



EFFECT OF E-REASSIGN SYSTEM ON PERFORMANCE OF CHARTERED UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

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Abstract

In recent years, different scholars have attributed the increasing organizational performance and HR functionality to the increased adoption of information systems in HR functions. The introduction of global HRMIS is a key component that can improve the performance of the organization and has been advocated for by management experts for implementation in organizations around the world. Despite the strategies embraced in universities, their performance is not as expected in comparison to the other universities regionally and internationally. The e-Reassign system is aimed at enabling the universities to allocate duties and responsibilities to employees at a given time for efficiency in performance. The objective of the study was to determine the effect of e-reassign system and the performance of chartered universities in Kenya. The collection of primary data was done using semi-structured

questionnaires which were sent to the respondents through e-mail. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The regression results indicated that the E-reassign system had a positive statistically significant outcome on the performance of chartered universities in Kenya. The study findings suggested that growth in the use of the E-reassign system would translate into an increase in the performance of chartered universities in Kenya. The study recommended that the management should formulate, strengthen and enforce a policy on e-reassign so as to take advantage of employees' experiences, seniority and employee discipline for better task performance.

Keywords: Performance, Systems, Human Resource Management, E-reassign System

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, different scholars have attributed the increasing organizational performance and HR functionality to the increased adoption of information systems in HR functions (Ngai & Wat, 2016; Mohanty & Tripathy, 2019). For instance, the United Kingdom (UK) HRMIS has contributed to increased pressure on companies to promote strategic agendas and concentrate more on the value of shareholders, leading to improvement in work, content and priorities of HR professionals (Weeks, 2013). A study by Singh, (2014), revealed that most European countries such as Sweden, United Kingdom, Germany, Greece and Slovakia were utilizing HRMIS in regard to payroll, individual personnel records, recruitment and selection, benefits, time registration and attendance, training and development, performance management, career planning/succession planning, work scheduling/work re-assign and health and safety.

In terms of technology use, Africa has not been realistic in providing integrated services effectively (Troshani, Jerram & Hill, 2011). This is a result of the inability of certain companies in their policies and processes to incorporate existing types of technologies. Human resource managers are required to proactively adopt technology to generate responses and meet evolving organizational prospects. African countries have not been practical in the utilization of technology to offer combined services efficiently. This is a result of failure to adopt current forms of technology in their procedures and processes (Weeks, 2013; Morrisson, 2022). According to Karanja (2016) regardless of the strong connotation for the venture in higher education to facilitate social advancement and economic growth, the area is a disaster all over the world.

Every society across the globe is fast becoming knowledge-oriented and operating in economies that are being driven by information. The ripple effect of this trend is the continuous growth of the international higher education market as a viable source of innovative HRM

approaches. Kemei (2016) noted that organizations are becoming globalized, generating the need for an integrated framework where they can efficiently manage their human capital. This has therefore led to the introduction of global HRMIS which is a key component that can improve the performance of organizations and has been advocated by management experts for implementation in organizations (Opiyo, 2015).

BACKGROUND ELUCIDATION

Human Resource Management Information System

There are many terminologies used for these systems nevertheless, HRMS, e-HRM (e-Human Resource Management) and HRIS are the most widely used (Dusmanescu and Bradic-Martinovic, 2011). The difference between e-HRM and HRIS can be explained based on the automation of HR services (transactional systems) for IT support of Management Information Systems. Moreover, HRIS is seen as a collection of interconnected databases and as applications for HRMS that brings a variety of HR functions together. The main objective of HRIS is to strengthen the HR department in order to increase the organization's efficiency. On the other hand, e-HRM provides facilities for the HR department and for both staff and management.

The availability of computerized systems has made it possible and successful to collect, store and use information (Weeks, 2013). In addition to collecting and storing data, advances in technology have made it possible to analyze and manipulate data. The development of information technology has contributed to the rapid use of HR to optimize processes, thereby promoting enhanced efficiency of the organization. Research by Hussain, Wallace & Cornelius (2017) credited the adoption of information systems with the increase in the usefulness of HR functions which lead to the realization of the strategic growth plan of an organization. As technology evolves with time, organizations become more complex and their information management requirements increase thus creating the necessity for relevant information systems to be put in place (Stone, Deadrick, Lukazewski and Johnson, 2015).

Recent studies on electronic HRM have suggested HRMIS in pushing HRM departments towards transformation where HR-related decisions are supported by adequate, descriptive and prognostic information systems (Midiwo, 2015). Owing to the evolving existence of technology, the adoption of information systems by organizations has gained traction in recent years. This is due to increased demands of HR practitioners from consumers and organizations over the years and the rapid speed of technological advances that have implemented processes and streamlined items that were not feasible in previous years. (Chukwunonso, 2013).

The employee e-re-assign system is an additional functionality of HRMS. E-reassign refers to the electronic gadgets used in the electronic allocation of duties and responsibilities to employees. According to Gellatly (2015), the e-reassignment system ensures HR function performance through promotion, transfer, pay revision, re-assign, confirmation, and pay mode change. Assigned targets have been shown to have a positive effect through two mechanisms. First, assigned goals influence the levels of personal (self-set) goals, which in turn affect the different dimensions of effort positively. Secondly, they influence both personal target levels and the different dimensions of effort.

E-reassign system refers to electronic gadgets used in the electronic allocation of duties and responsibilities to employees. Locke and Latham (2015) observed that the effects of re-assigning targets on direction, length and strength of effort are relatively automatic once objectives are adopted by individuals. The aforementioned authors further suggest that, under some conditions, priorities may have a beneficial effect on attempts to implement strategies. Weeks (2013) noted that to aid a manager in completing performance reviews, HRMIS should be upgraded from time to time as technology advances. This would promote the creation of reports on the results of workers that can be included in the distribution/assignment of work. The indicators for an e-reassign system that this study adopted are experience, seniority, task performance and discipline records as used by (Weeks, 2013; Gellatly, 2015).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Kenyan universities' performance has presented poor performance output as compared to the other universities in the region and internationally in the past decade. For example, in the recent ranking, University of Nairobi emerged as number 1,244 out of 2,000 universities ranked in the year 2019-2020 ranking statistics worldwide. This was the first time a Kenyan university appeared in the top university ranking since 2012 when the ranking was initiated (CWUR, 2020). Regionally during the year 2019-2020, the ranking was as follows; University of Nairobi-20, Kenyatta University-23, Egerton University-30, Moi University-46, Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology-64 just to mention a few (Webometrics, 2020). This ranking is based on web presence, visibility, transparency and scholarly excellence. Based on the above statistics the performance is not good and furthermore only a few universities appeared in the top ranks in the regional rankings.

Extant empirical literature on HRMIS have been conducted in American, European or Asian countries (Ihami, *et al*, 2016; Khashman, 2016; Marshal & Saima, 2014; Weeks, 2013; Khan, Ikhlaq & Mujtaba, 2012; Yiing & Ahmad, 2009). The majority of these studies were focused on identifying geographical variations in developed foreign countries so that their

results could not be generalized to Kenya, a developing country. This study sought to address this gap.

Research objective

To determine the effect of e-human resource planning system and on performance of chartered universities in Kenya.

Research hypothesis

H₀: E-reassign system does not significantly affect performance of chartered universities in Kenya.

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

E- Reassign System and Organization Performance

A new addition to the functionality is the E-re-assign module of HRMIS (Gupta, 2017). Being a new feature very few researches have been conducted on it. Existing literature has dealt with HRIMS in general. Ilhami, *et al.*, (2016) conducted a study whose findings showed that in businesses, HRM processes that are carried out by information systems contribute significantly to the competitiveness of enterprises as well as to the success of workers. To evaluate how using HRIS affects organizational effectiveness and employee efficiency, the study utilized a survey approach. A sample of 160 senior managers, mid-level executives and manufacturing and banking sector staff were involved. The analysis was conducted using correlation and regression test models. There is a variable gap since the organizational performance was utilized as a dependent variable in the study. Lastly, there is a theoretical gap since the study was not anchored on theories.

Weeks (2013) indicated that before the installation of the e-reassign system there was a reduction in the number of employees who required on-the-job training and those employees in need of re-assignment as well as those leaving their job. After the implementation of e-reassign systems job satisfaction increased, task-related employee complaints reduced drastically, the job accomplishment rate of employees after training increased, there was a reduction in the faults at work, employee performance increased, the rate of absenteeism went down and the reassignment of employees to incorrect jobs went down. The study's goal was to determine how HRMIS affected workers. The gap in this study is that it was done in a foreign country, this, therefore, invalidates the generalization of the results to a bigger population thus creating a contextual gap.

According to Kogo and Kimencu (2018), effective connections between organizational performance and human resources enabled organizations to achieve greater efficiency. Human resource managers develop programs that yield improved operational results. Sampling using stratified random sampling and basic random sampling techniques was used in this study to collect responses from 375 participants. Because it concentrated on insurance firms, the earlier study is different from this one that is in the finance sector and thus this invalidates the results which cannot be generalized to the education sector.

ETHICAL ISSUES

In order to guarantee that the study complies with ethical standards regarding confidentiality, anonymity, right to withdraw, no deception and the use of informed consent, the researcher took various precautions. According to Selvam (2017), ethical issues are aimed at regulating the research process through adherence to ethical principles to protect the welfare of vulnerable individuals. Since the data in this investigation had strategic significance, secrecy was a top priority. Before data collection was carried out, a permit was obtained from NACOSTI. This was followed by research authorization which was obtained from KU Graduate School. An ethical approval letter was also obtained from KUERC since the data that was used for this study was primary in accordance with Kenyatta University Research policy.

Secondly, university permission was obtained and respondents were assured of confidentiality by requesting them to fill out the informed consent form to ensure their privacy. Lastly, the participants were educated on the freedom to pull out at any stage of the study if they feel that the researcher has intentions of deceiving them during the study. The researcher carried out all the above dealings which focused on boosting the willingness and objectivity of the respondents. This study was a low risk due to the nature of the content being collected from the respondents since no sensitive information is required.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Positivism research philosophy was used in this study. Creswell (2009) points out that positivism focuses on the explanation of phenomena objectively as observed in the field and gives a basis for prediction and generalization. Similarly, Mertens (2005) supports this position by asserting that the positivism paradigm is considered appropriate by providing a foundation for generalizing the results. The study utilized explanatory and descriptive designs. For descriptive research design, the study specifically adopted a cross-sectional research design to collect the data for analysis.

The analysis used primary data which was obtained by means of questionnaires. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from 52 chartered universities in Kenya. The total number of respondents was 397 employees who comprised human resource officers, academic registrars, information communication technology officers and quality assurance officers. The sampling method used was multi-stage sampling whereby stratified sampling was applied then later simple random sampling techniques. This involved dividing the populace into strata and then by an assortment of the appropriate samples at each point. This technique made it easy for all respondents in the strata to be factored in (Nafiu, 2012). In order to produce graphs, tables, and statistical parameter estimates, data analysis was done using STATA version 15.0.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The study sought to assess the effects of the e-reassign system and the performance of chartered universities in Kenya. To measure the e-reassign system the study adopted four indicators which include experience, seniority, task performance and discipline records. The descriptive results for e-reassign are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1 E-Reassign System and Performance of Chartered Universities

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev
Experience							
Individual understanding helps to streamline and outline skills required for your job in the university	4.2%	11.5%	14.5%	36.4%	33.3%	3.83	1.14
E-reassign system helps in determining workers with similar skills in the university to enable planning in terms of task performance	7.9%	7.3%	13.9%	27.9%	43.0%	3.91	1.25
E-reassign system enables employees to be able to refine their task performance skills over time to avoid them becoming obsolete	11.5%	5.5%	15.2%	35.8%	32.1%	3.72	1.29
E-reassign system helps in enhancing the level of accuracy in the university	9.1%	6.7%	14.5%	35.2%	34.5%	3.79	1.24
Seniority							
E-reassign system helps in determining the rank an individual	7.9%	4.8%	14.5%	32.7%	40.0%	3.92	1.21

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev
has worked in the university							
E- reassign system as per the number of years one has worked in the university may be used to determine a job's seniority in the university	7.9%	7.3%	16.4%	26.7%	41.8%	3.87	1.26
E-reassign helps in identification of an employee's duties as well as responsibilities in the university	6.1%	6.7%	17.0%	33.9%	36.4%	3.88	1.16
E-reassign enable the university determine the span of control	3.0%	7.9%	15.8%	34.5%	38.8%	3.98	1.07
Task performance							
E- reassign enhances the marching of skills to the jobs available for employees in the university	7.9%	7.3%	17.6%	28.5%	38.8%	3.83	1.24
E-reassign helps in timely allocation of duties and responsibilities to an employee remotely	6.1%	7.9%	13.9%	28.5%	43.6%	3.96	1.20
E-reassign ensures timely departmental transfers to areas with deficit within the university	6.7%	8.5%	15.8%	31.5%	37.6%	3.85	1.21
E-reassign ensures accuracy of task performance in task performance in the university	9.7%	5.5%	17.6%	36.4%	30.9%	3.73	1.23
Discipline records							
E-reassign helps in accurate keeping and organization of disciplinary record of employees in the university	7.3%	4.2%	16.4%	41.8%	30.3%	3.84	1.13
E-reassign system can be used in retrieval of necessary information regarding an employee's discipline record when needed	6.7%	7.9%	18.2%	28.5%	38.8%	3.85	1.21
E-reassign can help universities to select candidates for special assignments and manage them	7.3%	7.9%	13.3%	37.6%	33.9%	3.83	1.19
E-reassign system can be used for determining which employees should be promoted/be given special assignments based on their employment record	5.5%	4.8%	15.2%	37.0%	37.6%	3.96	1.10
Aggregate Mean						3.86	1.18

As shown in table 1, the statements had a 3.86 on average, with a 1.18 standard deviation. This suggested that most of the respondents agreed with the statement even though few had varying opinions as indicated by the standard deviation. Similarly, the level of agreement on statements on whether the E- reassign system assists in determining workers with similar skills in the university to enable planning in terms of task performance, whether the e-reassign system enables employees to refine their task performance skills over time to avoid them becoming obsolete and on whether E-reassign system helps in enhancing the level of accuracy in the university was high as shown by the average score of 69.7 percent. The results suggested that e-reassign was effectively utilized by universities in Kenya.

The outcomes shown in Table 1 further demonstrate that majority of respondents agreed with statements used to determine seniority, task performance and discipline records. The aggregated means score of 3.86 indicated that respondents agreed that e-reassign systems played a critical role in the experience, seniority, task performance and discipline records which improve the overall performance of the universities that had implemented these systems. The findings are supported by Ilhami, *et al.*, (2016) that the HRM processes carried out by information systems contribute significantly to the competitiveness of enterprises and also to the success of employees.

Similarly, the study agreed with Weeks, (2013) whose findings indicated that before the installation of the e-reassign system there was a low number of employees who required to be reassigned and those who needed on-the-job training as well as those leaving their job. After implementation of e-reassign systems job satisfaction increased, task-related employee complaints reduced drastically, the job accomplishment rate by employees after training increased, there was a reduction in the faults at work, employee performance increased, the rate of absenteeism went down and lastly, the reassignment of employees to incorrect jobs went down.

Hypothesis Testing

The study used the findings of the overall multivariate regression to test the research hypotheses. The hypothesis was tested at the level of significance of 0.05 where the hypothesis was rejected if the p-value was less than 0.05.

H₀: E-reassign system does not significantly affect the performance of chartered universities in Kenya.

Table 2 Coefficients for Multivariate Regression Model

Coefficients	β	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	1.06	0.22		4.821	0.000
E-Reassign System	0.233	0.06	0.274	3.864	0.000

a Dependent Variable: performance of chartered universities

The second hypothesis of the study was that the E-reassign system does not significantly affect the performance of chartered universities in Kenya. The findings in Table 2 show that the coefficient of the E-reassign system is $\beta=0.233$, with a P-value $=0.000 < 0.05$. The results show that the E-reassign system has a positive and significant effect on the performance of chartered universities in Kenya. The study findings suggest that an increase of one unit of E-reassign system would translate into an increase of 0.233 in the performance of chartered universities in Kenya. Based on these findings, H_0 : E-reassign system does not affect the performance of chartered universities in Kenya was rejected.

The study findings concur with Weeks, (2013) who found out that before the installation of the e-reassign system there was a decrease in the number of employees who required the training and for those employees in need of re-assignment as well as those leaving their job. After the implementation of e-reassign systems job satisfaction increased, task-related employee complaints reduced drastically, the job accomplishment rate of employees after training increased, there was a reduction in the faults at work, employee performance increased, the rate of absenteeism went down and the reassignment of employees to incorrect jobs went down. The study findings collaborate with those of Ilhami, *et al.*, (2016) who carried out a study whose findings showed that the HRM processes carried out by the information systems contributed significantly to the competitiveness of enterprises and also to the success of employees in their workplaces.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of the study was to determine the effects of e-reassign system and the performance of chartered universities in Kenya. The e-reassign system was operationalized into three constructs which include experience, seniority, discipline records and task performance. Descriptive analysis results indicated that the respondent agreed that e-reassign systems played a critical role in the experience, seniority, task performance and discipline records which improve the overall performance of chartered universities that had implemented these systems. The regression results indicated that the E-reassign system had a positive statistically significant outcome on the performance of chartered universities in Kenya. The study findings

suggested that growth in the use of the E-reassign system would translate into an increase in the performance of chartered universities in Kenya.

The study noted that E- reassign system played a critical role in determining workers with similar skills in the university to enable planning in terms of task performance, determining the rank an individual has held, timely allocation of duties and responsibilities to an employee remotely and finally was used for determining which employees should be promoted or be given special assignment based on their employment record. These critical functions of e-reassign contributed significantly to improve the performance of universities. The study recommended that management should formulate, strengthen and enforce a policy on e-reassign so as to take advantage of employees' experiences, seniority and employee discipline for better task performance.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There were five main limitations that the study faced. First and foremost, fewer studies were available to quantify the effects of HRMIS and the organizational performance of universities (Midiwo, 2015). To counter this the researcher made use of other studies that have been previously carried out on HRMIS but done in other contexts and countries. Secondly, the respondents were out of the researcher's control in regard to the information that was filled in the questionnaires. To counter this the researcher had the field assistants guide the respondents. Thirdly, the respondents took longer to respond to the questionnaires sent to them through e-mail. To counter this the researcher through the use of research assistants made efforts to acquire their mobile phone contacts which were used for making follow-ups through calls to the respondents to ensure the questionnaires were received within the stipulated time frame of two weeks.

Lastly, the researcher met respondents who are sceptical of the intent of the study. This challenge was overcome with the use of a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) and a letter from the Graduate School of Kenyatta University (KU). Lastly, this study was carried out when the whole world is experiencing the outbreak of the Corona Virus pandemic. For the protection of the researcher and respondents, the researcher ensured that both the Ministry of Health guidelines and those of the World Health Organization were adhered to through the use of e-mails to minimize contact and spread.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study focused on the performance of chartered universities in Kenya. Universities have very well-educated staff hence there were educational biases in the study population

which may lead to their adoption and use of HRMIS. Future studies should focus on other organizations that have employees with different education levels to establish the effect of HRMIS on organizational performance remains significant. This will address the contextual and methodological gaps. This study also established that HRMIS accounted for 50.1% of the performance difference across Kenya's chartered universities. Additional research should concentrate on determining the impact of other factors that account for the remaining 49.9% of the performance of Kenya's chartered universities.

This study further recommends that a study should also be carried out on HRMIS and the performance of chartered universities using secondary data. To determine the degree of influence of HRMIS on overall university performance, this study used the Kenyan public chartered universities as a parameter. To definitively determine the extent of HRMIS's influence on all universities in Kenya, a comparative analysis that considers private universities should be conducted. The study recommends that an investigation should be carried out on human resource management information systems and performance in other sectors since ICT usage cuts across. This shall assist to ascertain whether the human resource management information system has enhanced performance in those other sectors. The university systems as a whole, as well as HR experts, would benefit much from such information.

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