while the remaining 4.68 percent were younger than 20 years. Related to job experience, about half (51.5

percent) of the respondents had 5-10 years of experience, 35 percent had 11 years of experience and above, and 13.5 percent had 0-5 years of experience. The results show that 59 percent of the respondents had an undergraduate degree as their highest qualification, followed by 37 percent who had a master's degree. Only 4 percent of the respondents had a Higher National Diploma. The results show that organisation A is a learning institution. According to Heracleous (2003), a learning organisation is characterised by high academic qualifications and continuous adoption of new technology to improve operations and gain a competitive advantage.

5.2 The reliability test

A reliability test was performed to determine the reliability and internal consistency of the instrument. The Cronbach's Alpha test was conducted on the constructs to measure their internal consistency (Taber, 2018). The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.755 was observed. Nunally (1978), as cited by Taber (2018), prescribed 0.7 as the minimum acceptable value for determining the instrument's reliability. The observed value shows that the instrument was reliable, and the study's findings can be replicated in similar circumstances.

5.3 Factor Analysis

The validity of the measurement instrument was assessed using factor analysis. Factor analysis highlights if the items being measured are clustered under the same variable or not. To ensure that the chosen analysis would be appropriate to the dataset at hand, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity were done. The results are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.902
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	214.65
	Df	18
	Sig.	.000

The calculated Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy statistic was 0.902, with a corresponding significance of 0.000 for the Bartlett test. The calculated value is greater than

0.70, indicating that each factor has sufficient items, any value less than 0.50 indicates inadequate items. If the KMO is greater than 0.5, and Bartlett's test is less than 0.1, it follows that the data is acceptable for factor analysis (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2010). Having qualified for factor analysis, principal component analysis (PCA) was used to extract varimax rotation. The resultant rotated component matrix is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Rotated Component Matrix

	Component		
	1	2	3
E-HRM is the future of human capital management	.745	.202	.362
E-HRM is an effective innovation for talent management	.671	.073	.180
E- HRM is a good technological innovation that support HRM	.219	.836	.341
Adopting e-HRM makes the company a global player in people management	.115	.718	.083
E-HRM is a decisive conduit for paperless office	.114	.860	.069
There is much paperwork that is difficult to computerise	.172	.336	.774
Adopting e-HRM increases the risk of losing important information due to hacking	.023	.128	.693

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations. Component 1 = Views of organisation A towards e-HR adoption, Component 2 = Perceived benefits of e-HR adoption, Component 3 = Challenges of e-HRM adoption by organisation A

Yong and Pearce (2013) prescribed that the acceptable factor loadings should be at least 0.4, but ideally, greater than 0.5. Factor analysis is appropriate when the calculated values are between 0.5 and 1.0. Values below 0.5 imply that factor analysis may not be appropriate (Yong & Pearce, 2013). As shown below, guided by Yong and Pearce (2013), factors with the largest eigenvalues were retained.

Component 1: Views of organisation A towards e-HR

- e-HRM is the future of human capital management
- e-HRM is a practical innovation for talent management

Component 2: Perceived benefits of e- HR adoption by organisation A

- e- HRM is a good technological innovation that supports HRM
- Adopting e-HRM makes the company a global player in people management
- e-HRM is a decisive conduit for a paperless office

Component 3: Challenges with e- HR adoption by organisation A

- There is much paperwork that is difficult to computerise

  Adopting e-HRM increases the risk of losing important information due to hacking

Based on the factor analysis presented in Table 2, the factors with the highest eigenvalues affirm that the constructs determine the adoption of e-HRM by organisation A.

5.4 The impact of HRM on employee relations and management

The advent of e-HRM has reduced the cost of generating information whilst at the same time improving communication and interaction between employees and management. In this regard, e-HRM has reduced people management costs whilst increasing the speed of communication and interaction (Al Shobaki, Naser, Amuna, & Talla, 2017). Bredin and Söderlund (2011) found e-HRM to be environmentally friendly in that it enhanced the environmental performance of the firms by advocating for paperless HRM systems. The respondents rated the effect of e-HRM on employee relations and management as presented in Table 3.

A high standard deviation highlights that data is spread out from the mean, while a low standard deviation shows data clustered around the mean. An acceptable Kurtosis value ranges between -10 and 10 (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010; Byrne, 2010). A negative Kurtosis value shows that the distribution has lighter tails than the normal distribution.

Table 3: The impact of e-HRM adoption on organisational performance

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev	Kurtosis
E-HRM has a potential of lowering the administrative costs	19.9%	8.4%	0%	16.1%	55.6%	2.1886	1.62971	-0.9232
By adopting e-HRM, organisation A can	21.8%	0%	0%	56.4%	21.8%	2.1888	1.62974	-0.923

deliver state of the art HR services								
Adopting e-HRM gives HRM staff more time to focus on strategic matters	0%	8.69%	0%	8.8%	82.52%	4.8492	.60117	1.8773
E-HRM increases HRM effectiveness and efficiency	0%	8.5%	0%	2.9%	88.6%	4.7448	.80635	8.604
E-HRM enables organisation A to scout for the best talent globally	18.9%	12.9%	0%	24.8%	43.4%	2.5661	1.63508	-1.579

The findings indicate that 71.7 percent of the respondents agreed that e-HRM improved human resources management through lowering administrative costs. The finding has a mean of 2.1886, a standard deviation of 1.62971 and Kurtosis of -0.923. This finding is in line with Marler and Parry (2015), who reported that e-HRM had reduced the cost of hiring by 95 percent. Regarding the effect of e-HRM on the handling of employee records, 61.4 percent of the respondents agreed that e-HRM had automated the handling of employee records. This finding has a mean of 2.1888 and a standard deviation of 1.679474, with a Kurtosis of -0.804.

The majority of the respondents (91.32 percent) agreed that adopting e-HRM gives HRM staff more time to focus on strategic matters of the organisation. This is shown by a mean of 4.8492 and a standard deviation of 0.60117. The findings also gave a high kurtosis of 1.8773. In a similar study, Panayotopoulou, Vakola, & Galanaki (2007) indicated that e-HRM allowed workers to focus on more strategic issues. Thus e-HRM reduces the physical interaction between employees and HRM managers, thus freeing them to concentrate on strategic issues of the human resources function.

Concerning the delivery of the state of the art HR services, an overwhelming 78 percent of the respondents agreed that e-HRM had brought the state of the art HR services. This is shown by a mean of 2.1888 and a standard deviation of 1.62974. The findings also gave a kurtosis of 0.923. Over two-thirds (68.2 percent) of the respondents agreed that e-HRM enabled organisation A to scout for the best talent globally. A mean score of 2.566, a standard deviation of 1.635 and Kurtosis of -1.579 was observed. This is similar to Spitzer (2014), who observed that e-HRM

allowed organisations to recruit from vast and distant geographical areas, replacing traditional staffing and workforce planning constraints.

The majority (91.5 percent) of the respondents agreed that adopting e-HRM increased HRM effectiveness and efficiency through a mean of 4.7548, a standard deviation of 0.80635 and a high Kurtosis of 8.604. This finding also indicates that there could be very high employee morale. As a whole, the findings presented give considerable consensus that organisation A has benefited from adopting e-HRM. The study's findings resonate with Heracleous (2003), who hailed e-HRM for promoting the development of new skills within employees and management alike. Since electronic platforms continually change, employees will also continuously upgrade their skills to keep pace with technological development, advantageous to the organisation. Goldstein (2015) noted that the advent of e-HRM had transformed how organisations hire, manage and support their employees. This is a crucial finding that signifies the importance and benefit of e-HRM in improving HRM. Evaluating employee performance through digital systems brings transparency and fairness.

5.5 The challenges with adopting e-HRM

Aggarwal and Sharon (2017) noted that human resources managers must continuously adapt to the changing e-HR practices. Swarnalatha and Sureshkrishna (2012) concluded that e-HRM presents HRM managers with the daunting task of developing and promoting a digital corporate culture within the organisation. Given these concerns, the respondents were asked to rate the challenges associated with adopting and implementing e-HRM, and the findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Challenges of e-HRM adoption by organisation A

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev	Kurtosis
Aligning e-HRM processes to the HRM function	5.7%	28.3%	0%	17.0%	49.1%	3.7547	1.45319	-1.354
Fear of changing the way employees and HRM staff do things	7.5%	11.3%	3.8%	71.7%	5.7%	3.5660	1.02862	1.133
Lack of		25.1%	7.5%	9.4%	22.1%	2.8679	1.73247	-1.755

commitment and involvement by all employees	35.8%							
Too many manual records to computerise	21.6%	46.1%	0%	18.0%	13.3%	2.4151	1.69199	-.1.395
There is high risk of losing important information due to hackers	17.0%	3.8%	9.4%	18.9%	50.9%	3.8302	1.51576	-.512

The respondents were asked to rate the challenges of aligning e-HRM processes to the HRM function; 66.1 percent agreed that aligning e-HRM processes to the HRM function was challenging. This finding has a mean of 3.75, a standard deviation of 1.45319 and a kurtosis of -1.354.

The responses show that 60.9 percent of the respondents disagreed that employees lacked commitment and involvement when adopting e-HRM, while 31.1 percent agreed. Results show that 67.7 percent of the respondents disagreed that computerising manual records hindered adopting e-HRM, while 31.3 percent agreed. The finding has a mean of 2.42, a standard deviation of 1.69199, and a kurtosis of -1.395. Respondents agreed that e-HRM improved communication between employees and managers, thereby increasing efficiency. The finding has a mean of 2.91, a standard deviation of 1.29199, and a Kurtosis of 1.935. The last item evaluated how the respondents perceived that the introduction of e-HRM would result in the loss of personal records and compromised access through hacking after adopting e-HRM. The responses show that 69.8 percent agreed, while 20.8 percent disagreed, and the rest were neutral. This finding gave a mean of 3.83 and a standard deviation of 1.51576, whilst the Kurtosis was -0.512. The responses show anxiety when changing how employees and HR staff perform their work, highlighting a significant challenge associated with adopting e-HRM.

The findings presented generally show that the line managers and HRM staff have some phobias towards adopting e-HRM. However, these phobias are not unique to organisation A as they have been reported by scholars such as Kuvaas et al. (2014), Nwaiwu (2018), Fedorova et al. (2019) and Das & Sureshkrishna (2019).

6.0 Discussion of the findings

The findings presented affirmed the positive effect of e-HRM adoption on the HRM performance of organisation A. The findings show that organisation A has taken significant steps in addressing some of the factors, making it ready to adopt and sustain e-HRM. The results show that organisation A is ready to adopt e-HRM through a high degree of readiness. The readiness was measured in terms of the readiness of the workforce to adopt e-HRM. This is supported by other scholars who pointed out that when organisations score highly on these factors, it shows the readiness to adopt e-HRM (Foiji, Hoque, & Khan, 2019; Masum & Kadar, 2015).

The findings also confirmed that the adoption of e-HRM positively impacts the HRM function of organisation A. This view was also expressed by Kuvaas et al. (2014), Ebersold and Glass (2015) and Al Shobaki et al. (2017), who found e-HRM to be associated with many benefits which are catalytic to the business performance of the firm. Despite the benefits, the findings also indicated that the adoption of e-HRM has its fair share of challenges despite the celebrated milestones. Aggarwal and Sharon (2017), Fedorova et al. (2019), and Das and Sureshkrishna (2019) pointed out that e-HRM presents HRM managers with the daunting task of developing and promoting a digital corporate culture.

The findings reveal that organisation A recognises e-HRM as a critical people management strategy to improve efficiency, employee experience, and service delivery. The findings gathered affirmed immense benefits that could accrue to organisation A by adopting e-HRM. The identified benefits included lowering administrative costs, delivering state of the art HRM services, enabling HR staff more time to focus on strategic matters, increasing HRM effectiveness and efficiency, and facilitating the scouting of the best talent globally. The findings confirmed the assertions of Sohail et al. (2020), who identified a plethora of benefits that accrue to organisations as a result of embracing e-HRM. Similar sentiments were also expressed by Masum and Kadar (2015), who hailed e-HRM as an effective strategy for improving an organisation's competitive advantage.

7.0 Conclusions

The results show that the three constructs had a direct impact on the adoption of e-HRM. The findings indicate that organisation A had satisfied most of the significant factors for the effective adoption of e-HRM. Based on this finding, the study concludes that e-HRM can enable organisation A to compete globally for effective and competent human resources, providing tremendous prospects for business success. Implementing e-HRM improves the digital skills and competencies of the employees, which is a critical 21st-century skill. The study's limitation is that it was a case study on one company in the telecommunications industry. However, given that organisation A is a significant player in the mobile telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe, the findings reflect the industry's general position towards embracing e-HRM. The study recommends that future researchers focus on establishing the effects of e-HRM and digital transformation on employees and business performance of the mobile telecommunication firms in Zimbabwe.

This study is very significant in that it exposes how e-HRM can leverage the HR practices of organisations to lower costs, improve efficiency and foster global competitiveness. The study's findings are essential to practitioners and scholars on e-HRM adoption. The study generates new knowledge for benchmarking by other players in the telecommunications sector in Zimbabwe as they endeavour to embrace e-HRM. Thus significantly contributing to the body of knowledge on e-HRM, which appears to be very scant in developing countries such as Zimbabwe at the present moment.

COMPETING INTERESTS DISCLAIMER:

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist. The products used for this research are commonly and predominantly use products in our area of research and country. There is absolutely no conflict of interest between the authors and producers of the products because we do not intend to use these products as an avenue for any litigation but for the advancement of knowledge. Also, the research was not funded by the producing company; rather, it was funded by the personal efforts of the author.

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