



Employees' Satisfaction Towards E-HRM In Organizations

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Abstract

Electronic HRM is increasingly gaining importance within working organizations and many of its adherents assume and express its advantages. It also refers to the processing and transmission of digitized information used in HRM, including text, sound and visual images, from one computer to another. E-HRM is a way of implementing HR strategies, policies, and practices in organizations through a directed and conscious support of and with the full use of web-technology-based channels. The word 'implementing' in this context has a broad meaning, such as making something work, putting something into practice, or having something realized. E-HRM hence, is a concept - a way of 'doing' HRM. . Scientific support, however, is scarce and there is a lack of clarity regarding the contribution of e-HRM to HRM effectiveness. Efficiency, service delivery and standardisation goals are commonly realised. Some evidence of a transformational impact of e-HRM was found, as HR staff has more time and information to support the organisation in achieving its business strategy. Technology has recently developed in a way that enables e-HR to make a mark, especially with the introduction of corporate intranets and web-enabled HRIS. The nature of the development path, however, varies considerably from one organisation to another organisation.

Keywords: *Electronic HRM (E-HRM), Virtual HRM, Web-based HRM, Human resource information system.*

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1. DEFINING E-HRM

The processing and transmission of digitalized HR information is called electronic human resource management (e-HRM). Information technology is vastly changing the way HR departments handle record keeping and information sharing. Employees can gain information through self-service. **E-HRM** is the planning, implementation and application of information technology for both networking and supporting at least two individual or collective actors in their shared performing of HR activities.

E-HRM is neither same as HRIS (Human Resource Information System) which refers to ICT systems used within HR departments nor is it the same as V-HRM or Virtual HRM - which is defined by **Lepak and Snell** as "...a network-based structure built on partnerships and typically mediated by information technologies to help the organization acquire, develop, and deploy intellectual capital [1]. " e-HRM is introduced to improve efficiency, service delivery, standardization and organisational image, and to empower managers and transform HR into a more strategic function.

E-HRM is in essence, the devolution of HR functions have been done for the purpose of management and employees. They access these functions typically via intranet or other web-technology channels[2]. The empowerment of managers and employees to perform certain chosen HR functions relieves the HR department of these tasks, allowing HR staff to focus less on the operational and more on the strategic elements of HR, and thus, allowing organisations to lower HR department staffing levels as the administrative burden is automatically lightened. It is anticipated that, as E-HRM develops and becomes more entrenched in business culture, these changes will become more apparent, but they have yet to be manifested to a significant degree. A CIPD 2007 survey states that "The initial research indicates that much-commented-on development such as shared services, outsourcing and e-HR have had relatively little impact on costs or staff numbers.

Employees' satisfaction is necessary for smooth working of an organisation. Without this, peaceful running of an organisation is not possible. If some changes are done in the organisation and employees are dissatisfied with it then the results of those changes are not in favour of the organisation. The technology-assisted model of HRM is often begun as an efficiency program, but it soon evolves into a major source of competitive advantage. In addition, while some human resources management departments utilize a few virtual HRM applications, others strive to reengineer, automate and integrate nearly all of their HRM functions.

E- HRM costs lower and therefore improves efficiency by:

- ✓ Reducing paperwork and streamlining work flow,
- ✓ Automating redundant HRM tasks,
- ✓ Empowering employees to embrace a self- service HRM delivery system,
- ✓ Keeping the company workflow fully informed about all important HR compliance issues and corporate events,
- ✓ Speeding up the response time of HRM systems,
- ✓ Ensuring that more informed decisions are made,
- ✓ Improving time management.

2. GENERAL REVIEW

At first we demystify the phenomenon E-HRM by raising the following items:

- ✓ The state of HRM in an organization
- ✓ The E-HRM goal
- ✓ E-HRM types
- ✓ E-HRM outcomes

3. THE STATE OF HRM IN AN ORGANIZATION

E-HRM is a way of implementing HR strategies, policies, and practices in organizations through a conscious and directed support of and/or with the full use of web-based channels. E-HRM is a concept -a way of 'doing' HRM. The fact is that E-HRM can transform the nature of HRM strategies, policies and practices. The literature on E-HRM is growing, including a book edited by **Gueutal and Stone** in which, mainly American scholars present a good overview of E-HRM research to date, and try to bridge the gap with E-HRM practice. Researchers are searching for relevant and adequate theory that can fully grasp the concept of E-HRM, and frequently present fragmented empirical evidence, particularly on E-HRM sub-fields such as e-recruitment and e-learning, the so-called "early bird" areas where web technology was first adopted [3].

4. E-HRM GOALS

What are the goals that drive stakeholders for deciding about E-HRM? Based upon a scan of professionally-oriented and academic journals, we can draw three types of goals:

- ✓ Improving the strategic orientation of HRM,
- ✓ Cost reduction/efficiency gains, and
- ✓ Client service improvement/facilitating management and employees.

Some of the empirical findings add globalization to these goals, seeing it as an E-HRM driving force in large international organizations. However, findings also show that these goals are not clearly defined in practice which means that E-HRM is mostly directed towards cost reductions and efficiency increases in HR services, rather than aiming to improve the strategic orientation of HRM. Through recent studies it was found that in nearly half of the companies with a fully integrated HRIS, HR was not viewed as a strategic partner.

5. E-HRM TYPES

The current literature distinguishes three types of E-HRM:

- ✓ Operational E-HRM,
- ✓ Relational E-HRM, and
- ✓ Transformational E-HRM

Within all the three types of HRM, choices have to be made in terms of which HRM activities will be offered face-to-face, and which will be offered through web-based HR.

For the operational type of HRM, the issue amounts to a choice between asking employees to keep their own personal data up-to-date through an HR website or to have an administrative force in place to do this for them. In relational type of HRM, there is a choice between supporting recruitment and selection through a web-based application or using a paper-based approach.

Lastly, in terms of transformational HRM, it is possible to create a change-ready workforce through an integrated set of web-based tools that enables the workforce to develop in line with the company's strategic choices.

E-HRM types tend to be mixed, establishing a good basis for E-HRM at the operational level seems to be an essential prerequisite for relational and transformational E-HRM; and this requires changes in the tasks of HR professionals (less paper-based administration, more e-communications with employees, acquiring skills for operating IT).

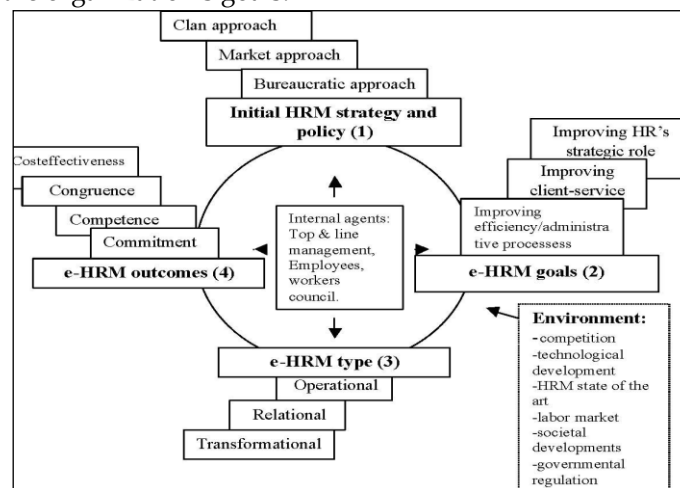
Further, that there is a “gap” between E-HRM in a technical sense (the available functionality) and its use and adoption by employees and line managers. What has shown up clearly is that a company with HRM policies and practices which are of the bureaucratic type cannot just jump to a transformational type of E-HRM.

6. E-HRM OUTCOMES

There are four distinguish four possibilities:

- ✓ High commitment
- ✓ High competence
- ✓ Cost effectiveness
- ✓ Higher congruence

These outcomes may change the state of HRM in an organization, or through individuals and/or groups within an organization actually result in a new HRM state. This completely closes the circle. With the addition of the E-HRM outcomes, the building blocks which are needed to finalize our E-HRM model have been identified (As per the Figure below). Literature suggests that the various goals of E-HRM and the different types of E-HRM are expected to result in outcomes including more efficient HRM processes, a higher level of service delivery and a better strategic contribution. Such outcomes can be formulated in one concept, which can be termed as HRM effectiveness. E-HRM is expected to contribute to the effectiveness of HRM, which consequently could help achieve the organization’s goals.



7. Achievement of e-HRM goals

The possible goals for e-HRM have been listed - efficiency, service delivery, strategic orientation, manager empowerment and standardisation. Scholars have agreed that e-HRM leads to

considerable changes (Gueutal and Stone, 2005; Strohmeier and Kabst, 2009) but have rarely examined the outcomes of e-HRM compared to the initial goals for e-HRM introduction. We might presume that e-HRM systems, developed for efficiency gains, for improvements in service delivery or for a more strategic orientation for HR, would achieve outcomes related to efficiency, service delivery and a strategic orientation respectively.

However, there may be situations when goals are not realised, so intended outcomes are not achieved, or when unintended outcomes are experienced [3]. The fact that e-HRM systems introduced to achieve a particular goal will automatically lead to that outcome may be simplistic and unrealistic, as might be the idea that e-HRM will always lead to the same outcomes for the HRM function. Despite these suggestions, the situations under which e-HRM may satisfy efficiency, effectiveness or strategic objectives have not generally been investigated.

This article will provide an initial exploratory investigation of the factors that might affect whether goals of e-HRM use are translated into outcomes.

Following the framework of the stated goals identified, a structured examination of organisational goals for using e-HRM has been provided, the outcomes that are actually realised as a result of e-HRM use and the factors that affect this. The questions are:

- ✓ What are the goals stated by organisations when introducing e-HRM?
- ✓ What are the actual outcomes experienced by organisations as a result of the introduction of e-HRM?
- ✓ What factors affect the realisation of stated goals for e-HRM?

8. Methodology

As HRM is a highly organisational specific activity, I have adopted a qualitative case study methodology in ten organisations. While it was not possible to fully represent the population of organisations through ten case studies, we have selected a range of organisations so that e-HRM could be examined in a number of different contexts. Organisations were selected who had introduced e-HRM over a year before from a range of industry sectors, at different stages in e-HRM implementation and with different e-HRM systems and experiences. The final sample was dependent on the agreement of every organisation to take part, so to this extent a convenience sample was used.

The ten case studies was a sufficient number of organisations to explore a range of goals and outcomes of e-HRM in a qualitative study. The case studies consisted of visits between May 2012 and October 2012, where interviews with senior HR practitioners (including those responsible for the introduction of e-HRM) and HR users of e-HRM, as well as managers and employees where they were direct users of the system were held, and related documentation gathered as appropriate to the case. Conversational interviews such as those used in the study are appropriate for case studies of e-HRM use. The number of interviewees for each case study was dictated by the advice of HR Manager, the organisational structure, end users of e-HRM and availability of interviewees. In SkyM (name of the Organisation not disclosed) focus groups with employees were conducted to enable to talk to more employees. In total, 50 interviews and five focus groups were undertaken. An interview protocol was developed based upon the e-HRM literature and discussions.

For HR managers, this contained a series of questions about the reasons for introduction of e-HRM, its implementation and the impact that it had within the organisation. For managers and employees, the interviews focused on their use of the system and the impact that e-HRM has had on them and on their perceptions of the HRM function. In addition, a number of questions about the organisation and HR structure were asked. These protocols were first circulated to three HR practitioners and changes were made based upon their feedback.

Interviews were not recorded, due to interviewee's confidentiality. Detailed notes were taken and checked with interviewees for accuracy.

9. RESULTS

Efficiency or operational effectiveness was the most commonly mentioned goal for introducing e-HRM, appearing in all ten case study organisations. The nature of planned efficiencies varied among organisations. Organisations introduced e-HRM to reduce headcount within the HR function, to improve cost effectiveness, remove the use of paper in HR processes or to improve the speed of processes [4].

Nine organisations had realised efficiency savings as a result of introducing e-HRM. Some organisations had reduced their HR headcount as a result of using e-HRM, but these reductions were relatively small. Organisations had also experienced direct cost reductions and claimed to have achieved faster HR processes, though many had not measured these changes.

In most organisations, the automation of processes and the direct entry of information and data by managers removed the need for duplicate keying of data by the HR administration team resulting that the amount of time needed for transactions was reduced considerably.

Eight organisations had goals for improving service delivery. Seven organisations provided evidence that service delivery goals were being realised. Improved accuracy of the information contained in HR systems was achieved by removing duplicate keying of data, users had more easy access to information or training material and there was improved accuracy and availability of data for use in valuable management decision-making. The introduction of e-HRM had significantly reduced the transactional work of the HR administration teams in organisations allowing the HR function time to work on more complex or value added tasks, and to spend more time advising managers. The resourcing team was more client-focused and proactive in recruitment, recruitment administrators' had been re-named 'recruitment advisors' to reflect this and the processes were more transparent.

Six organisations had goals for manager empowerment through the development of management capability to conduct HR activities, such as recruitment, appraisal, performance management and updating information. However, only three organisations provided evidence that this empowerment was being realised. Only four of the case study organisations had aimed to increase the strategic orientation of the HR function, although these organisations had not defined this as the execution of business strategy. The actual impact of e-HRM was lesser clear, although seven organisations described outcomes that could be described as increasing the strategic orientation of the HR function.

10. CONCLUSION

From the above analysis it can be concluded that respondents from different organisations have different opinion towards all the Factors like faster Communication, Improvements, Benefits, Employee Management, Time Efficiency and Client Oriented. Respondents of different age groups have almost same opinion towards faster Communication, Employee Management and Time Efficiency while they have different opinion towards Improvements, Benefits, and Client Oriented. E-HRM outcomes are mainly related to efficiency, service delivery and standardization, relational outcomes and potential improvements in organisational image.

The realisation of improved efficiency and effectiveness is dependent on the design and implementation of the system and increased effectiveness and involvement in delivering the business strategy may depend on appropriate redeployment and up-skilling of HR staff.

This study may be limited by the inclusion of a number of organisations which had implemented e-HRM technology relatively recently as the impact of e-HRM might become greater over time. Our organisations use of e-HRM mainly focused on the use of relatively basic e-HRM functionality. The impact of e-HRM may be particularly great in large organisations where the number of employees is such that the automation of processes is cost effective. Further research into the impact of e-HRM in smaller organisations is needed. The realisation of improved efficiency and effectiveness is dependent on the design and implementation of the system and increased effectiveness in delivering the business strategy may depend on appropriate redeployment and up-skilling of HR staff [5].

11. SUGGESTIONS

- ✓ E-HRM is client oriented which means that if clients are happy with it then employees are automatically satisfied.
- ✓ Administrative burden can be reduced by implementing e-HRM thus the employees will feel satisfied.
- ✓ Today time management is must for everyone and e-HRM helps in Time Management.
- ✓ As e-HRM supports multi-language thus can overcome cross-cultural barriers.
- ✓ Employees have to take more and more part in online discussions of the organisation so that they feel recognized in the organisation.
- ✓ E-HRM enjoys complete transparency in the system. No information can be retained as secret in the organization with the help of e-HRM.
- ✓ Employees have to self managed 'employee management'.

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