

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**EXPLORING THE BENEFITS OF HUMAN RESOURCES INFORMATION
SYSTEMS AT ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY**

by

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DECLARATION

I, **Primrose Sinazo GWAMBE**, declare that

- (i) The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
- (ii) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
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Date

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my late dear parents, Mr Amon Khondlo and Mrs Nothando Beatrice Khuzwayo for laying a sound foundation and values that have carried me over the years. To my sisters for their support and playing a parental role in my life, they are Gugulethu Mbatha, Zethu Makhoba and Buhle Khuzwayo. This study is also dedicated to my loving, caring, and supportive family, especially my husband Skhumbuzo, as well as children: Andile, Mvelo, Owethu Gwambe and our grandson Hlelolomdali.

ABSTRACT

Organisations, including municipalities, are gradually adopting and using human resources information systems (HRIS) to evolve and modernise their Human Resources (HR) departments. HRIS should lead to valuable outcomes for organisations. However, an observation had been made that eThekweni Municipality's human resources department had different perceptions about the key benefits of using HRIS. Employees' perceptions have led to either resistance or acceptance of the change. The main purpose of this study was to explore the benefits of the Human Resources Information System at eThekweni municipality. By exploring these benefits, the study should contribute to municipal policy and practice on how employees could be attracted to adopt and adapt to HRIS to enhance their job performance and subsequently contribute to positive organisational performance and productivity. The study explored these benefits by employing the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) theoretical framework which analyses the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of technology by individuals in an organisation. The study employed a qualitative research methodology, which involved a purposive sampling strategy, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions as a means to collect data. Themes and sub-themes have been developed through thematic analysis. The study found various HRIS benefits that are enjoyed by end-users in eThekweni Municipality. These benefits included time-saving, real-time information, accurate reporting, self-service options, paperless system, and strategic decision making. On the perceived usefulness, the study found that some employees perceived the system as useful. In contrast, others faced challenges with some modules of HRIS, citing that they have received complaints from other end-users which have not been addressed. The perceived ease of use of the system revealed that some end-users found HRIS user-friendly, while others found some platforms, such as e-Recruitment module e-Careers, not user friendly to both municipal employees and the public. There were some technical challenges found by the study, such as system complexity issues. Also, the lack of system adaptivity remained a major HRIS implementation issue that posed a potential implementation threat. Several findings in this study carried significant human resources-related policy and practice implications. Some recommendations included improving the current HRIS to be more user-friendly, increase training interventions and phase out manual paper-based systems.

Keywords: Human resources information system; employee perception; human resources; human resources management; human resources process.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DSS	Decision Support System
EDP	Electronic Data Processing
E-HR	Electronic Human Resources
E-HRM	Electronic Human Resources Management
ERM	Employee Relationship Management
ESS	Employee Self Service
FG1	Focus Group 1
FG2	Focus Group 2
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HR	Human Resources
HRIS	Human Resources Information System
HRM	Human Resources Management
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
MIS	Management Information System
MNC	Multi-National Corporations
SHRM	Strategic Human Resources Management
SME	Small Medium Enterprise
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
UK	United Kingdom

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, modern organisations are using the human resources information system (HRIS) to decrease the burdensome administration duties and activities. Companies that have adopted electronically automate human resources (HR) functions and processes, such as HRIS, already have a competitive niche (Ilamosi & Oluyinka, 2020). Beadles, Aston, Lowery and Johns (2005) concur that numerous scholars have supported that the adoption of HRIS could add value for the organisations. Beadles et al. (2005) further stated that decreased costs, time spent on burdensome administration and enhanced communication, should lead to the creation of HR departments that contribute to strategic organisational management.

eThekwini municipality is the third-largest metropolitan municipality situated in eThekwini, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa (eThekwini Municipality, 2011). The founding of eThekwini municipality in 2000 is a creation of legislative requirements which saw the amalgamation of five local councils into one. The local councils were Outer-west, Inner-west, Metro Central, South and North and Operational duties (Madondo, 2008). Once merged, one system was adopted. An observation has been made that eThekwini municipality's HR department, has different perceptions about the significant benefits of using HRIS. Employees' perceptions will lead to either resistance or acceptance of the change (Eby, Adams, Russel and Gaby, 2000). Thus, the study aimed to explore the benefits of the Human Resources Information System at eThekwini municipality.

Masrek (2009) points out that HRIS features the global best practices in Human Resources and provides a single interface for government employees to perform Human Resource Management functions effectively and efficiently in an integrated environment. Yet still, employees' benefits about human resources information system remain an under-researched phenomenon (Masrek, 2009). Therefore, this research study aimed to explore the benefits of the HRIS at eThekwini municipality.

1.2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

This research study aimed to explore the employees' benefits of using HRIS at eThekwini Municipality within the HR community. It has been the observation of the researcher that before the merger, each entity was relatively autonomous, with its hierarchy, different human resource information systems and decision-making powers. The challenge facing eThekwini Municipality is an undesired low level of uptake of the human resources information system. As described by Becker and Huselid (2006), the motive why organisations ought to utilise HRIS is that it can assist in intensifying competition by improving the HR process. According to Schweyer (2010), technological adaptation could create platforms that enhance how information is transferred and invest in the development and growth of knowledge. Furthermore, since HR departments are responsible for information sharing, companies are expected to control such resources with the assistance of information technologies in the field of HR (Schweyer, 2010).

Troshani, Jerram and Hill (2011:475) state "there is a paucity of research concerning human resources information system adoption in the public sector which presents unique challenges due to its idiosyncrasies". EThekwini Municipality is a public sector, also having challenges in realising full benefits of HRIS, therefore would greatly benefit if the study were to be conducted urgently. The purpose of exploring these benefits of human resources information system is to encourage the adaption and use of the system by all employees of eThekwini, as the municipality struggles to do away with the old manual systems and transition towards seamless and paperless systems on par with the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

1.3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Technological advancements have been widely adopted and used by organisations to advance their primary business processes. However, HR processes have been left behind in these technological advancements, and HR departments often find themselves using outdated manual processes and procedures. Kumar and Parumasur (2013) explain that HRIS can improve HR departments, particularly in time savings. Wei and Feng (2013) also concur that HRIS is an extremely crucial resource available to drive the competitive edge of the organisations.

EThekwini is the largest municipality in the province with more than 26 000 permanent employees (eThekwini Municipality, 2011). Maintaining such large amounts of employee information is an enormous and tedious task that may lead to many mistakes. Hence, such

mistakes can be avoided through HRIS usage (Barber, 1998). Currently, at eThekwini Municipality, human resources information system uptake is low within the HR community; consequently, benefits are not fully realised. This study is going to explore and examine the benefits of using human resources information system at eThekwini Municipality. Govender (2013) argues that to reap the full benefits of using the human resources information system, HR staff should work together with end-users to make aware to employees the benefits and advantages of using HRIS. Govender (2013) further stated that the overall objective of HRIS aims to ensure that access to information is easily and readily available to management to make strategic organisational decisions.

Should the study not be conducted urgently, eThekwini Municipality will not realise the full benefits of using the system. The study should explore the reasons for low uptake based on employees' perceptions. Does it have to do with user-perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and the like? In a paper presented by Ibrahim and Yusoff (2013) in Malaysia, they stated that 75% of human resource transactions could be reduced and recuperate costs connected with the technology in less than two years. The employees' perceptions and advantages of using HRIS at eThekwini Municipality have not been researched on. Hence this study shall contribute to the literature about human resources information system at eThekwini.

While acceptance is more prevalent among larger organisations, Strohmeier and Kabst (2009) describe large and well-established organisations as the first to adopt HRIS, and successful adoption is more likely to trickle down to smaller organisations. Ngai and Wat (2006) also detected big organisations were more likely to adopt HRIS. Haines and Petit (1997) warn that early HRIS adoption on its own does not then lead to automatic adoption or usage by end-user employees. Lippert and Swiercz (2005) conclude that the growing consensus is that successful HRIS implementation requires an alignment of organisational culture, technology adoption, technology utility, and sensibility to privacy.

1.4. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Several researchers concur that technology per se is no longer seen as the most challenging element in organisations (Chapman & Webster, 2003). Human resources information system, just like any technology system, has become a way of life for any organisation to succeed. For human resources information system to be effective, end-users need to adapt to the new technology, that is, become convinced about its advantages and be capacitated on its use

(Wright, et al., 2001). Kavanagh (2014) states that despite significant theoretical bases on the IT influences on HRM, there was still limited empirical evidence in the field of web-based HR systems. Also, most studies conducted on HRIS have been conducted in developed countries in Europe and North America. The quicker the organisations implement and adopt HRIS, the better the service delivery will be.

Moreover, it was found that while there is growing research into the take up of HRIS applications, there was a dearth of an investigation into the impact of HRIS on the people involved (Kavanagh, 2014). The paramount benefits of the implementation of the human resources information system would be the rapid response and access to information that it would bring to eThekwini Municipality employees, the municipality itself and the community at large. The most significant barrier would be slow uptake on using the system and insufficient financial support. The rationale behind choosing eThekwini Municipality was due to the organisation's adoption of HRIS that is utilised by thousands of employees across various departments. The municipality's employees have years of end-user experience and the study sought to explore and identify what types of benefits exists. Also, how could the system be improved and made more user friendly so as to phase out manual paper-based HR systems that still exist within the organisation.

1.5. OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.5.1. Aim of the Study

The main aim of this study is to explore the benefits of human resources information system in eThekwini Municipality.

1.5.2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research study are as follows:

- To understand the extent of the perceived usefulness and influence of human resources information system on employees at eThekwini Municipality;
- To ascertain how the perceived ease-of-use using the human resources information system affect the employees at eThekwini Municipality; and
- To explore the extent to which eThekwini Municipality enjoys benefits of using the human resources information system.

1.5.3. Research questions

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

- To what extent does the perceived usefulness and influence of human resources information system have on employees at eThekwini municipality?
- How does the perceived ease of using human resources information system influence employees at eThekwini Municipality?
- To what extent does eThekwini Municipality enjoy benefits of using human resources information system?

1.6. CONCEPTS / KEYWORDS

The main concepts underpinning this study are as follows:

Employee Perception: According to Langton and Robbins (2004:132), “employee perception can be defined as a process by which individuals organise and interpret their sensory impressions to give meaning to their environment”.

Human Resource Management (HRM): Human Resources Management (HRM) “is the function within an organisation that focuses on recruitment of, management of, and providing direction for the people who work in the organisation” (Bratton and Gold, 2003:7).

Human Resources Information System – De Sanctus (1986) define human resources information system as a specialised information system within the traditional functional areas of human resources, designed to support the planning, administration, decision-making and control activities of HRM.

However, several authors have argued that De Sanctus’s (1986) definition neglects the adoption and deployment of the information system in the corporate (Bondarouk and Ruel, 2009; Ruel et al. 2004; Strohmeier, 2007). Similarly, human resources information system is considered as a systematic procedure for collecting, storing, maintaining, and recovering data required about their human resources, personnel activities and other characteristics (Kovach, et al., 2002). As a public sector organisation, in particular, the municipality is also affected by its human resources information system and should be able to handle, store and manage information on its employees and stakeholders.

Human Resource Process – This refers to all the processes associated with the HR department. The vast majority of HR functions have had some degree of automation applied to gain effectiveness on user satisfaction (Teo, et al., 2001). HRIS can contribute to the efficiency of most HR processes. Other than that, the human resources information system can enhance the HR processes and minimise redundancy in HR (Aggarwal and Kapoor, 2012).

1.7. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

There are several Theoretical Frameworks that the study could have explored. They are, but not limited to Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Theory of Reasonable Action (TRA), Task-technology fit (TTF), Technology Acceptance Model - original (TAM), TAM2 and TAM3. Each framework emphasises different factors. The theory underpinning this study is the original TAM. TAM is an information systems theory that models how users come to accept and use technology. The model suggests that when users are presented with new technology, several factors influence their decision about how and when they will use it (Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1989). The original TAM model has two constructs, that is, Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEU). This theory was used because the study sought to unravel the benefits of HRIS related to its usefulness (or lack thereof) and its ease of use (user-friendliness) or lack thereof.

Perceived Usefulness is defined as the potential user's subjective likelihood that the use of a particular system will improve their action (Davis, 1989). This principle is similar to that of Perceived HRIS Usefulness, which refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a human resources information system would enhance his or her performance within an organisation. Accordingly, a user's primary motivation to use the human resources information system will derive from the functions it performs for him/her (Davis et al., 1989).

Perceived Ease of Use (PEU)

PEU refers to the degree to which the potential user expects the target system to be effortless. The belief of the person towards a system may be influenced by other factors referred to as external variables in TAM. This principle is similar to that of Perceived HRIS Ease of Use, which refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort. The actual use of the computer system can be defined by the degree to which system characteristics match user task needs (Davis et al., 1989).

1.8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher has opted to use a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research designs have evolved throughout the years, and a large number are recognised today (Rubin, 2008). This study has employed a qualitative research methodology to collect in-depth data and achieve rich findings. Rea (1997) states that qualitative research methodology permits the researcher to collect in-depth data from a sampled population that experienced the phenomenon underpinning the study. The use of qualitative methodology allows the researcher to collect data on the perspective of the people based on the problem statement (Rubin, 2008).

A qualitative methodology has been used for its ability to explore, describe and produce detailed results regarding the issue being researched. Also, Silverman (2000) concurs that qualitative research is well suited to achieve a higher and more detailed understanding of the perceptions and lived experiences of participants. Furthermore, qualitative research allows the researcher to develop new perceptions from the view of the participants in a local setting (Saunders, 2010).

A qualitative research methodology in this study resulted in the unearthing of underlying factors that emanated as both negative and positive perceptions towards HRIS and highlighted the key benefits thereof. This qualitative approach utilised critical strategies, such as in-depth interviews and focus groups. The thematic analysis was also employed to analyse data from five (5) interviews and two (2) focus group discussions.

1.9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues are the concerns and dilemmas that arise over the proper way to execute research, more specifically not to create harmful conditions for the subjects of inquiry, humans, in the research process (Schurink, 2005:43). This study abided by the University of KwaZulu-Natal's code of ethics, and the researcher conducted herself with respect and sensitivity when dealing with participants. The researcher has obtained an Ethical Clearance Certificate from the university to conduct this study. Also, a gatekeeper's letter has been granted by eThekweni Municipality, allowed the researcher to expedite the study.

The researcher ensured the following throughout study: (i) explicate the aim and objectives of the study, as well as the procedures to be followed upfront to everybody taking part in the research; (ii), made it clear to them that participating in the study is voluntary, and that should

they for any reason want to withdraw from it, they have the right to voluntarily do so at any time; (iii) that everybody participating in the study completed an informed consent form; and (iv) that their privacy would be respected at all time, and that everything they share would be treated as confidential and anonymity (Shrink, 2005:43).

1.10. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study had several limitations, which included the number of participants, and the choice of methodology. Firstly, the study only managed to interview twelve (12) participants who were purposefully and randomly selected and felt that this number was enough to get information-rich responses, as additional responses were repetitive. Secondly, some of the departments, such as the Information Technology (IT) department, were purposefully omitted from the study. The reason behind this omission was that the IT department's role is to procure the HIRS, meaning that they are not end-users who interact with the system on a daily basis. At the same time, this study needed to capture the benefits and challenges of end-users using the HRIS. Also, the study opted for a qualitative methodology as opposed to a quantitative or mixed-methods approach. Meaning that only in-depth interviews were conducted, instead of statistical surveys or questionnaires, which could have tested the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of the HRIS on HR employees of eThekweni Municipality. However, a qualitative method managed to yield suitable results which could inform human resources related policies in the organisation. The study also focused on internal end-users and did not get the views from external end-users such as people who use the e-Recruitment platform to apply for advertised vacancies.

1.11. ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This dissertation consists of five (5) chapters in total.

Chapter One: Introduction and Overview of the Study

Chapter One consists of the introduction and background of the human resources information system, problem statement, rationale, the research objectives and questions, and critical concepts.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Chapter Two discusses the literature review by departing with historical background and evolution of HRIS, following with an overview of HRIS from three international countries, then a regional status of human resources information system in Africa. Then an overview of HRIS in South African municipalities, and concludes with a presentation of the theoretical framework adopted by this study.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Chapter three presents the methodology that has been employed by the study, including data collection and analysis techniques used in the process.

Chapter Four: Data Presentation and Analysis

Chapter four presents the findings that emerged in the data analysis process, including verbatim quotations, and an analysis of the results presented.

Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations

The final chapter, chapter five, discusses the research results and their impact on both policy and practice and concludes with some recommendations.

1.12. CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided a comprehensive summary and sketched indication of the research study. This chapter included a summary of the theoretical framework, research methodology and ethical considerations. This section also dealt with the main objectives and purpose of the study through the research questions and the significance of the study. In the next chapter, which is chapter two, the focus will be on the literature review of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

A review of the literature is presented in this chapter, including the historical emergence of the HRIS as a system that has been adopted globally. The chapter also provides a theoretical framework that underpinned this research study, which was the original Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The chapter embarks by providing brief literature on the historical evolution of HRIS and how it has been widely accepted as a system for best practice in the human resources field. Second, the chapter assesses the status of HRIS on a global context by reviewing literature from India, the United Kingdom and Canada. Third, the chapter will assess the status of human resources information system in Africa and how governments have benefited from adopting this system. The African countries that the literature will be based on are Ethiopia, Kenya and Ghana. The chapter will then assess the status of HRIS in South Africa on a broader context, encompassing both the public and private sectors. The chapter will then progress to a comparative presentation of the status of HRIS in KwaZulu-Natal by looking at the districts surrounding eThekweni Municipality. Lastly, the chapter will conclude with an analysis of the theoretical framework, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). This section will analyse how users come to accept and use technology.

2.2. HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF HUMAN RESOURCES INFORMATION SYSTEM

HRIS began from payroll systems in the late 1950s and continued with the first automated employee data in the 1960s (Kavanagh, et al., 1990). The foundation for the growth of HRIS was laid out through the introduction of computer technology post the Second World War era, between 1945 and 1960. This is the same era that witnessed the adoption of the concept of the job description, re-emergence of trade unions, the shift from personnel departments to human resources departments, and the use of computer technology (Thite, et al., 2012; Bhuiyan, et al., 2014). Around the same period, computer technology was proving to deliver better productivity at lower costs for most industries and governments across all departments. This resulted in an increased demand for HR departments to employ IT to keep up with the increasing volume of employees, which required efficient processing of employee information (Thite, et al., 2012).

Hence, the development and widespread of the human resources information system as an interface between human resources and information technology.

The idea of HRIS propelled during the late phase of the legislative era, which was between 1960 to 1980, as governments and industries were slowly incorporating the management information system (MIS) with IT in HR departments. There was increasing pressure and demand for administrative departments, such as Human Resource Management (HRM), to employ IT to successfully process employee information (Bhuiyan, et al., 2014). The more computer technology evolved during the 1980s, the increasing the demand became for cost-effective employee recordkeeping systems, such as the human resources information system, within HRM. This led to an increase in the number of service providers to assist organisations in tailor-making HR programs in terms of both software and hardware (Thite, et al., 2012). The costs of computer technology were slowly decreasing, while the costs of employee compensation and benefits were gradually increasing, this acquired computer-based HR systems, such as the human resources information system, a wise business decision.

Bhuiyan et al. (2014) state that although human resources departments were slowly adopting HRIS, the system was still being used mostly for keeping employee administrative records. HRIS was not being utilised to its full potential to include employee participation and empowerment. Meanwhile, industries and economies were proliferating, and trade unions began to negotiate better employee terms, including healthcare and retirement benefits (Thite, et al., 2012). This led to a rapid increase in employee compensation which had to be justified by management against the cost of production. The increase in employee benefits also broadened the scope of HRM and further called for a strategic method of improving HR-related service delivery.

The cost-effectiveness era between 1980 and 1990 witnessed an unprecedented increase in personnel costs, with some companies in the United States reporting an increase of more than 80% of their operating costs (Thite, et al., 2012). Meanwhile, the focus in HR departments shifted from employee administration to employee involvement and empowerment (Bhuiyan, et al., 2014). Human resources information system was beginning to come up with a solution to make HRM user-friendly by removing the administrative burden of storing employee records manually. Employee administration gradually became effortless without compromising HR jobs. The human resources information system suddenly became prevalent in the late 1980s and early 1990s with the introduction of the Enterprise Resource Management

(ERM) software (Bhuiyan, et al., 2014). Human resources information system gradually shifted from being a simple record-keeping tool to a more sophisticated analytical tool which could assist managers in decision-making.

The post-1990 tech era saw a significant shift from large mainframe computer technology to smaller personal computers that could be used in small offices and homes. This technological evolution of computers primarily benefited smaller firms as a human resources information system became affordable and readily available (Kavanagh, et al., 1990). Strategic human resource management (SHRM) derived its theoretical significance from a resource-based view of a firm that treats human capital as a strategic asset that provides a competitive advantage since intellectual capital is difficult to imitate (Becker & Huselid, 2006). HRIS, therefore, played a key role by adding value to SHRM as industries faced skills shortages, especially information technology skills. Regardless of the firm size, human resources information systems evolved to provide sophisticated analytical tools to manage rich information, while assisting management in making critical decisions regarding the firm's human capital (Hendrickson, 2003). The shifting political climate of the 1990s together with the changing global economic landscape, increasing globalisation, and the technological breakthrough of the Internet, all led to a global surge of HRIS software to manage employee data while assisting management with decision-making.

HRIS has evolved in recent years not just to enhance the administrative role of HRM technologically, but also to instil a strategic role in HRM. As such, HRM is now seen as a strategic partner that can increase organisational value. Beadles et al. (2005) reveal that the human resources information system has two main benefits, namely administrative and strategic. Administrative benefits of HRIS are the day-today uses of keeping employee records, accessing data and self-services, and these benefits have proven to improve productivity, communication, reduce costs and provide a better return on investment (Watson, 2002; Beadles et al., 2005). Strategic HRIS contains tools to assist managers in decision-making which include those associated with strategic recruitment and retention of employees (Beadles, et al., 2005). The easy access to employee information brought to by human resources information system has enabled managers to make strategic decisions on enhancing human capital.

Kavanagh et al. (1990) state that human resources information system functions now interact with HRM functions such as performance management, staff training and career development, human resources planning, and compensation management. Also, human resources information system is explained in a three-level continuum, namely electronic data processing (EDP), management information system (MIS), and decision support system (DSS). Furthermore, a combination of these three systems can occur within a single firm (Kavanagh, et al., 1990).

Figure 2.1: Three dimensions of HRIS

Dimensions	EDP	MIS	DSS
Target Users	Basic level operators	Middle managers	Top managers and executives
Focus	Data, files, storage, transaction processing, and reports	Information retrieval, Plan and analyze data against expected values, Integration	“What if” analysis through use of models, generation of decision alternatives
Characteristics	Basic personnel information	Inquiry capability, report generation capability	Interactive for users
Examples	Payroll	Turnover reports, age and gender distribution, EEO compliance report	Human resource planning, compensation simulation

Source: David, et al. (2011).

The three dimensions of the human resources information system in Figure 2.1 show how each target user interacts with the system on multiple levels within the organisation’s HRM. EDP focuses on primary data collection, transaction processing and storing, and the creation of reports. MIS used by middle managers focuses on information retrieval, the planning and analysing data against expected values, and integration; its characteristics are inquiry capability and report generation capability. DSS mostly focuses on decision making by top managers and executives by manipulating and analysing available human resources data. These dimensions have evolved to focus more on sophisticated human resources information system applications that add value to HRM.

The historical evolution of human resources information system has always adapted with the ever-changing technological environment to provide top-notch online HRM services. The technological advancements of the 21st century, which is dubbed the information technology era, have witnessed an increase in the use of high-end devices such as laptops, tablets and smartphones. All of which has made access to human resources information system simpler to access and convenient to use. Many companies in today's scenario have started using sophisticated human resources information system applications like training and development, recruitment and selection, performance management, compensation management, and career development (Sowjanya, 2019). Companies across the world have begun to customise and tailor design their human resources information system to better suit their industry environments, work trends, government legislation and technological developments.

2.3. HRIS IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT: INDIA, UNITED KINGDOM, CANADA

The countries that have been reviewed under this study are India, the United Kingdom and Canada. The reason behind the selection of India is because the country has the second-largest workforce globally. However, only 7% of the 400 million workers are engaged in formal employment in a country that has over 50 labour legislations, thousands of trade unions, and an advanced IT industry (Verick, 2018). The United Kingdom (UK) was selected for its sophisticated labour laws that protect employees and offer a high national minimum wage. The UK also sources much of its labour on the international labour market. Canada was selected in this study because of its liberal socio-political climate, which transcends into its labour laws, particularly its flexible immigration labour programs that attract talent from around the world.

2.3.1. HRIS in India

India has the second-largest labour workforce in the world, China having the largest, and the country has a well-established IT sector that contributes significantly in its gross domestic product (GDP). Hence, it was intriguing to analyse how the adoption of HRIS could help streamline and manage large amounts of employee data across several industry sectors. A study conducted by Kundu and Kadian (2012) sought to understand which of the sophisticated HRIS applications were used the most by which industries. These sophisticated applications of HRIS included sophisticated HRIS applications like corporate communication, payroll, career enhancement and planning. The study revealed that the application of HRIS payroll was widely used by multinational companies based in India, who had a slight edge over other Indian companies in the manufacturing sector (Kundu & Kadian, 2012).

The application of HRIS corporate communication was used mostly in the service sector companies as compared to manufacturing companies, and service sector multinational companies have been using HRIS corporate communication more than their manufacturing sector multinational counterparts (Kundu & Kadian, 2012). Service sector companies often use more corporate communication as the industry is more technologically driven than the manufacturing sector. Also, the service sector companies are new in India compared to old manufacturing sector companies. Overall, managers and employees who participated in the study perceived that all other factors of HRIS applications, that is corporate communication, payroll, recruitment and selection, performance management, compensation management, and career development, are applied highly in Indian companies and could be termed as sophisticated (Kundu & Kadian, 2012).

Another study conducted in particular software companies located in Bangalore Karnataka, India, aimed to assess the level of employee satisfaction in the use of HRIS. This study revealed that the majority of employees in software companies had felt a high level of satisfaction in the usage of HRIS (Nawaz & Gomes, 2014). The study further examined the participants' perceptions of the system's usage and effect on cost and time-saving. The results indicated the overall satisfaction by managers on HRIS time and cost savings (Nawaz & Gomes, 2014). Thus, indicating that HRIS is beneficial in a manner that it can save time and costs for companies in the software sector. These findings confirmed earlier studies which suggested that HRIS can improve productivity and reduce costs for companies (Watson, 2002; Beadles et al., 2005).

2.3.2. HRIS in the United Kingdom

The United Kingdom (UK) has a long history of advance labour legislations, and its government ensures that employees are conscious of matters pertaining to human rights and labour issues. The country also offers a high national minimum wage for employees across all industries. The UK is also known for sourcing talent from the international labour market and is a country that is technologically highly advanced, with a robust economy in the European region. The UK largely relies on outsourcing some of its HR duties, such as assessment centres and HR call centres (Kalmarova, 2012). Companies in the UK have spent millions of pounds sterling tailor-making and implementing HRIS, yet few companies would boast about using this system to its full potential (Brewster, 2006). Studies conducted on the use and impact of HRIS seem to confirm that the system's impact has not been fully realised.

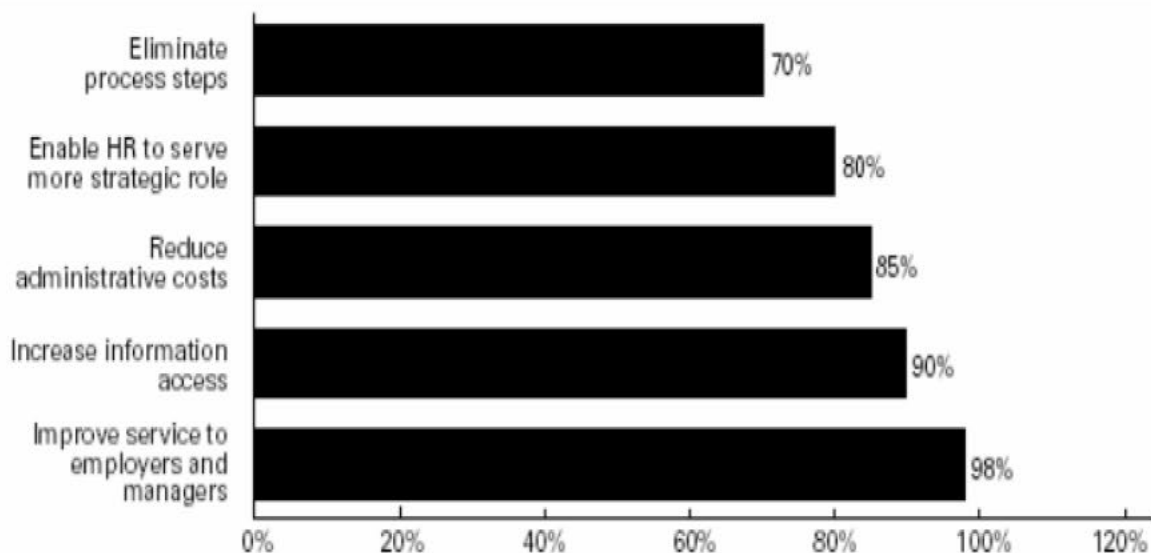
Early studies conducted on HRIS use by multi-national corporations (MNC) in the UK sought to evaluate the effectiveness of its implementation. A study was conducted on MNCs who had outsourced their HR-related functions to companies that offered human resources services. The study found that the drastic organisational changes which were made during the adoption of HRIS or e-HR services had a significant impact on employees in various MNCs (Cooke, 2006). According to Cooke (2006), the restructuring of HR departments to include HRIS online self-services caused a loss of face-to-face contact, especially in cases where employees needed to share personal and confidential information with HR staff members. Cooke (2006) also revealed that another impact of the HRIS implementation was the loss of employee representation. Since HR support staff were no longer located on the same premises as other employees, there was a lack of representation in disciplinary matters, as line managers had to conduct disciplinary cases without HR support (Cooke, 2006). Unsurprisingly, this impact on employees did not bode well with labour unions, especially in a country with advanced labour laws that favour employees the most.

Another finding was that there was a lack of clarity of ownership of HR problems (Cooke, 2006). Employees felt that there was no clear reporting structure on HR, and employees could not go with their grievances to the line managers, especially where such grievances were concerning line managers. Other initial underlying issues with the implementation of HRIS in UK-based MNCs were IT issues, whereby nobody knew who should be approached with regards to teething IT problems in the use of HRIS (Cooke, 2006). All these issues led to a negative perception of service providers offering human resources services to companies willing to outsource such HR functions. The implication of HRIS on line managers who participated in the study included work intensification, waste of resources, lack of interest and competence in HR issues, and dampened staff morale (Cooke, 2006). The implication of HRIS on HR staff included work organisation and skills requirements, career implications, and difficulties in maintaining work relationships with clients (Cooke, 2006).

The implementation of HRIS modules, such as employee self-service (ESS), to UK-based companies had contributed to significant benefits for human resources departments such as reduced costs and time, increased information access, and improved service delivery (Hawking, et al., 2004). These benefits were evident when comparing companies who had not implemented HRIS versus companies who had web-based technology that provided ESS access to both managers and employees. Hawking, et al. (2004) found that organisations who

developed their ESS web sites more interactive reported significant success as compared to those organisations who only used it just to store information. The survey results of this study also revealed the levels of success and benefits managers and employees enjoyed the post-implementation of web-based ESS (see Figure 2.2).

Figure 4.2: Five main objectives reported by UK companies post-ESS implementation



Source: Cedar (2001)

These successes or benefits enjoyed by UK companies who implemented web-based ESS included the elimination of process steps (70%) such as manual leave applications, enabling HR to serve a more strategic role by concentrating on more tactical issues (80%) and increase information access (90%). The survey revealed that the implementation of ESS as part of HRIS meant that employees could then access a more extensive information database without the involvement of HR staff, such as viewing and comparing payslips to identify any errors, and view and apply for leave online (Hawking, et al., 2004). These services formed a broader Employee Relationship Management (ERM), which was web-based and provided support to HRM. Hamerman (2002) described ERM as an evolution of self-service technology to support managers and employees, providing the platforms for information delivery, process execution and collaboration in the organisation.

A more recent study conducted on the impact of HRIS in foreign MNCs based in the UK found that the implementation of the system has ensured that MNCs keep up with the universal trends in human resources. Ferner et al. (2011) state that the usage of HRIS software, such as SAP and PeopleSoft, have transformed how company headquarters can monitor and evaluate HRM

without physically being in various subsidiaries. Also, HRIS has enabled HR networking among MNCs and their subsidiaries, where talent is easily shared, and uniform career development programs are implemented across the board (Ferner, et al., 2011). This study also found that HRIS was found to be significantly appreciated by United States (US) MNCs based in the UK, whereas they remained insignificant in US firms.

2.3.3. HRIS in Canada

Canada's liberal socio-political climate which transcends into its labour laws, particularly its flexible immigration labour programs, attract talent from across the world. The temporary foreign worker program has been extended to include both high-skilled and small-skilled workers. The program was revised in 2013 to increase wages and provide temporary workers with the same rights as Canadian workers. Canada has developed its HRM to include HRIS or e-HR services in both small and large companies. A study conducted in various countries, Canada being one of them, indicated that organisational size influenced how HRIM or e-HR services were used; whereby more prominent companies used e-HR services effectively compared to smaller companies (Parry, 2011). This finding concurred with a study by Ball (2001), who stated that e-HR use was more sophisticated in large companies due to their economies of scale, as such services require initial investments.

The use of HRIS in Canada, and eleven other countries, was also tested if it had a significant impact on HR employee size in a firm. In comparison, firms with fewer HR employees were more encouraged to use HRIS than firms with more significant numbers of HR employees. The data from the study revealed that the introduction and use of e-HR were not based on the firms' HR employee ratio, and e-HR did not reduce the HR headcount of firms (Parry, 2011). This finding contradicted previous literature which suggested that HRIS or e-HR led to cost savings through the reduction of HR headcount in these countries (Parry & Tyson, 2006). The implementation of e-HR in these countries where the study was conducted revealed that the system was not utilised to its full potential in a way that does not involve human intervention.

Another study which was conducted on 1854 manufacturing small-medium enterprises (SMEs) in Quebec, Canada, sought to determine whether SHRM led to the implementation of e-HR and whether the firms' e-HR competencies and infrastructure led to improved SHRM performance. This study found that the development of more substantial SHRM capabilities in companies led to increased e-HR competencies (L'Écuyer, et al., 2019). This suggested that as companies adapt their human resources departments, and treat human capital as strategic assets,

these companies do so by enhancing their e-HR capabilities. Also, there was a positive relationship between SHRM capabilities and e-HR infrastructure (L'Écuyer, et al., 2019). At the same time, manufacturing companies needed to upgrade their e-HR infrastructure and connectivity, as well as their e-HR technologies such as self-service portals to enhance their HR departments, motivate and empower employee capabilities.

2.4. HRIS DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: ETHIOPIA, KENYA AND GHANA

The African countries that have been chosen to be reviewed in this study are Ethiopia, Kenya and Ghana. Ethiopia was selected for its impressive GDP growth of over 10% in the past eight years, surpassing most developed countries in the world. This rapid economic growth has been contributed by the financial services sector and the construction sector. Kenya is on a course to transform its vibrant economy from a low-income to a middle-income country. The Kenyan government has embarked on a process to turn Kenya into a global ICT competitor. Ghana was selected because it has one of the best labour policies in Africa, which protects against discrimination of any form and encourages the practice of trade unions. However, the country has experienced a slow transition into IT-based systems such as HRIS.

2.4.1. HRIS in Ethiopia

HRIS in Ethiopia is currently in its infancy as the country is still experimenting with the system in various sectors of its economy such as construction, financial services and the health sector. Both the financial services and construction sectors accounted for most of the economy's growth, which has been experiencing significant GDP growth of over 10% annually between the periods 2007/8 to 2017/18 (World Bank, 2019). Despite the economic boom, Ethiopia is still regarded as a low-income country with weaknesses in the information systems such as the handling of data and incapability of staff in using computerised information systems. The public health sector of Ethiopia is one of the struggling sectors of the economy, especially in the adoption and implementation of high-end information systems such as HRIS. A global review of information systems on HR for health in 2013 reported Ethiopia as one of the World Health Organisation (WHO) designated human resources health (HRH) crisis country (Riley, et al., 2012; Dilu et al., 2017). HRIS in Ethiopia still relied on paper-based systems where HR employees collect and capture personnel data manually.

A study was conducted in Ethiopia to assess the HRIS implementation readiness in the Ethiopian health sector. This study aimed at evaluating the effect and usage of HRIS and any

associated challenges in hospitals and health organisations in Ethiopia (Dilu, et al., 2017). The overall readiness for the implementation of HRIS in the health department was assessed through surveys and questionnaires, and the results revealed that most hospitals and health department HR did not have the necessary capacity and IT infrastructure. Most HR offices did not have an Internet connection, and a single computer was being used by more than ten HR personnel. Also, several public hospitals did not have separate HR offices, and some shared their HR office with other departments. Meanwhile, 87% of HR offices did not have a separate budget to plan and implement their programmes (Dilu, et al., 2017). The observations and results of this research study showed that most health organisations and their HR offices were not efficiently organised. The state of public hospitals in this region of Ethiopia reflected the incapacity to successfully implement and maintain an effective HRIS that could add value to the public health system.

Dilu et al. (2017) also found that most HR personnel did not have any basic computer knowledge, and most participants stated that they did not possess the capabilities to use HRIS effectively. However, most participants agreed that HRIS is a valuable system for their organisations. Roughly 84% of the HR employees thought that HRIS was a crucial element of HRM, while a few (35%) participants revealed their fears about the system by stating that HRIS would make them lose their jobs (Dilu, et al., 2017). Significant challenges found in this study included that lack of logistics and supply, poor internet connectivity, lack of office equipment and frequent power interruptions. In comparison, other challenges included lack of competency or technical skills, such as computer skills, inefficient communication skills, data storage and retrieval skills. In-depth interviews revealed that one of the key challenges was related to organisational and managerial dynamics (Dilu, et al., 2017). These included a lack of top management support in the HRIS implementation and HR support process, collaboration with other departments and low IT usage morale.

HRIS has a broad scope and plays a crucial role in financial institutions such as banks of developing countries. “It is applied in personnel administration, salary administration, leave of absence recording, skill inventory, medical history, performance appraisal, training and development, HR planning, recruitment, career planning, negotiations” (Ponduri, 2016:38). The quality of HRIS at commercial banks in the Dessie district of Ethiopia was assessed in a study that sampled 100 participants who worked in the banks’ HR departments. This study was crucial as it sought to determine whether current HRIS meets banks and HR staff expectations

and to observe the post HRIS implementation at banks (Ponduri, 2016). The results revealed that less than half of the HR personnel who participated in the study were satisfied with their current HRIS, while the same number concurred that their HRIS was up to their expectation (Ponduri, 2016). These findings illustrated that the levels of satisfaction with current HRIS in banks were significantly low, and the system did not meet the HR personnel expectations. Although, it was not clear from the findings whether the participants possessed the necessary skills to utilise HRIS to its full potential for maximum benefits.

Ponduri (2016) also found that HR processes such as recruitment, training, data input, and data maintenance were not enhanced by the implementation of the HRIS. Almost 40% of the participants stated that HRIS contribution improved their recruitment processes, data input and maintenance, and reduced paperwork. In comparison, over 60% of the participants stated that their current HRIS did not help them to implement the administrative process (Ponduri, 2016). Most participants also believed that their current HRIS did not decrease the time allocated on communication, capturing data, training and recruiting. Some challenges that were found in current HRIS in Ethiopian commercial banks included the banks' HR employees lack sufficient training to adopt the system entirely, and banking information systems being too disparate, which reduces their efficiency (Ponduri, 2016). Despite the contributions of information technology in Ethiopian banks, IT has not been fully explored in the banks' human resources departments.

2.4.2. HRIS in Kenya

Kenya is on a course to transform its economy from a low-income to a middle-income country. The Kenyan government has embarked on a process to turn Kenya into a global ICT competitor. Kenya's vibrant economy constitutes of a young and middle-aged middle class who are tech conscious. Hence, the use of HRIS in Kenya is relatively effective than other neighbouring African countries. A study was conducted to determine the perceived factors affecting the usage of HRIS, focusing on the Kenya Revenue Authority, which is a parastatal mandated to enhance the mobilisation of the Kenyan government revenue and provide effective tax administration (Mohamed, 2006). Almost 83% of participants who were involved in the study were between the ages of 18-40. The study perceived that young people, especially those who had tertiary qualifications, accept and adapt to change more efficiently; thus, they will embrace the HRIS more easily (Mohamed, 2006). The findings revealed that top management was able to approve and align HRIS with the organisation's strategic goals, and participants

revealed that HRIS had improved management planning and decision making. Although, participants were indecisive regarding senior management's commitment to resources and budget allocations towards the HRIS implementation.

Mohamed (2006) also found that effective communication influenced the implementation of HRIS and that the use of HRIS enhanced efficiency and effectiveness, HR project progress, new organisational structure, and roles and responsibilities being communicated to employees. However, participants disagreed on employees having access to relevant HRIS information. Furthermore, computer literacy had a considerable impact on the daily use of HRIS by employees (Mohamed, 2006). Training on the use of HRIS by ICT was not as frequent as employees wanted, which led to new employees not being inducted to the system immediately after being employed. With regards to infrastructure and maintenance of HRIS, the study found that the ICT of the Kenyan Revenue Authority did not have enough resources to undertake the implementation and maintenance of HRIS (Mohamed, 2006). A key finding was the need to accept change by top management and embrace the use of information technology at all levels of the organisation. The change should be part of the organisational culture so every employee could embrace the use of information technology.

Another study conducted on HRIS and competitive advantage of companies listed on the Nairobi Securities Exchange in Kenya revealed that HRIS influenced the companies' competitive advantage (Kariuki, 2015). Companies achieve competitive advantage over their competitors if those companies can perform specific tasks at a lower cost by incorporating information technology to their products and services. The role of information technology and competition is referred to as the value chain (Porter & Millar, 1985), and companies can perform value activities at economically lower costs in a way that leads to more value and increase in profits. According to Porter and Millar (1985), human resources management is recognised as a valuable activity under the value chain, and the use of HRIS potentially lowers costs, thus providing a competitive advantage for organisations. The study found that HRIS influences competitive advantage, meaning that for organisations to achieve a competitive advantage, they need to integrate their HRIS components such as forecasting and planning, strategic integration, HR analysis, communication and record compliance (Kariuki, 2015). HRIS strategic integration proved to be effective in providing better decision-making, and Kenyan companies have much to benefit from the adoption and effective use of the system.

2.4.3. HRIS in Ghana

Ghana has one of the best labour policies in Africa, which protects against discrimination of any form and encourages the practice of trade unions. However, the country has experienced a slow transition into IT-based systems such as HRIS. This was evident in a study conducted by Nyame and Boateng (2015), which analysed the usage of HRIS among 129 firms based in Ghana from both the public and private sectors in the Accra Metropolitan Area. The study found that roughly 40% of the Ghanaian firms had adopted and implemented HRIS, and most of these firms who haven't adopted HRIS were still using manual systems in HR. These results suggest that implementation of HRIS has been slow across Ghanaian firms, and there is more room for improvement. Larger profit-making private companies were found to have the financial resources to adopt HRIS, as compared to smaller SMEs who only employ less than 100 people (Nyame & Boateng, 2015). Otherwise, it would be useless for a company to invest in HRIS without having enough resources to maintain the system and use it effectively to gain a sustainable competitive advantage.

Nyame and Boateng (2015) also found that the size and type of organisation and the establishment of the organisation are more likely to influence the transition to HRIS. Firms who were over ten years old were more likely to adopt HRIS, although the type of firm did not indicate a positive or negative influence on the adoption of HRIS in Ghana. What was interesting was that some firms did not know the system. Therefore, they did not have any plans to adopt HRIS, while many have not adopted the system because of ignorance or resistance to change (Nyame & Boateng, 2015). About 53% of the participants stated that their organisations were ready to implement HRIS, while the rest stated that their organisations were not ready. This indicated the state of resistance in adopting information technology systems such as HRIS in Ghanaian firms, and the unwillingness to embrace IT in organisational culture.

Another study by Karikari et al. (2015) focused on the role of HRIS in human resources planning by identifying the benefits, contributions and challenges of the system. Human resources planning activities include staffing, training and development, career development, and downsizing (Tansley, et al., 2001). This study aimed to document the effectiveness of HRIS in HR planning in the hospitality sector. The initial findings indicated that HRIS assisted in locating vacancies and analysed each vacancy. HRIS was also useful in identifying training requirements, selected employees to be capacitated, and evaluated the impact of the training received (Karikari, et al., 2015). Three main factors identified included identifying critical

vacancies and employees to fill these vacancies, reaching improved decisions regarding talent management and succession, and creating employee development plans (Karikari, et al., 2015).

Karikari et al. (2015) also found that there were three main benefits of HRIS regarding performance management. These benefits included analysing qualifications and skills and ensuring that the company goals are aligned with those of the employees (Karikari, et al., 2015). There were also some challenges found in the use of HRIS for human resources planning. These challenges included the inability to forecast the demand and supply of labour, access to information, workforce shortage, and cost of recruitment (Karikari, et al., 2015). The practical usage of HRIS in the hospitality area in Ghana, especially in HR planning, has played a significant part in HRM.

2.5. HRIS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Government entities, as well as companies in South Africa, have slowly adopted HRIS as a strategic system to enhance human assets and retain intellectual capital. However, the system has not been effectively implemented and utilised in a manner that reduces time and cost while providing entities with a competitive edge. Electronic human resources management (e-HRM), which is supported by HRIS, was introduced in South Africa during the 1990s as an IT support system for HR practitioners (Ukandu, et al., 2014). The democratic transition that occurred post-1994 witnessed an increase in business outsourcing services and recruitment agencies. Meanwhile, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa encouraged the formation of labour unions across all major economic sectors and also allowed employees the right to join and be represented by any labour union of their choice.

In 2001, the South African Department of Labour and the Department of Education implemented an HR strategy that would improve the way human resources collect, analyse, store and retrieve information. Access to information in South Africa is a right enshrined in the Constitution's Bill of Rights, together with supporting legislation, such as the Promotion of Access to Information Act of 2000 (PAIA). PAIA by decree protects access to human resources information stored using HRIS. Although, it is at the discretion of the organisation which information can be made available to employees. Naicker (2010) stated that information that can be made available could include medical aid, job grades, leave records, and work conditions.

Insufficient literature analysing the effects of HRIS in South African public institutions and private entities is a cause for concern. However, some studies have been expedited on the effects of HRIS in retail companies and universities (Schweyer, 2010; Naicker, 2010). South African organisations utilise various forms of HRIS for different reasons such as recruitment, training management, or performance management, while some companies have incorporated both corporate intranet and HRIS to enhance their HRM (Schweyer, 2010; Naicker, 2010). Naicker (2010) argues that the lack of HRIS development in South Africa may be attributed by the following: lack of knowledge and resources, budgeting constraints, time restraints, data security and integrity, and privacy and security.

Ukandu et al. (2014) conducted a study analysing the influence of HRIS in decision making at various universities in South Africa. This research study aimed to analyse the influences of electronic human resources management (e-HRM), which utilise HRIS, to understand the benefits brought by the system usage (Ukandu, et al., 2014). The study found that HR employees would usually use e-HRM for decision making in processing leave administration, staff appointments, monitoring of employment equity matters, approval of job grades, and information analysis (Ukandu, et al., 2014). HR directors used E-HRM as a decision-making tool in salary advancements, promotions and confirmations, and annual leave. HR managers also revealed that the introduction of e-HRM and its use of HRIS had created some form of maturity and stability in HR processes, evolving from administrative to strategic.

The implementation of e-HRM in South African universities has also assisted in the auditing process, as information stored in HRIS is highly credible and becomes easily accessible (Ukandu, et al., 2014). The turnaround time to process paperwork such as leave applications has become quicker with the usage of e-HRM (Ukandu, et al., 2014), which means that human resources departments can provide efficient services to all employees in the organisation. HR employees revealed that the usage of e-HRM enabled them to improve record-keeping by ensuring that data is collected and stored accurately. Another finding that emerged from this study was that the use of e-HRM by all employees and managers led to the exposure of engaging with modern technological advancements (Ukandu, et al., 2014). A doctoral study by Phahlane (2017) revealed that HIRS implementation in universities suffered from inconsistent direction/leadership from management, HRIS resistance from HR staff, and a lack of user trust by HRIS end-users. Human resources in tertiary institutions in South Africa performs slightly different as compared to local municipalities who have large numbers of employees. Hence, it

is intriguing to understand how HRIS is used and perceived by HR employees and managers of local municipalities.

2.5.1. Status of HRIS in Local Municipalities

The White Paper on Human Resources Management in the Public Service of 1997 sets the foundation for the development of human resources strategies by government departments, including local municipalities. This policy provides a framework on how public service organisations can devise a strategy that will meet human resources needs and drive human resources activities. The effectiveness of the strategy will depend on the support of HRIS, which will provide accurate and timely information for decision-making purposes (DPSA, 1997). There is limited literature on how this proposal on the use of HRIS will strengthen HRM in local municipalities in South Africa.

Kumar and Parumasur (2013) conducted a study on the impact of HRIS on organisational efficiency by focusing on random local municipalities in South Africa. The study sought to investigate the impact of HRIS on HR functions, time management, cost management, managerial satisfaction with HRIS, and the impact of HRIS on overall organisational efficiency. A sample of 101 managers of municipalities in various departments within the municipality was selected. The study found that HRIS significantly enhanced overall organisational efficiency in all sub-dimensions such as HR functions, time management, cost management and managerial satisfaction (Kumar & Parumasur, 2013). The impact of HRIS in all dimensions determining the organisational efficiency in municipalities seemed to have a snowballing effect in all dimensions, thereby having a spiralling positive effect on organisational efficiency (Kumar & Parumasur, 2013).

HRS was found to significantly affect time management in municipalities as it can accelerate the response time compared to traditional labour intense HR practices (Kumar & Parumasur, 2013). This means that less time is spent on daily administration activities, and more time can be allocated for HR employees to use on planning and strategic decision making. Strategic decision making and HR planning affect the productivity and profitability of an organisation (Dery, et al., 2013). Managerial satisfaction of HRIS was significantly high in local municipalities, as management participants revealed that HRS provided efficiency and ease of access to information, which enabled these managers to make strategic decisions on enhancing and retaining human capital (Kumar & Parumasur, 2013). This finding correlates with previous

studies which found that HRIS improved strategic decision making in organisations (Ukandu, et al., 2014).

Kumar (2013) in a separate study on managerial perceptions of HRIS, mentioned that as much as HRIS improved organisational efficiency at local municipalities, the system currently not used to its full potential. It was found that 48.5% agreed and a further 18.8% strongly agreed that HRIS could be better utilised in that at the current moment it is not being used to its full capabilities and has not reached its full potential (Kumar, 2013). This finding signalled a considerable improvement potential for HRIS in local municipalities, where various municipal departments could potentially benefit from time and cost management brought by the system.

James (2006) conducted a study on the use and effect of HRM technology at Breede Valley Municipality, Western Cape, South Africa. The local municipality utilised CAPMAN as a technology-based system to capture human resources information and for planning purposes. The following benefits were identified in the use of the system in Breede Valley Municipality:

“The system reduces errors, increases efficiency and reduces costs for an organisation (e.g. paperwork is reduced, forms are standardised, and reports are generated faster). It can be used as a strategic tool to help the municipality plan well and prepare for the future. It can provide valuable information to decision-makers and alert them of potential problems or opportunities” (James, 2006: 74-75).

These benefits, however, could only be achieved if the system is integrated with existing technology-based information systems, if the employee information is currently updated, and if employees are trained continuously on any new software updates (James, 2006). Studies reveal common findings such as time and cost efficiency and the strategic decision-making function which the system provides to management. This study attempted to explore the benefits of utilising HRIS in eThekweni Municipality, including difficulties, if any that emerged from the usage of the system by HR employees.

2.6. END-USER PERCEPTIONS OF HRIS: USEFULNESS AND EASE OF USE

The adoption and implementation of HRIS in organisations bring with it a lot of uncertainties and perceptions, as end-users try to evaluate the perceived usefulness and ease of use of the system. Meaning the degree to which a person perceives how the system will enhance their performance, and the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort, that is, user friendly (Davis, et al., 1989). Maier et al. (2013) argue that the

implementation of HRIS in an organization leads to employees having to learn and adapt to new routines which created more work stress and may lead to decreased employee job satisfaction if the new system is difficult to use. This challenge can be one of the reasons why employees may end up resisting using HRIS.

A study by Maier et al. (2013) sought to explore the relationship between the perceived use of HRIS and the perceived usefulness of HRIS. The claim was that the higher the perceived usefulness of the implementation of HRIS would lead to higher perceived usefulness (Maier, et al., 2013). The study found that employees would have a positive evaluation of HRIS if they were well capacitated to use the system with ease. “Hence, an additional effort through training is necessary to ensure that HR employees evaluate the HRIS positively” (Maier, et al., 2013:3). The finding highlighted the significance of providing adequate HRIS knowledge and skills to employees so that they can have a positive attitude towards the system and be able to use it in a manner that enhances job performance and organisational efficiency.

Maier et al. (2013) further claimed that the more positive employees’ attitudes towards using HRIS, the lower the turnaround intention would be in an organisation. A turnaround intention is a voluntary or involuntary process where the organisation's employees plan to leave their jobs or fire the employees (Saeed, et al., 2014). Turnover intention can be influenced by various variables such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, leader membership exchange, emotional intelligence, social support, job motivation and job performance (Saeed, et al., 2014; Kim, 2015). Hence, the employees' attitude regarding the use of HRIS has a direct impact on turnover intention (Saeed, et al., 2014). Meaning that employees are likely to be stressed and frustrated if they cannot use the implemented HRIS, and may consider leaving the organisation due to low job satisfaction.

HRIS has further become more useful to employees by becoming more interactive and allowing individuals to access and edit their personal information and records through employee self-service (ESS). Employee self-service, as the name implies, further reduces the administrative workload in HR departments by allowing employees to have updated access to their records (Kovach et al., 2002:44). Over the decades, ESS has been more effective and accessible as it has moved from client-server architecture to a web-based environment. This web-based technology allows management and employees to conduct their own data management and transaction processing, such as change of personal details, viewing payslips and applying for leave, rather than relying on HR staff to perform those duties (Marler, et al., 2009). ESS thus

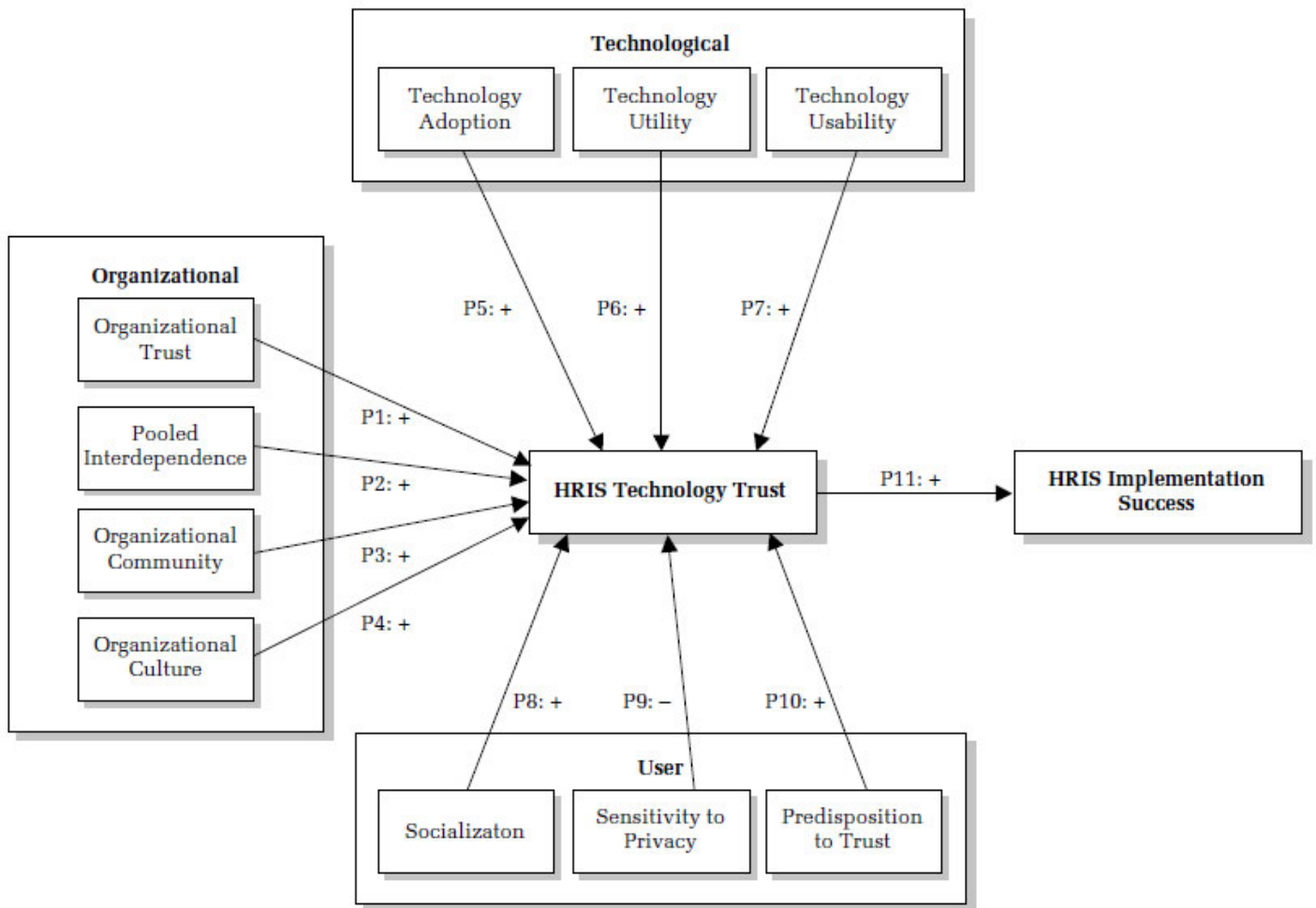
allows for managers and employees to save time and effort to consult with HR staff, and that time saved can be useful in boosting organisational performance.

HRIS also has significant implementation issues that may lead to poor adoption by end-users. Employees who are reluctant to change may resist the implementation of HRIS, primarily in organisations that still retain older manual and paper-based systems. Kovach et al. (2002) stated that one of the most overlooked implementation issues for HRIS was organisational inertia, that is getting employees to adopt and adapt to a new information system, turns out to be a new function or process. This implementation issue could be averted should the employees be involved in the planning and launching process of HRIS. Kovach et al. (2002:46) also agree that “getting HR staff and employee end-user involvement early in the HRIS development process is essential to successful implementation”. Successful implementation of HRIS may then lead to actual perceived usefulness and ease of use.

Lippert and Swiercz (2005) found that technology trust was another construct which prevented the implementation success of HRIS. “Technology trust can be defined as an individual’s willingness to be vulnerable to a technology based on person-specific expectations of the technology’s predictability, reliability, and utility as moderated by the individual’s predisposition to trust the technology” (Lippert & Swiercz, 2005:341). The successful implementation of HRIS relied on three factors, namely organisational, technological and human factor (Lippert & Swiercz, 2005).

A quantitative study on the perceived ease of use of HRIS by Al Mamun and Islam (2016) found that 70% of the study’s participants agreed that the implementation of HIRS smoothed managerial decision making, solidified managerial communication to employees, and accelerated managerial effectiveness. Another study by Bayraktaroglu, Kahya, Atay, and Ilhan (2019), which identified the acceptance conditions for the implementation of HRIS using the TAM, found that the increases in success affected user satisfaction. Also, user satisfaction in the use of HRIS increased organisational performance. However, efforts to enhance participation by users required regular training sessions to ensure user satisfaction (Bayraktaroglu et al., 2019).

Figure 2.7: HRIS technology trust model



Source: Lippert & Swiercz (2005)

Each of the three factors that influenced the successful implementation of HRIS had several elements that contributed to the overall outcome of the process (see Figure 2.3). Organisational factor included elements such as organisational trust, pooled interdependence, organisational community and organisational culture. The technological factor included elements such as technology adoption, technology utility and technology usability. The human or user factor included elements such as socialisation, sensitivity to privacy, and predisposition to trust. Only the element of sensitivity to privacy was negative, as individuals were more sceptical and less trustworthy of systems such as HRIS that stored personal and sensitive information by organisations (Lippert & Swiercz, 2005).

2.7. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK – TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE MODEL

This study could have explored numerous theoretical frameworks. They are, but not limited to Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Theory of Reasonable Action (TRA), Task-technology fit (TTF), Technology Acceptance Model - original (TAM), TAM2 and TAM3. Each framework emphasizes different factors. The theory underpinning this study is the original TAM. TAM is an information systems theory that models how users come to accept and use technology. The model suggests that when users are presented with new technology, several factors influence their decision about how and when they will use it (Davis, et al., 1989). Also, TAM is the most widely used theoretical technology model (Razmak & Bélanger, 2018). The original TAM model has two constructs, that is, Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEU). This theory was used because the study sought to unravel the benefits of HRIS related to its usefulness (or lack thereof) and its ease of use (user-friendliness) or lack thereof by the eThekwini Municipality.

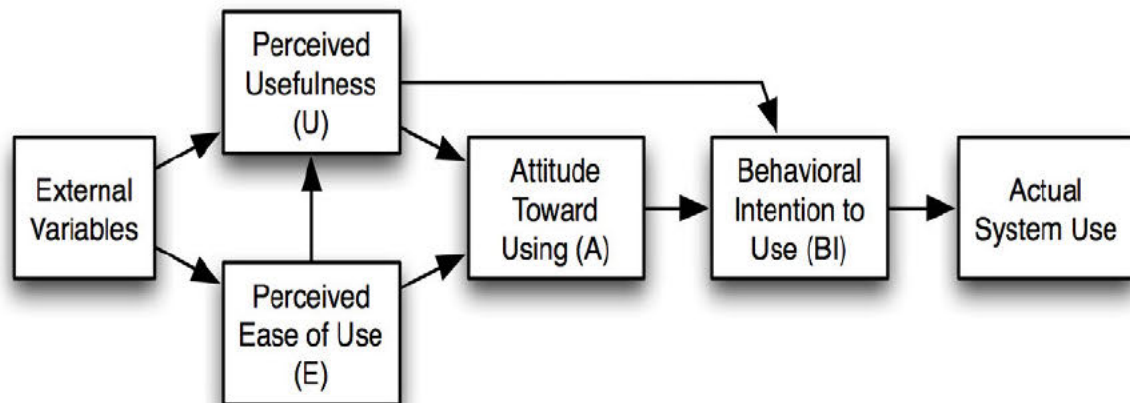
Perceived Usefulness (PU)

PU is defined as the potential user's subjective likelihood that the use of a particular system will improve their action (Davis, 1989). This principle is similar to that of Perceived HRIS Usefulness, which refers to the degree to which a person believes that using an HRIS would enhance his or her performance within an organization. Accordingly, a user's primary motivation to use the HRIS will derive from the functions it performs for him/her (Davis, 1989).

Perceived Ease of Use (PEU)

PEU refers to the degree to which the potential user expects the target system to be effortless. The belief of the person towards a system may be influenced by other factors referred to as external variables in TAM. This principle is similar to that of Perceived HRIS Ease of Use, which refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort. The actual use of a computer system can be defined by the degree to which system characteristics match user task needs (Davis, 1989).

Figure 2.4: A Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)



Source: Bagozzi, Davis, and Warshaw (1992)

Davis (1989) hypothesised that the attitude of a user towards the technological system was a significant determinant on whether the user will accept or reject the system. Perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are two external variables, with the perceived ease of use having a direct influence on the perceived usefulness (see Figure 2.4) (Marangunić & Granić, 2015). TAM follows the common thread of belief, behaviour and intention and has been employed to study and examine various information systems (Teo & Van Schaik, 2012).

Bagozzi (2007) identified some shortcomings of the popular TAM model, which should be taken into consideration in the social sciences. One of the crucial shortcomings is the group, cultural and social aspects of technology acceptance, which the TAM model does not consider when analysing the attitude towards using and the behavioural intention to use information systems (Bagozzi, 2007). Human behaviour is sometimes spontaneous or socially constructed, and individuals do not live in isolation. Sometimes individual actions are influenced by organisations or affiliated groups, religion, or cultural values and norms. Bagozzi (2007) argues that TAM focuses on individual action or personal intentions and ignores group action or collective intentions in the use of information technology. Information systems such as HRIS may require collective action where HR personnel perform strategic activities in line with organisational objectives. This study considered any cultural and social aspects that influenced the perception and use of HRIS by HR employees and managers of eThekwini.

2.8. CONCLUSION

This chapter highlighted the historical emergence and evolution of HRIS, which stemmed back from the Second World War and evolved towards the cost-effectiveness era between 1980 and 1990. HRIS has evolved in recent years not just to enhance the administrative role of HRM technologically, but also to play a more strategic role in HRM. This chapter also outlined the status of HRIS in a global and regional context by presenting literature on countries such as India, the UK, Canada, Ethiopia, Kenya and Ghana. MNCs in India, UK and Canada have popularised the use of HRIS in a manner that reduces costs and provides organisations with a competitive edge. African countries still faced socio-historical challenges such as funding for the implementation of HRIS, training on the effective use of the system, and budgeting constraints were prevalent. HRIS was found to have an impact on time management in South African local municipalities since it could accelerate the response time compared to traditional labour intense HR practices. The theoretical framework underpinning this study, the TAM, was presented with a brief background and illustration of how perceived ease of use has a direct influence on the perceived usefulness of information systems. Although, TAM has some shortcomings of ignoring group, cultural and social aspects that affect decision-making, and these shortcomings should be considered when employing the model.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research methodology that has been adopted by the study. This study uses a qualitative research methodology which includes the collection of raw data via in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The chapter departs by presenting the research design, which includes a brief overview of the qualitative research and phenomenological approach employed by the study. The chapter follows with a presentation of the sampling strategies, location of the study, data collection and analysis. The chapter then discusses some ethical considerations which include credibility, reliability and confirmability, transferability and dependability. The chapter then concludes with a presentation of some methodological challenges the study encountered.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

Qualitative Research

The study opted to adopt a qualitative research methodology. A qualitative study would gather information-rich data and would highlight the perceptions of the HRIS. As opposed to a quantitative study, which would only provide statistical data without capturing the perceptions and experiences from end-users, qualitative approach was going to generate more data through the interviews. The study explores the benefits and underlying challenges. Hence, only a qualitative methodology can fully capture these benefits. Qualitative research designs have evolved throughout the years, and a large number are recognised today (Rubin, 2008). In this study, a qualitative research methodology was used to achieve the objectives of the study. Rubin (2008) states that qualitative research is a form of research methodology that allows a researcher to collect data that is rich in the textual description of how a target population is experiencing a phenomenon. Using a qualitative research methodology, researchers can collect data about the human perspective of the research problem (Rubin, 2008).

A qualitative methodology was chosen for its ability to explore, describe and produce detailed results regarding the issue being researched. Also, Silverman (2000) concurs that qualitative research is well suited to achieve a higher and detailed understanding of the perceptions of participants. Furthermore, qualitative research allows the researcher to develop new

perceptions from the participants' view in their setting (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Also, a qualitative research methodology resulted in unearthing underlying factors that emanate as both negative and positive perceptions towards HRIS and highlight the key benefits thereof. This qualitative approach utilised critical strategies, such as in-depth interviews and focus groups.

Phenomenological Approach

The nature and topic of this study were to explore the benefit of using HRIS from the perspectives of HR employees and managers in eThekweni Municipality. These HRIS benefits were documented from HR employees and managers who have used and engaged with the system continuously, and thus have a lived experience on the applicational benefits and challenges. Hence, this study calls on a phenomenological approach that would document the lived experiences of HR employees and managers in their engagement with HRIS. A phenomenological study explores the meaning of several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2017). In a phenomenological study, the researcher is required to collect data in the form of interviews from individuals who have a lived experience of the phenomenon, then develops a composite description of the essence of the experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

3.3. LOCATION OF THE STUDY

The research study on the benefits of HRIS in eThekweni Municipality was conducted at eThekweni, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. EThekweni Municipality has approximately 3,6 million residents and is located at the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and spans an area of over 2555km² (eThekweni Municipality, 2018). As of June 2018, there were over twenty-five thousand (25000) employees employed by eThekweni Municipality, and over five hundred (500) of them are employed in the Human Resources department (eThekweni Municipality, 2018).

3.4. SAMPLING

The sampling selection process for this research study focused on HR employees of eThekweni Municipality. According to Yin (2009), sampling refers to a subset of the entire population, meaning that a sample is taken that represents the larger targeted population. A population is defined as an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set

of specifications. A population comprises all the potential cases, such as persons, objects, events, that constitute a known total or whole (Polit and Hungler, 2014:37).

This study employed a non-probability sampling design to select participants who contributed to rich data. Rubin (2008) explains that in this non-probability sampling design, the people are selected based on the subjective choice of the researcher. It is also very cost-and-time-effective. A purposive sampling strategy was used to select individuals whose lived experiences in the use of HRIS provided this study with in-depth and rich information. According to Patton (2015), purposive sampling was when the researcher purposefully and subjectively selected individuals who possessed rich information within limited resources.

Sample size

A sample of Human Resources employees was used to represent the entire targeted population of HR employees in the municipality. A sample size of twelve (12) participants was used in this study. The initial proposed study was sixteen (16) participants. However, most responses were beginning to be repetitive. Hence, the researcher opted to reduce the sample size to twelve. Five (5) interviewees were purposefully selected to represent five HR departments. Seven (7) focus group interviewees were randomly selected to ensure an even representation of all five departments. This representation has been presented on the demographic table on Chapter 4. This sample was randomly selected from five departments within HR unit in the eThekweni Municipality. The target population for this study was all employees working in five (5) different departments of HR unit, in the eThekweni Municipality. This sample size constituted a fair representative sample of employees and managers who are currently end-users of HRIS.

3.5. DATA COLLECTION

Data collection in a qualitative research study involves using various tools and methods such as interviews and focus groups. The researcher collected data using in-depth semi-structured interviews. Also, the use of focus groups as a method to collect data from individuals in the same setting allows the researcher to cross-examine and find any concurring or contrasting data. Whitney (2008) states that data collection is a process whereby the researcher systematically gathers information to answer the research questions and evaluate results. Identifying interviewees, designing an interview schedule, location, setting up for the interview to take place, and obtaining consent from the interviewees is part of a data collection method used in qualitative research (Creswell, 2007). The study only utilised an interview guide

approved by the ethical committee. An interview guide does not require any pilot test such as those conducted on interview questionnaires to test its validity and reliability.

Semi-structured Interviews

The semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted to collect data related to benefits of HRIS at eThekweni Municipality. The questions were designed and given to potential participants at least few days before interviews were conducted. This ensured that participants familiarise themselves with the research study. Targeted participants were then interviewed and provided an opportunity to share their lived experiences on HRIS. The researcher conducted five (5) individual interviews with employees across different levels and departments of HR. These individuals were purposely selected because they represent both the views of the employer and those of employees.

Semi-structured Focus Groups

Another strategy to collect data was semi-structured focus groups. These discussions allowed the researcher to collect comparative and contrasting phenomena on the benefits of HRIS at eThekweni Municipality. The benefits of this instrument were to gather various perceptions and shared beliefs of the use of HRIS in the municipality in a group setting. Two (2) focus group discussions were conducted, with a combined total of seven (7) participants. Each session was allocated forty-five (45) minutes. The permission was sought upfront to record discussions using an audio recorder.

3.6. DATA ANALYSIS

Data gathered from both interviews and focus groups was analysed thematically. Data analysis is a process of examining raw data from participants to reach conclusions (Rubin, 2008). Thematic analysis is a procedure whereby themes and sub-themes are developed through the coding and arranging of data to form systematic patterns (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Sprague (2005) also states that thematic analysis is based on coding and classifying information so that the findings of the study could emerge. This method also informed the results of this study. The raw data was analysed thematically using the NVIVO version 12 software. Through this software, the researcher developed themes and sub-themes, which were coded and arranged for easier reporting during the discussion of findings.

3.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Qualitative research is conducted on the field with real people who live and work in those settings, and these people are not anonymous to the researcher. Therefore, the researcher ensured the identity of the participants, including their privacy and confidentiality. The researcher did this by assigning aliases or numbers to individuals to ensure their privacy (Creswell, 2007).

The researcher ensured that all ethical issues were addressed, including anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw from the study. Participants were orientated on the objectives of the study and were requested to sign an informed consent form which stipulated that their privacy would be protected.

3.7.1. Credibility

Credibility is defined as the value and believability of the study based on the strategies of triangulation, prolonged observations, member checking and peer briefing (Houghton, et al., 2013). Guba and Lincoln (1994) state that credibility is the proposed criterion against which the truth value of a qualitative study should be judged. The strategy of triangulation was employed in this study to ensure the credibility of the research. Triangulation is the use of multiple methods in research to collect data and develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being researched (Carter, et al., 2014). In triangulation, the researcher searches for convergence among multiple sources to form themes or categories. The multiple methods that have been adopted by this study include in-depth interviews, field notes and observations. The collection of data using multiple sources ensured the credibility of the study and prevented any biases that might arise from only conducting one-on-one interviews.

3.7.2. Reliability

Reliability is defined as the “extent to which the results are consistent over some time, and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results can be reproduced in a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered reliable” (Golafshani, 2003:598). Reliability is hard to achieve in a qualitative study due to different perspectives and lived experiences of individuals who often have different constructs and meanings. As such, the best possible way to ensure the reliability of the study would be to keep an audit trail. An audit trail involves a gathering of all of notes and materials such as interview transcripts, final draft reports, and notes collected during data collection (Cope,

2014). In this study, notes were taken during the interviews and data analysis stages, and interview transcripts are available to confirm the reliability of the research.

3.7.3. Confirmability

Confirmability is a process whereby the researcher discloses and makes available the data that they are basing their findings or interpretations of (Heigham & Croker, 2009). This process is to ensure that the findings are those of the participants and not the biases of the researcher. Rigour in qualitative research was achieved through an audit trail that can be evidence that the study is trustworthy, thus ensuring confirmability of the research study (Houghton, et al., 2013). The researcher can demonstrate confirmability by describing how conclusions and interpretations were reached, thus illustrating how the findings were derived from the data (Cope, 2014). The researcher can achieve this by providing rich direct quotations from the participants under each theme or sub-theme.

3.7.4. Transferability

Transferability refers to how a research study and its findings can be transferred to another setting or group (Houghton, et al., 2013). A research study has met this criterion if the findings of the study have meanings to individuals who were not part of the study and readers can associate the findings with their own experiences (Cope, 2014). A researcher can achieve this by providing enough information on the participants and the research context to enable the reader to assess the transferability of the findings (Cope, 2014). To ensure transferability, the researcher should provide details of the methodologies that were employed in the study and the context and setting to study so that the reader will have enough information to assess whether the study can be applied to another setting.

3.7.5. Dependability

Dependability refers to the consistency and repeatability of the research findings over similar conditions (Cope, 2014). This can be obtained by using multiple data collection strategies and providing detailed reports on how the research was conducted (Houghton, et al., 2013). Dependability can also be achieved when another researcher concurs with the decision trails at each stage of the research (Cope, 2014). Koch (2006) stated that a study is only dependable if the results were to be repeated with similar participants in similar environments.

3.8. METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

The researcher faced minor methodological challenges during the research study processes. A challenge that was faced concerning the methodology of the study was the recruitment of participants as per the proposed purposive sampling and organising suitable times to meet for one-on-one interviews. Another challenge was to organise participants for the focus group discussions since the targeted participants were full-time employees at the municipality. Nonetheless, the researcher was able to organise a suitable time to conduct both interviews and focus groups.

3.9. CONCLUSION

This chapter covered and presented the methodology that was adopted by the study. The study employed a qualitative research methodology. The non-probability sampling design was also employed to ensure rich information is collected from targeted participants. Data was collected using focus group discussions and one-on-one in-depth interviews. A purposive sampling method was used to select the sample of the study. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse data and present findings to be discussed in Chapter 4, and all ethical issues mentioned were adhered.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research findings that emerged from the data analysis process. This study employed a thematic analysis as a methodology by coding the raw data and arranging it in emerging patterns. The chapter begins by presenting a demographic profile of the participants. The chapter then presents these findings with verbatim quotations from the participants. These findings are also linked to the theoretical framework and literature review presented in Chapter 2. The main aim of this study was to explore the benefits of HRIS in eThekweni Municipality. The study also sought to understand the extent the perceived usefulness influence perceptions of the employees at eThekweni Municipality. Also, to explore to what extent eThekweni Municipality enjoy benefits of using human resources information system. Participants were asked to share their lived experience in applying the system in the workplace. The study also sought to ascertain how the perceived ease of using HRIS does affects the employees at eThekweni Municipality. Participants shared their perceptions on the ease of use of the system, which also included some technical challenges and system inconveniences. Table 4.1 below presents some of the emerging themes of this study.

Table 4.1: Themes and sub-themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
1) Understanding of HRIS	
2) Benefits of HRIS	Time-saving
	Real-time information
	Accurate reporting
	Self-service options
	Paperless system
	Information recordkeeping
3) Perceived Usefulness	Strategic decision-making
	Useful system
	System training
4) Perceived Ease of Use	Access to system and technology
	User friendly
	Technical challenges
	HRIS system adaptivity

4.2. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

The research data was collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions involving twelve (12) participants who are all employed by eThekweni Municipality under the human resources department. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, the names of the participants have been replaced with aliases. Also, the designations of the participants have been omitted. The table below presents the demographic profile of the participants:

Table 4.2: Demographic profile of participants

		Gender	Age	Unit/Branch	Designation
Participants:					
	Participant 1	Female	46-55	HR – CES	Senior Manager HR
	Participant 2	Male	46-55	HR – Shared Services	Payroll Controller
	Participant 3	Female	46-55	HR – Human Settlement	Recruitment Admin
	Participant 4	Female	36-45	HR - Trading Services	Payroll & Recruitment Manager
	Participant 5	Female	46-55	HR - Treasury	Deputy Head HR
Focus Group 1:					
	FG1 Participant 1	Male	56+	HR – PRC	Staff Assistant
	FG1 Participant 2	Female	56+	HR – Community Safety	Principal Clerk
	FG1 Participant 3	Male	36-45	HR – HR Corporate	Recruitment Admin
	FG1 Participant 4	Female	19-35	HR – Finance	Payroll Administrator
Focus Group 2:					
	FG2 Participant 1	Female	36-45	HR – Recruitment	Principal Clerk
	FG2 Participant 2	Female	36-45	HR – Shared Services	Senior Clerk
	FG2 Participant 3	Female	19-35	HR - Payroll	Staff Assistant

Out of the 12 participants who took part in this study, only 3 of them were men, and the majority were women. That constitutes 25% of men and 75% of women who took part in this study. The majority of participants are in the adult category of 36 years and above, with only one Participant in the youth category between the ages 19 to 35. All participants are employed in various sectors of eThekweni Municipality’s Human Resources Department. Participants include Deputy Heads, Senior Managers, Managers, Senior Officers, Administrators, and Clerks.

4.3. UNDERSTANDING OF HRIS

This study focused on interviewing individuals who have had exposure to HRIS. Thus the individual was the unit of analysis. Hence, it was in the interest of this study to determine the

participants' understanding of HRIS. Therefore, the researcher introduced the interviews with a question that sought to determine the participants' basic understanding of what HRIS is. Participants provided the following narratives in their responses to their understanding of HRIS:

Um, my understanding is that its online software that is used to capture the data and information and also to do the analysis of the organization, especially for HR section, where you can be able to write some reports that are needed, and also for payroll section where you can get any type of leave. It can be sick leave, FRL or annual leave. Also, another thing that I found is that it's a system that combines all the information for the entire organization. So that anyone maybe who wants will have access to that report and can get such information. (FG1 Participant 4)

OK, HRIS is in my view refers to a computer system. That covers the various modules of HR. Namely, if we start from where we start, the organizational structure first, then employee personal details, and then there will be pay and leave, talent management, performance management, etcetera. So that all combinations of all those modules HRIS. (Participant 2)

Ok, my understanding is that HRIS is a form of human resources software that combines a number of systems processes to ensure the easy management of HR processes and data. (FG2 Participant 3)

It also assists the organisation to align with the ever-changing world of work in terms of talent attraction and employee engagement. (Participant 4)

Participants 2 and 4, together with FG1 Participant 4 and FG2 Participant 3 understood HRIS as a computerised software system to collect employee data and also performs data analysis for the organisation. This finding resonates with the definition of HRIS provided by Hendrickson (2003:381) who stated that "HRIS's can be briefly defined as integrated systems used to gather, store, and analyse information regarding an organization's human resources". Another common concept found in these responses was the integration of various systems or modules into one, meaning that modules such as talent management, payroll, leave applications, and performance management are all integrated into a single system under HRIS.

4.4. BENEFITS OF HRIS

This study aims to explore the benefits of HRIS enjoyed by both the employer and employees of eThekweni Municipality. These benefits would highlight the impact and level of usefulness HRIS was across various end-users of the system. Hence, participants were asked what benefits both employer, and HRIS brings end-user employees of eThekweni. Most benefits enjoyed by managers and employees overlap, as managers also enjoy benefits such as self-service, real-time information, and time-saving. Other common benefits that were found included accurate reporting, paperless system, and information recordkeeping.

4.4.1. Time-saving

Time-saving emerged as one of the key findings during data analysis. HRIS has demonstrated to be beneficial for organisations because it can save time and cost (Nawaz & Gomes, 2014). Time saved in an organisation increases productivity as employees can begin with new tasks. Most participants expressed that HRIS was able to save time. Participants provided the following statements:

Ok, for me there is a benefit for recruitment because it's time-saving. Before on an establishment, you had to use an Excel spreadsheet that used to take months to update. (FG2 Participant 1)

Also, it saves time as there is no running around and searching for paper. Now everything is on the system, you just click on the system, and the information appears. It's also easy to compile reports, that is also very helpful. (FG2 Participant 2)

Most definitely time-saving, yes. Um, and also the way things are going on right now everything is computerised, you know. So, I think you would feel more at ease with the accuracy if everybody is using the same system, putting all the information in there. So, differently, time benefits there, the time-saving benefit there. (Participant 1)

There is a lot of flexibility in working with the system. It has also improved my performance. Work gets to be delivered on time while requiring less time to perform duties that would have taken hours to complete. (Participant 5)

FG2 Participant 1 and 2, together with Participants 1 and 5 agreed that HRIS saved time. This finding concurred with Kumar and Parumasur (2013), who found that time management was a dimension which impacted organisational efficiency in municipalities through the adoption of HRIS. Furthermore, FG2 Participant 2 revealed that HRIS saved time as it eliminates the use of paper in their working environment and makes it easy to compile reports. Both these findings that are paperless technology and accurate reporting emerged in this study and are interlinked with the time-saving benefit brought by HRIS.

4.4.2. Real-time information

One of the benefits that emerged from this study was how HRIS was able to provide real-time information to management. Participants revealed that the system's ability to produce real-time information which can be useful in making strategic decisions was a significant benefit to the organisation. Indeed, a feature that was not available before the adoption of the system by the municipality. Participants provided the following narratives:

FG1 Participant 1: I think that the reality is with real-time issues. Um, and I'm thinking with SARS, previously you had to wait for one month to submit documentation with SARS. Now because we're online, that can happen within a day or two to confirm SARS information. It's also easy to access, we don't have to look at files, we have easy access to real-time information, and any one of us at our department has access to information. So, it's real-time and easy access. (FG1 Participant 1)

From how I understand the system, real-time from a system in our perspective in our case would be a day later. Every evening they have automatic pay run, or automatic system run that will update the information. So, as you capture, it might show it to you on the screen, but in the background, it didn't happen, but only when they do they run at the end of the day does it come into the reporting and stuff. So, in that instance, it is a day later. In other instances, it can change almost immediately. Still, we run reports maybe once a month Like funded vacancies, we try to pull the report on the first day of the month, and then whatever changes take place for the rest of the month, we leave it and only look at the first of the month next month. (Participant 2)

It also determines but also allows for confidential information to be transferred or transmitted in terms of the copy requirements. So, it's on a safe and secure platform, sensitive information

is on a safe and secure platform, and you get real-time information. So, it's like a one-stop-shop. (FG1 Participant 3)

Participant 2, FG1 Participants 1 and 3, revealed that one of the benefits of HRIS is that it provides access to real-time information. This real-time information was key to the compilation of reports, especially for the HR staff and management. This finding resonated with Aggarwal and Kapoor (2012), who listed real-time data as one of the benefits HR employees enjoyed by using HRIS in the workplace. Participant 2 further explained that real-time, according to the municipality's HRIS system, was a day later, meaning that if the information is captured today, it would only appear the following day as real-time information. Meanwhile, FG1 Participant 3 explained that the information captured and stored using HRIS was safe and secure.

4.4.3. Accurate reporting

Real-time information is mainly used by HR staff and management to compile reports and make strategic decisions from those reports. Hence, accurate reporting emerged as a finding during data analysis. Participants indicated that accurate reporting, mainly how HRIS produces reports, was another huge benefit. These are the narratives provided by the participants:

Ok, as I said earlier to the organisation, it's the time factor, accuracy, ease of reference. Um, you know, specifically what you're looking for, you can pull that out. Yes, because the system is specific to what you're looking for. So, it's easy for you to go in and specify exactly what you want so you can get the end result. (FG2 Participant 3)

As I said earlier on, the way things are going now as far as electronics is concerned, that's definitely the way to go. It's easier, accurate, and if you need to pick up something, you yourself can go into the system and check whatever it is you're looking for. No need to go through paperwork. (Participant 3)

Also, one of the benefits now we can, because it's an extensive system, we've got departments, you've got your Housing sections. You've got your Skills Development department, like EMA department, where they can now go to the system and pull out the reports. That minimizes for them to call, you know, our HR guys who are the centrepiece of building the system. They can now go to the system and pull out those reports. You've got your internal control guys who

now don't have to come to our offices, as they can print reports online. I think those are some of the benefits to eliminate people coming in and out of our offices. (FG2 Participant 1)

Participant 3 and FG2 Participants 1 and 3 stated that one of the benefits of HRIS was to accurately generate reports for various HR departments using the information that has been captured. The reports are then used for various functions, including strategic planning and decision making by management. This finding resonated with a study by James (2006), who found that the use of HRIS was a strategic tool to generate reports faster and provide valuable information to decision-makers and alert them of problems or opportunities. FG2 Participant 1 further stated that the availability of HRIS to other departments reduces the time and effort of employees having to request reports from HR. This finding links accurate reporting with time-saving.

4.4.4. Self-service options

A significant benefit of adopting HRIS is to enable self-service options where employees can interact with the system. This self-service benefit was widely enjoyed by both managers and employees. When participants were asked what the benefits of HRIS for the end-user were, they responded with the following:

Ok, I can see my payslip on the system, I can then pull it and print it if I need it. I don't have to call my payroll administrator to get my payslip. I can also go to the system and view my leave balance, especially now because I know that I'm studying. I can go and see how many annual leaves I've got, so that's I know when I apply how many leave days I can be able to take. So, those are also the benefits of using the system. (FG1 Participant 4)

So, one is able to, and I'm able to update personal details personally, um but it's only specific information. So, I can update my next of kin details, I can't update if there is a change of surname and stuff, but I can't update banking details and stuff; that is limited to the HR guys. Alright, um I'm also able to view my payslip ahead of payday. So, generally after the dummy run-up, I'm able to view my payslip. I can't perhaps identify errors before the final pay run and have it corrected. So, that's an advantage me. (Participant 2)

There are many benefits of using an integrated HRIS solution. At our workplace, the ESS module allows you to view your payslip, view your IRP5 and apply for leave online. Quick and

easy access. The automation of performance agreements also makes the completion of agreements simple to administer and brings about uniformity. At eThekwini, the e-Careers module is one of the biggest benefits as it is public-facing and allows the citizens to see all the vacancies that are available in the City. Candidates can also apply on-line via the various Centres of Excellence that comes with free WIFI as well. Internal staff have the Employee Self Service portal that gives them instant access to their payslips, IRP5s, and they can apply for leave online. (Participant 3)

Participants 2 and 3, and FG1 Participant 4 stated that the main benefit of having HRIS included self-service options where they can view their payslips, apply for leave, change and update personal information, and view one's IRP5 online on a web-based environment. Marler, et al. (2009) found that HRIS provided employees self-service benefits such as viewing payslips and applying for leave online. This finding was in line with the administrative benefits of HRIS mentioned by Watson (2002) and Beadles, et al. (2005), where the provision of self-services by the system improved productivity and reduced costs. Participant 3 further stated that one of the self-service options available was the e-Careers module where employees and the public could apply for vacancies on the online system rather than sending manual applications.

4.4.5. Paperless system

One of the benefits that emerged as a finding was how HRIS was a paperless system that reduced the office burden of dealing with tons of documents. This was a benefit that was enjoyed by both the employer and employees. Participants elaborated further and provided the following narratives:

The other benefit for me is that I don't have to now carry out whole documents with me. I can just connect to the Wi-Fi in the building, and I can access the system through the Wi-Fi, and I can if you want a vacancy checking report, I can see it right there where I'm sitting with my PC. So, I don't have to carry fifty files with me in meetings. I can just carry my laptop, and I'm able to access all sorts of information. (FG1 Participant 1)

So, it is paperless now where they don't need to come to our offices where we are situated, you know. They can now go and click the buttons there. Secondly, reports that were done manually can now be easily pulled from the system, which makes it easy for people. (FG1 Participant 2)

I belong to the paperless 4IR community, able to access information wherever I am, can communicate with the business and all my stakeholders without having to see them face to face. I am able to provide an HR service by just a click of a button. (Participant 4)

It improves operational excellence by removing all the burdens of having to deal with old systems that use paper. There is also the speed and quality of performing or archiving data. You can also, as I said, retrieve data, and it can also make back-ups for the organisation. (Participant 5)

Participants 4 and 5, and FG1 Participants 1 and 2 stated that one of the benefits of HRIS is that it is a paperless system, which means that managers and employees do not have to carry papers and files and that reports can be produced instantly with a click of a button. This finding resonated with a research study by James (2006) and Ukandu, et al. (2014), who found that the implementation of HRIS in organisations reduces paperwork.

There was one Participant who stated that the move towards a paperless system was significantly slow. The Participant stated the following:

Also, I think since we are in this moving away from paper, but we still lack because I think by this time around, we should have the electronic attendance system. So, it's all of those things that tell us that we are still stuck somewhere. We are not moving forward. (FG2 Participant 1)

FG2 Participant 1 argued that the move toward a paperless environment still lacked behind, as an electronic attendance system was supposed to be in place already. However, this was not the case. This finding signalled that not all HRIS processes are paperless. There are processes within HR that still relied on manual paper-based systems.

4.4.6. Information recordkeeping

Part of the HRIS benefits is the ability to keep records of information. This information recordkeeping emerged as a finding in this study. Participants revealed that one of the benefits of HRIS was information recordkeeping, and they provided the following statements:

Um, eThekwini now has a single database of all employee information and cost, and the HR system keeps all that. It should be keeping next of kin details in the case of an emergency one

is able to contact one's next of kin. It will keep all the earnings details, will keep all personal details. So, everything is in one database, which is great. (Participant 2)

Ok, I think a benefit for me is that it's easy to access information and record-keeping. Like for instance, previously when someone is calling and say I am so and so I need to check something, we had to run and find the information of the employee, but now you just enter the employee number on the system. It gives you all the information, so it's really helpful. (FG2 Participant 2)

All the information is easily accessible through the HRIS system based on the fact that all the information is contained therein. So, the system keeps all records of employees, and you don't have to recapture employee details if they've been on the system before. (Participant 1)

Participants 1 and 2, and FG2 Participant 2 stated that through HRIS, information is easily accessible as the system keeps all records of employees. This information is used for a variety of tasks, as Participant 2 mentioned that personal information could be useful to contact the next of kin in case of an emergency. Participant 1 further stated that the system keeps all employee records, and this prevents the recapturing of information, especially if the employee has been captured before. This finding was synonymous with a study by Ukandu, et al. (2014), which found that HR employees revealed that the implementation of HRIS enabled them to improve record-keeping by ensuring that data is collected and stored accurately.

4.4.7. Strategic decision-making

A significant HRIS benefit for employer is that it improves strategic decision making, as HR managers and employees spend less time on tedious paperwork and have more time available for strategic decision making (Beadles, et al., 2005). The study found that some participants acknowledged that HRIS enhanced strategic decision making in eThekweni Municipality. The participants provided the following accounts:

The benefits from an employer perspective are to have information in a single repository that can be extracted at any time for strategic decision making. For example, should the employer have to render a service, a good HRIS solution will be able to assist with workforce planning. Furthermore, benefits of the system assist in terms of compliance to legislation and ensure proactive measures that can be put in place should the Employer identify trends and patterns

that would negatively affect the workplace, for example, loss of scarce skills, ageing workforce.
(Participant 3)

Um, yeah and also just I think it helps the overall objective of strategic planning of an organization. Certainly, from a management point of view, you get to see exactly a snapshot of where your organization is at any time, regardless whether its demographic, vacancies or whether it's the costs involved in salaries. Also, compliance I've got here, also certainly from an HR side you've got EE reporting. For businesses, you've got BEE reporting which can almost be stored on an HRIS system. (FG1 Participant 3)

So sorry, but that also leads to, like also you're freeing up now HR staff from tedious administrative tasks now to concentrate on other things or maybe other strategic projects which could be a benefit to the Department. So, now that it has been shifted to the control of the employees themselves, yeah it would take a bit off their plate. (FG1 Participant 2)

Participant 3, and FG1 Participants 2 and 3 agreed that HRIS enhances strategic decision making by utilising available data to identify potential problems and opportunities. Also, HRIS saves time and allows for HR staff to perform other strategic functions in the organisation. This finding correlated with a previous study by Kumar and Parumasur (2013), who found that managerial satisfaction of HRIS was significantly high in South African local municipalities. Managers who participated in the study strongly agreed that the system provided efficiency and ease of access to information, which enabled these managers to make strategic decisions on enhancing and retaining human capital.

4.5. PERCEIVED USEFULNESS

Another objective of the study was to understand the extent perceived usefulness of HRIS influence the perceptions of employees in eThekweni Municipality. Participants were asked in their own words to explain the perceived usefulness of HRIS on employees in eThekweni. Some participants revealed that the system is useful, while others stated that so far, the system was not useful as it was not used to by the majority of employees. There were other emerging sub-themes such as systems training and initial system rollout.

4.5.1. Useful system

The perceived usefulness of HRIS influenced some employees of eThekweni Municipality. Some participants revealed that HRIS is a useful system for their organisation. Hence, a useful system emerged as a sub-theme during the thematic analysis of data. When participants were asked to share their perceived usefulness of HRIS, they responded with the following statements:

Ye, the system is quite useful for HR staff who work on different modules. Um, even though the system was in place for quite some time, I only came to know about it maybe a year or two years later, where it was brought to my attention and shown how it can be used. It can be very useful, yes if everybody is trained on how to use it and also explained the benefits of using it.
Participant 1)

We've created paths that allow our staff that use the system to get into a path, and the screen follows one after the other. So, it allows them ease of use, and because they do the same transaction capture on a month to month basis, they basically easily understand the elements that they need to use. We even have it listed on the path, as to what elements they need to add and stuff, and we have procedure manuals updated three years. We have regular meetings payroll and recruitment staff, for example. So, I'm saying, for those people, it is easy.
(Participant 2)

This inclusiveness of providing HR Centres of excellence with computers and free Wi-Fi makes them proud to be employees of the city. Employees are finding the system useful and productive. These initiatives attract the youth that is more computer savvy and ultimately paints the City as an Employer of Choice. (Participant 4)

Participants 1, 2 and 4 stated that the system was quite useful to HR employees who work on different modules such as payroll, recruitment and shared services. Participant 1 further stated that the system could be more useful if employees were trained. Signalling that there is a lack of training or induction of the system to employees in the organisation and that HRIS is probably not used to its full potential. Kumar (2013) also found that in some local municipalities in South Africa, HRIS was not used to its full potential, where managers could benefit from the time and cost savings the system brings in organisations.

Some participants contradicted the findings that the system was useful, and claimed that for them, the system was not useful as it had some technical flaws. These participants provided the following narratives:

I think, there are some people who feel positively about the system, and if an employee has a negative experience, the employee will be negative on the system because the employees don't trust the system. From where I come from, the payroll environment, we found that we will have issues with the online application of leave, where the leaves hadn't reduced. Sometimes the online application resulted in negatively balance, and then we need from the payroll system had to get involved with the employees recovered that. So, it actually posed a risk to the Council. (FG1 Participant 2)

The system is perceived not in a positive way, or should I say not as good as it should. There have been many complaints around the application of leave and so no. Also, some data pertaining to leave had been lost, and leave balances not deducted on the system. There are also human challenges to the system, as employees are lazy to capture information on the system, and this leads to many backlogs of leave capture. This results in the data integrity being questioned. (Participant 5)

It wasn't informing employees of lapsing of leave. So that's a negative impact, so people tend not to trust the system, and that results in grievances. So, I think it's a trust issue where somebody has experience with a negative kind of feedback. (FG2 Participant 1)

Participant 5, FG1 Participant 2 and FG2 Participant 1 revealed that HRIS was somehow not useful in some areas. FG1 Participant 2 and Participant 5 both stated that the system was not perceived positively, as there were some complaints regarding the application of leave and leave balances not being deducted on the system, while creating backlogs of leave capture which have to be done manually, thus compromising data integrity. FG2 Participant 1 revealed that this led to employees not trusting the system.

4.5.2. System training

An essential aspect of ensuring that the system is useful was to provide training for end-users on various modules of HRIS. Some participants felt that the system is only useful when

employees are trained on how to use it. One Participant revealed that there is a systems team that trains employees by stating the following:

We have a systems team that also goes out to train employees. So, the training also results in a step by step procedure manual, so that makes it useful as well, but for someone that just comes new they're going to find it a bit of a daunting task, because they're going to see too many screens and too many pay elements, and it becomes a problem. (Participant 2)

Participant 2 stated that although they have a systems team that comes to train employees on how to use the system, it was still challenging for new employees who haven't received training yet. This finding concurred with a study by Maier, et al. (2013) who found that employees would have a positive evaluation of HRIS if they had adequate capabilities on how to utilise the system with ease. Therefore, the training of end-users was crucial to ensure they were able to evaluate HRIS effectively. Another Participant stated the following:

I think the people that feel it's useless are people who have not been trained on pulling the report from the system for capture and capturing the reports on the system. (FG2 Participant 1)

FG2 Participant 1 stated that those employees who felt that the system was useless were those that have not been trained on capturing data and producing reports. There was also a remark regarding the upgrading of the system, where one Participant stated the following:

Even when they do the system upgrades, they must not do them alone. They must call the people who are using the system on a daily basis to find out their opinions. They mustn't just throw the system at us and expect us to know everything. (FG2 Participant 2)

FG2 Participant 2 revealed that when the system is being upgraded, the service provider and systems team must involve the end-users in the process, to incorporate the end-users' inputs on how best to make HRIS more useful and user-friendly.

4.5.3. Access to system and technology

A significant challenge that emerged was the lack of access to technology such as computers and access to the HRIS system. This finding of access to the system and technology emerged during the data analysis process, and participants provided the following narratives:

Yeah, I was going to say yeah that a huge chunk of our employees in the organization does not have access to emails. I do seem to recall there was one point where they were going to allocate an email address to everybody, and then those employees were going to get access from our walk-in centres at the PCs (Personal Computers). But I'm not sure whether that's actually happened or not. (FG1 Participant 3)

Some of the employees do have emails even though most of the time, they work out of their offices, but some of them do have emails. But I'm not sure how many, because mostly like GA (General Assistant) people and workshop attendants, you find out that they don't have email addresses. So, in that manner, they can't have the same self-service because these employees do not have email addresses. Therefore, they can't enjoy the same benefits that we are enjoying. (FG1 Participant 4)

Another thing that a quarter of the employees in the municipality don't have access to computers in order for them to access the information and services that are offered to them. I think that also it won't work. Because only a few people in about eight thousand or so have the access, and the rest does not have access. So, how do we as a Council work around that, because these services that the system offers are not taken out to the employees? (FG2 Participant 3)

The HRIS system in eThekweni Municipality is accessed through a work email address and a password. Both FG2 Participants 3 and 4 revealed that not all municipal employees have email addresses, especially General Assistants who are mostly placed in Depots. Therefore, these employees could not access the HRIS system and did not enjoy the same benefits as those who had access. Meanwhile, FG2 Participant 3 revealed that some municipal employees do not have access to computers, and therefore could not access the system regardless if they had work email addresses or not. Another Participant stated the following:

When the system was being implemented, there was an idea of putting kiosks at depots where employees can have access to the system. The problem is that they still won't be able to access the system because they don't have email addresses. But you find asking yourself why does this system have to be linked with an email address? Why doesn't it be linked with the service number? (FG2 Participant 2)

FG2 Participant 2 stated that even if the municipality erects kiosks around the City, some employees still will not be able to access HRIS because they do not have work email addresses. The Participant even asked why the system required employees to log in using email addresses instead of using their service number.

4.6. PERCEIVED EASE OF USE

The study sought to understand the extent perceived ease of use of HRIS influence the perceptions of employees in eThekweni Municipality. The study found that some participants perceived HRIS as user-friendly and some specified that specific tailor-made HRIS modules were non-user-friendly. Some technical challenges emerged in the study, while the HRIS system adaptivity was a critical challenge, where some employees were reluctant in using the system.

4.6.1. User friendly

Participants were asked to share their experiences on the perceived ease of use of HRIS in eThekweni Municipality. Some participants found the system easy to use, while other participants found some parts of the system challenging. Participants provided the following lived experiences:

OK, from my experience it's easy to use. OK, I think if they are shown, yes definitely they will be influenced. But if they are unsure of what they are dealing with, then they are going to be reluctant. So, for me, yes, it is easy. (Participant 1)

It's easy to use because as for us we have access, like payroll and recruitment, we have access to both. I can pull something that they have on their side to check, and they can pull our reports because we are working in sync. (FG1 Participant 1)

Both Participant 1 and FG1 Participant 1 stated that HRIS in eThekweni Municipality was user-friendly. Participant 1 further stated that if employees are shown how to use the system, then it would be user friendly. Otherwise, employees will be reluctant to use HRIS if they are not sure what they are using. Other participants who found some parts of the system not user-friendly stated the following:

I would think that some parts of the system, like the pay system, is useful, although it has its shortcomings and all, the e-Career system that's attached to it is not that user friendly. Even for the people out there, it's not that useful, it's a long process, and they've always got questions. Even if they use it three times, they're still going to come back and ask you the questions. So, that part seriously needs to be relooked at, the e-Careers and advertising systems. (FG2 Participant 1)

Ok, the e-Careers system, something should be done. Much as we really want people to apply through the e-Careers system, but it's not user friendly. It's not user friendly for someone who's applying from outside, and even the officials on the receiving end are not finding it user-friendly. Somehow the system is too complicated, and sometimes you even prefer to receive manual job applications versus the report that you get from e-Careers. So, now we need to have a system that is more user friendly, even for GAs to be able to apply online easily. Why do we say GAs must use paper? Because we think they cannot use computers? No, we must really do something to make the system user-friendly. (FG2 Participant 2)

FG2 Participant 1 revealed that the e-Careers module of the HRIS, which is used for vacancy applications and recruitment, was not user friendly. FG2 Participant 2 stated that the module was not user friendly for both employees and people outside the organisation. The e-Careers module was a long and complicated process, which led to HR employees often preferring to receive manual vacancy applications versus the report generated by the system.

4.6.2. Technical challenges

Various internal and external variables could influence the perceived ease of use of a system. Hence, some technical challenges emerged in the study and influenced the system's ease of use. One Participant provided the following technical challenge:

Currently, we've got different types of shifts within eThekwini. So, shift workers are not accommodated by the system, especially in self-service. Meaning that for instance, when they apply for leave, they cannot apply online, because maybe they will be off for four weeks and then they would come back for another four weeks. So, it does not accommodate shift patterns. So, we still lack in that sense as Council. Also, the splitting of leave credits, employees cannot understand, you know, and also that. (FG2 Participant 2)

FG2 Participant 2 revealed that the system did not accommodate municipal shift workers, and HRIS in eThekweni does not accommodate shift patterns where employees worked for four weeks and were off another four weeks. She further stated that employees could not understand the splitting of leave credits by the system. Another Participant stated the following technical challenge:

Now, when it comes to terminations, it differs a little bit in terms of your statutory leave. According to the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, it states that a person should have fifteen days, you know when you are paying out the leave, but our organization does not cater to that. So, whenever we are doing terminations, we have to go and adjust the leave manually. It goes with the split of leave, and you've got your non-stats and your stats. Your stats part of it is supposed to be fifteen days, and it mustn't be exceeded according to the statutory law here. However, within eThekweni Municipality, it's sixteen days that you need to take. But when it comes to terminations, we don't pay sixteen, and we pay fifteen days. So, it is contradicting the system, and that is why we need to do it manually and adjust it on the system and put it on the annual leave. So, for me, I don't know, but it's not working out. So really, we need a system where it will accommodate and talk to our basic conditions of employment, our conditions of service, as well as the basic collective agreement. (FG2 Participant 1)

FG2 Participant 3 stated that there was a technical challenge of the HRIS system regarding the terminations of employment. The HRIS system was contradicting the country's Basic Conditions of Employment Act. In contrast, the number of leave days paid by the system versus the number of leave days allowed in eThekweni Municipality is inconsistent, leading to manual amendments. Another Participant who faced a challenge stated the following:

I also think that the HR systems people should make themselves more available to find out how they can help employees. I mean, there was a time when I needed to change my password. So, I sent an email, and I was asked to copy someone, then when I called no one was answering. So, the whole day passed without any help. So, two days later you find out that you still haven't changed your password. (FG2 Participant 3)

FG2 Participant 3 stated that she encountered a challenge when trying to change her password, as HR systems employees were not immediately available to assist with the change of password. This inconvenience caused the Participant not to be able to access the system. These

challenges affected the ease of use of HRIS, and for HR employees to carry out their duties efficiently.

4.6.3. HRIS system adaptivity

Another critical challenge regarding the ease of use of the HRIS system in eThekwini was the reluctance and lack of HRIS system adaptivity by managers and employees. The study found that there was still resistance by some managers and employees in adapting and entirely using the HRIS system. Participants provided the following narratives:

People are still reluctant to use the current system, and now that we're about to move into a new system and people are more sceptical. Some activities brought by the new system will be highly automated. Therefore, we need to strengthen change management efforts so that the mindsets of employees in eThekwini Municipality could be changed. (Participant 5)

It's just that the municipality I think as you said they don't want to move into that direction, they are stuck in the old way of doing things, but if they do and do it the right way like transfer employees on time and use it the right way, then in that way it's much easier to locate and to find employees. So, basically, it's a huge job for them because our establishment is huge. I don't know why we do both in the Council. We get the report from the system, and there is also this paperwork. That means we're moving back and forth because now we have to decide. However, other people are still resisting because they see that there are two systems being used. (FG2 Participant 3)

Quickly, it's change management. We have not changed the mindset of people, and we continue to do run dual systems. As soon as we stop the second system, people will be forced to do it. I mean, the issue of leave forms, if you can if you have access to it you should not be accepting executive pay. You're not allowed to submit manually, but we still have people submitting manual when they have access to online leave application. So, I said we need to change the mindset of those individuals, and also when we introduced the system, we should have enforced and made it compulsory. (FG1 Participant 1)

Participant 5 stated that some employees of eThekwini were still reluctant in using the HRIS system. FG2 Participant 3 stated that the municipality as a whole was still stuck at performing duties the old way, where both the old manual system and HRIS coexist, leading to duplicate

systems being used. FG1 Participant 1 stated that the mindset of employees had still not changed, as the municipality continues to use dual systems instead of enforcing the use of HRIS only. This finding revealed how the benefits of HRIS were still not realised as some people preferred to use the manual system instead. This finding also resonated with a study by Kovach, et al. (2002) who stated that one of the most overlooked implementation issues for HRIS was organisational inertia, that is, getting employees to adapt to a new information system.

4.7. CONCLUSION

The chapter presented vital findings that emerged from the study. These findings were presented in themes and sub-themes drawn from the thematic analysis. The chapter also presented a demographic profile of the participants from individual interviews and focus group discussions. The major sub-themes which answers the main research questions were the benefits of HRIS that emerged from the data analysis process. These benefits were: time-saving, real-time information, self-service options, accurate reporting, information recordkeeping, paperless system, and strategic decision making. Some challenges emerged, including technical challenges in using HRIS, non-user-friendly applications, such as e-Careers module, and HRIS systems adaptivity where people were still reluctant in adopting HRIS.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to explore the benefits of human resources information system (HRIS) in eThekweni Municipality. The study analysed HRIS benefits on the employer and end-user HR employees. This chapter discussed the findings that emerged in the data analysis. Furthermore, the chapter discussed each finding per theme and sub-themes and attempted to link these findings with reviewed literature and theoretical framework. This section also argued the implications of these findings on human resources management policy and practice. Second, this chapter discussed the realisation of the study's objectives. This section examined whether the results of this study answered the research questions. A presentation of the recommendations based on the findings of the study followed. Lastly, the chapter concluded with an overview of the study, its findings and recommendations.

5.2. OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

5.2.1. Aim of the Study

The main aim of this study was to explore the benefits of human resources information system in eThekweni Municipality.

5.2.2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research study were as follows:

- To understand the extent of the perceived usefulness and influence of human resources information system on employees at eThekweni Municipality;
- To ascertain how does the perceived ease of using human resources information system affect the employees at eThekweni Municipality; and
- To explore to what extent eThekweni Municipality enjoy benefits of using human resources information system.

5.2.3. Research questions

The study attempted to answer the following questions:

- To what extent does the perceived usefulness and influence of human resources information system have on employees at eThekweni municipality?

- How does the perceived ease of using human resources information system influence employees at eThekwini Municipality?
- To what extent does eThekwini Municipality enjoy benefits of using human resources information system?

5.3. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.3.1. Understanding of HRIS

The importance of understanding HRIS was to ensure that the end-users effectively utilise the system to enhance their jobs and improve organisational productivity. HRIS is defined as a specialized information system within the traditional functional areas of the, designed to support the planning, administration, decision-making and control activities of HRM (De Sanctus, 1986). HRIS is also considered as a systematic procedure for collecting, storing, maintaining, and recovering data required about their human resources, personnel activities and all characteristics (Kovach, et al., 2002). Hence, it was in the interest of this study to determine the participants' understanding of HRIS. Most participants' responses indicated that they understood what HRIS was as a computerised software system to collect employee data and also to perform data analysis for the organisation. This finding resonates with the definition of HRIS provided by Hendrickson (2003:381) who stated that HRIS's can be briefly defined as integrated systems used to gather, store, and analyse information regarding an organization's human resources. However, Hendrickson (2003) further stated that HRIS is not just computer software but also includes the organisation's policies and procedures, which have to be incorporated into the system to produce an effective tailor-made system. Participants also understood that HRIS comprised of various modules such as talent management, payroll, leave applications, and performance management. This finding was in line with Kavanagh, et al. (1990), who stated that HRIS functions now interact with HRM functions. However, these findings were only based on HR staff understanding of HRIS, who often interact with the system regularly. It was not found whether other end-user employees within the municipality understood what HRIS was and how the system operates.

5.3.2. Benefits of HRIS

The benefits of HRIS remained the main aim of this study. The researcher aimed at exploring what type of benefits managers and employees within eThekwini Municipality enjoy. Participants were then asked what benefits are brought by HRIS. The benefits that emerged

from this study included time-saving, real-time information, self-service options, accurate reporting, paperless system, and information recordkeeping. Previous studies have found that HRIS was beneficial for organisations because of its ability to save time and cost (Nawaz & Gomes, 2014). Most participants who participated in this study agreed that HRIS saves time. This finding concurs with Kumar and Parumasur (2013), who found that time management was a dimension which impacted organisational efficiency in municipalities through the adoption of HRIS. By using HRIS instead of manual paper-based systems, HR employees in eThekweni agreed that the computer-based system saved time. This means that HR employees spend less time on day-to-day activities and have enough time to spend on strategic decision making and planning. Strategic decision making and HR planning have an impact on the productivity and profitability of an organisation (Dery, et al., 2013). Therefore, the time-saving finding was interlinked with the finding of strategic decision making.

HRIS presented real-time information to end-users, and the information was used for various activities such as reporting and strategic decision making. Some participants reported that one of the benefits of HRIS was its ability to provide information in real-time. However, other participants stated that some aspects of the system were not real-time, where information was only updated overnight. The real-time information was reportedly used mostly for reporting purposes. This finding resonated with Aggarwal and Kapoor (2012), who listed real-time data as one of the benefits HR employees enjoyed by using HRIS in the workplace. Accurate reporting was also found to be a benefit most employees enjoyed when using HRIS. HRIS was able to accurately generate reports for various HR departments using the information that has been captured, and the reports were valuable in strategic decision making by managers. This finding resonated with a study by James (2006), who found that the use of HRIS was a strategic tool to generate reports faster and provide valuable information to decision-makers and alert them of problems or opportunities.

The HRIS system in eThekweni Municipality is a web-based design that has employee self-service options and allows for end-users to interact with the system. Hence, one of the significant benefits for both employer and employees in the organisation was the self-service option, which was widely enjoyed across the municipality. The study found that end-users of eThekweni enjoyed self-service options such as the online viewing of payslips, online applications for leave, updating of personal information, and viewing IRP5. These self-service benefits were part of the administrative benefits of HRIS mentioned by Watson (2002) and

Beadles, et al. (2005). Kovach et al. (2002) also stated that employee self-service reduces the administrative burden in HR departments by allowing employees to have access to their records instead of consulting with HR. The time that is saved by employees can be useful in boosting organisational performance and productivity. Further, the time saved by employees allowed them to focus on other aspects of HR such as policy and strategic planning.

Since HRIS was an online web-based system, it eliminated the administrative burden of using paper. Therefore, one of the benefits of HRIS that emerged from the study was that the system was paperless, even though, some employees still submitted paper-based leave forms instead of utilising the web-based paperless system. The managers and employees could access information at any point and did not have to carry files like they used to before HRIS was implemented. This finding was in line with studies by James (2006) and Ukandu, et al. (2014), who found that the implementation of HRIS in organisations reduces paperwork. Employee information was kept in a database and made readily available to HR staff. Hence, another benefit of HRIS that emerged from the study was information recordkeeping. This finding was synonymous with a study by Ukandu, et al. (2014), which found that HR employees revealed that the implementation of HRIS enabled them to improve record-keeping by ensuring that data is collected and stored accurately. These benefits allowed HR staff to spend less time on tedious paperwork and have more time available for strategic decision making (Beadles, et al., 2005). The study also found that a significant benefit of HRIS was strategic decision making. This benefit was interlinked with time-saving and information recordkeeping. The time saved and the ease of access to information enabled managers in South African local municipalities to make strategic decisions on enhancing and retaining human capital (Kumar & Parumasur, 2013).

5.3.3. Perceived Usefulness of HRIS

The benefits brought by HRIS enhanced the usefulness of the system since the perceived usefulness of the system referred to the degree to which a person believes that using an HRIS would enhance his or her performance within the organization. Although, there were participants who perceived parts of HRIS as not useful, as there had been some complaints regarding the application of leave and leave balances not being deducted on the system. Also, while creating backlogs of leave capture which have to be done manually, thus compromising data integrity. Some participants stated that as much as HRIS was useful, it could be more useful if employees were trained. This finding resonated with a study by Kumar (2013), who

found that HRIS was not used to its full potential in some municipalities, where managers could benefit from the time and cost savings the system brings in organisations.

The issue of training was a crucial aspect in evaluating the perceived usefulness of HRIS, as employees would feel positive about the system provided they had adequate training on how to use the system effectively. The study found that there was an existing systems team responsible for training employees. However, it was still challenging for new employees who haven't received training yet. This finding was in line with a study by Maier, et al. (2013) who found that employees would have a positive evaluation of HRIS if they had adequate knowledge and skills on how to use the system with ease. One Participant commented that it would be beneficial for end-users to be involved in future HRIS upgrades and implementations. This finding resonated with Kovach, et al. (2002), who argued that getting HR staff involved in the early development of HRIS seemed to enhance the implementation of the system. Bayraktaroglu et al. (2019) also stressed the issue of regular HRIS training to enhance user participation.

HRIS in eThekweni Municipality had significant implementation issues such as the lack of access to the system and technology such as computers. The HRIS system in eThekweni Municipality is encrypted and accessed through a work email address and a password. The study found that not all municipal employees had email addresses, and these employees could not access HRIS and enjoy some of the benefits already mentioned in this study. The study also found that some municipal employees did not have access to computers, and therefore could not access the system regardless if they had work email addresses or not. This finding had significant implications in the policy and practice of human resources management, as the full impact of HRIS could not be realised if some employees could not access and use the system.

5.3.4. Perceived Ease of Use of HRIS

For the information system to be useful to end-users, it should be user friendly, and users should be able to use it free of effort to meet their job needs. Davis (1989) stated that the actual use of the computer system could be defined by the degree to which system characteristics match user task needs. The study revealed that some participants found HRIS in eThekweni Municipality to be user-friendly, while others found some aspects of the system non-user-friendly. One of the reasons pointed by participants out which caused the system to be non-user-friendly was because some employees were not taught how to use HRIS, and they were reluctant to use the system as they are not sure how to use it. The critical aspect of HRIS that end-users found to

be non-user-friendly was the e-Recruitment module (e-Careers) module, which was used for recruitment purposes. The study found that e-Careers was not user friendly for both municipal employees and the public who use it to apply for vacancies. The reports produced by the system were inconsistent, leading to some HR staff preferring to receive manual job applications instead of online applications through e-Careers. This finding defeated the purpose of HRIS implementation in eThekwini, which strived towards a practical, user-friendly, effortless and paperless human resources environment.

Other HRIS implementation issues included system technical challenges such as the exclusion of municipal shift workers by not accommodating shift patterns in the system. Shift workers were employees who worked for four weeks in and four weeks off. So, by the time they were in, their login credentials would be invalid, and they could not get access to HRIS. HRIS, in this case, was not tailor-made to accommodate the diverse working patterns of municipal employees in eThekwini. Hence, some of the benefits brought by HRIS are not realised across the organisation. Another technical challenge raised was that employees could not understand the complex splitting of leave credits by the system, causing frustrations and negative user perceptions of HRIS. This finding resonated with literature from Kashive (2011), who argued that complexity and user perception were part of the socio-technical challenges HRIS experienced in organisations, especially for employees who had low levels of computer self-efficacy. The introduction of HRIS in organisations that include complex processes that are different from current processes decreased the likelihood of implementation success (McAfee, 2003; Kashive, 2011).

A crucial HRIS implementation issue that was revealed in this study was the lack of system adaptivity, where some employees were reportedly reluctant in adapting to the HRIS system. EThekwini Municipality was on the verge of implementing a new version of HRIS. However, some employees within the organisation were still reluctant to use the current system and preferred to use the old manual system. This led to the existence of a dual system, where both HRIS and old manual systems coexisted in the organisation. The mindset of employees within the organisation had still not changed to adapt to HRIS because the old manual system was still an option. The study also found that there was no mandatory enforcement when HRIS was implemented. At the same time, even some managers had not fully embraced the system and continued to use the manual system. This finding resonated with a study by Kovach, et al. (2002) who stated that one of the most overlooked implementation issues for HRIS was

organisational inertia, that is, getting employees to adopt and adapt to a new system, which was a new business process for them. This finding poses a potential threat for the new system to be implemented, and also carries significant policy and practice implications on HRM in eThekwini Municipality. The inability for the organisation to adopt a culture of information technology that would improve the quality of information and use it as a competitive advantage to make better decisions and achieve organisational goals (Kashive, 2011) poses a threat for the successful implementation of HRIS in eThekwini Municipality.

5.4. REALISATION OF OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: To understand the extent the perceived usefulness influence perceptions of the employees at eThekwini Municipality.

This objective was realised because the study found that HR staff who participated in the study perceived HRIS in eThekwini Municipality as useful and believed that using HRIS enhanced their performance within the organization. Although, there were participants who perceived parts of HRIS as not useful, as there had been some complaints regarding the application of leave and leave balances not being deducted on the system. Also, while creating backlogs of leave capture which have to be done manually, thus compromising data integrity. Some participants stated that as much as HRIS was useful, it could be more useful if employees were trained, signalling that there was room for growth and improvement in end-user usability.

Objective 2: To ascertain how the perceived ease of use affects the employees at eThekwini Municipality.

This objective was also realised because the study found that HR staff perceived HRIS as easy to use and user-friendly. However, some participants stated that some features of HRIS in eThekwini, such as e-Careers platform, were non-user friendly and difficult to use for both municipal employees and the public who used the platform to apply for vacancies. There were some system technical challenges, such as the exclusion of municipal shift workers by not accommodating shift patterns in the system. Also, technical challenges, such as the complexities of leave splitting, decreased the likelihood of implementation successes. The existence of a dual system, where both HRIS and the old manual system coexisted in the organisation, and the fixed mindset of employees within the organisation, all contributed to the organisation inertia, where employees were reluctant in adapting to the new HRIS system.

Objective 3: To explore to what extent eThekwini Municipality enjoy benefits of using HRIS.

This objective was also realised as the study found several benefits that employees of eThekwini Municipality enjoyed from using HRIS. These benefits included time-saving, real-time information, accurate reporting, self-service option, information recordkeeping, and strategic decision making. Most of these benefits were interlinked, such as the time saving brought by HRIS, and the accurate recording contributed to strategic decision making by managers within the organisation.

5.5. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Various HRIS challenges emerged from this study. As a result, the researcher has made a few recommendations for consideration in enhancing the implementation of HRIS in eThekwini Municipality. These recommendations, as broad as they are, could improve access to HRIS, including developing an information technology culture within the organisation that will embed actual perceived usefulness and ease of use of the system by end-users.

- The study found that many municipal employees did not have access to HRIS and its self-service options because they did not have work email addresses to log in to the system. It is recommended that the municipality and its HRIS service provider develop a means for employees to access the system using their service numbers.
- The study found that the e-Careers module, which is used by both employees and the public, was not user friendly. It is recommended that the module be improved and made user friendly in a manner that encourages end-users to adopt the system as a preferred option when applying for vacancies.
- Another finding was that HRIS was not used to its full potential because many end-users were not equipped with adequate knowledge and skills to interact with the system. Therefore, it is recommended that the municipality develops a training action plan that will utilise the resources of the already existing HRIS systems team to capacitate all employees on how to best use HRIS in a manner that enhances their jobs and improves organisational performance. The systems team should also be easily accessible to deal with system queries and troubleshooting. The benefits of HRIS found in this study should be enjoyed by all employees across the organisation.

- Organisation inertia was found to be a stumbling block in the successful implementation of HRIS in eThekweni Municipality. Some managers and employees were still reluctant in adapting to HRIS, primarily since the manual system remained an option. Therefore, it is recommended that the municipality, after making HRIS user friendly and capacitating employees, slowly phase out some of the manual processes and procedures that can be easily achieved using HRIS. This also includes encouraging end-users to be involved in the planning and implementation phases of the new HRIS.

5.6. CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the findings of the study, and one of its key findings was the benefits managers, and employees enjoyed using HRIS. Most of the findings, especially the benefits enjoyed by eThekweni municipal employees, were synonymous to the benefits found in the reviewed literature and theoretical framework. The most significant benefit found in this study was time-saving, which enabled HR staff to concentrate on more strategic decision-making activities that gave the municipality a competitive edge and enabled it to achieve its organisational goals. The self-service option benefit, where employees were able to interact with the system personally, was also a significant finding, although, there were some modules such as the e-Careers system that could be improved and made more user-friendly. EThekweni Municipality needs to adopt an information technology culture, where online strategic information systems, such as HRIS, could be used effectively and to their full potential. This strategy could potentially enhance organisational performance and productivity, especially in a rapidly developing public administration sector shaped by technology and the 4th Industrial Revolution.

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Annexure A: Ethical clearance certificate



UNIVERSITY OF
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INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

04 November 2019

Mrs Primrose Sinazo Gwambe (216076907)
School Of Man Info Tech & Gov
Westville Campus

Dear Mrs Gwambe,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00000533/2019

Project title: Exploring the benefits of Human Resources Information System at eThekwin Municipality

Full Approval – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 04 September 2019 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. **PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid for one year from 04 November 2019.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Urmilla Bob
University Dean of Research

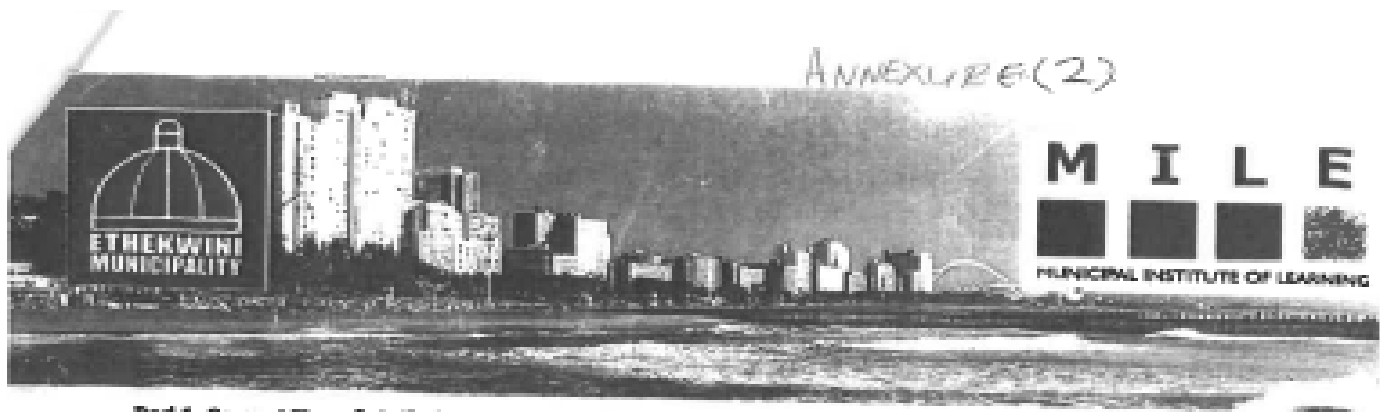
/dd

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Annexure B: Gatekeepers letter



Pod 1, Second Floor, Intshulko Junction, 730 Mary Thelma Street, Umkhumbane, Cape Maseko, Durban 4001.
Tel: 031 322 4513, Fax: 031 341 3405, Fax to email: 086 268 7160, Email: mile@durban.gov.za, Website: www.mile.org.za

For attention:
Chair of Ethics Committee
College of Law and Management Studies
School of Management, IT and Governance
University of KwaZulu Natal
Westville Campus
Durban
4001

3 April 2019

RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT TO PRIMROSE SINAZO GWAMBE, STUDENT NUMBER 216076907- GRANTING PERMISSION TO USE ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY AS A CASE STUDY

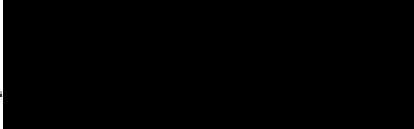
The Corporate and Human Resources Unit and eThekweni Municipal Academy (EMA), have considered a request from Primrose Sinazo Gwambe to use eThekweni Municipality as a research study site leading to the awarding of a Masters in Commerce degree (HRM) entitled: "Exploring the Benefits of Human Resources Information System at eThekweni Municipality."

We wish to inform you of the acceptance of her request and hereby assure her of our utmost cooperation towards achieving her academic goals; the outcome which we believe will help our municipality improve its service delivery. The student is reminded of the ethical considerations at all times when conducting the research. In return, we stipulate as conditional that she, accompanied by her supervisor, presents the results and recommendations of this study to the related unit/s on completion of her research study.

Wishing Ms Gwambe all the best in her studies.

.....


Kim Makhathini
Head: Corporate & Human Resources
eThekweni Municipality



Dr M. Ngušane
Head: eThekweni Municipal Academy
eThekweni Municipality



Annexure C: Consent form

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL For research with human participants

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date: 04th November 2019

Greetings,

My name is Primrose Sinazo Gwambe, a Master of Commerce in Human Resources Management student. I am currently enrolled with the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Westville Campus, South Africa. My student number is 216076907. My contact details are as follows:- (031) 311 4495 work number and 0722 0088 68 mobile number. Sinazo.Gwambe@gmail.com and 216076907@stu.ukzn.ac.za are my e-mail addresses.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research of “Exploring the benefits of Human Resources Information System (HRIS) at eThekweni municipality. I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter. The aim and purpose of this research is to explore the understanding of employees insofar as HRIS is concerned. The study is expected to include sixteen (16) participants in total. The participants will be representatives of all five (5) departments within the Human Resources (HR) unit. The participants are chosen from different levels within the HR unit. The data will be collected by conducting interviews. There will be two (2) focus groups each comprising of five (5) participants and a balance of The duration of your participation if you choose to participate and remain in the study is expected to be approximately 30 to 45 minutes. The study is self-funded.

We hope that the study will create the following benefits (a) better understanding of the benefits of using HRIS (b) improved uptake of using HRIS (c) positive perceptions of the usefulness of HRIS and (d) positive perceptions on the ease of using HRIS.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee approval number HSSREC/00000533/2019.

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at 0722 0088 68, 216076907@stu.ukzn.ac.za or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban 4000, KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Your participation in the study is voluntary and by participating, you are granting the researcher permission to use your responses. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequence.–Your anonymity will be maintained by the researcher and the School of Management, I.T. & Governance and your responses will not be used for any purposes outside of this study.

All data, both electronic and hard copy, will be securely stored during the study and archived for 5 years. After this time, all data will be destroyed.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in the study, please contact me or my research supervisor at the numbers listed above.

Sincerely

Primrose Sinazo Gwambe

Annexure D: Interview guide

SECTION A DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

My name is Primrose Sinazo Gwambe (216076907). I am a Master of Commerce (MCom) candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Westville campus, eThekweni, South Africa.. I am conducting research on the topic “Exploring the benefits of Human Resources Information System (HRIS) at eThekweni municipality”. This study aims to investigate the benefits of using HRIS at eThekweni municipality. It further seeks to understand the employees’ perceptions about the ease of using the system and perceived usefulness of the HRIS. Your participation through availing yourself and taking time to participate in an interview or focus group will be sincerely appreciated.

INTERVIEWEE:(Optional)

DESIGNATION:

GENDER:

AGE (please tick X appropriate box)

19 -35 years	36-45 years	46-55 years	56 + years	
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UNIT/DEPARTMENT/BRANCH.....

INTERVIEWER: P.S. GWAMBE

SECTION B INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Purpose of the research:

This study will explore the benefits of using Human Resources Information System (HRIS) within eThekweni municipality as understood and perceived by the participants.

1. What is your understanding of Human Resources Information System (HRIS)?
2. In your view explain the employer’s benefits of using the system?
3. What are some of the benefits of using the system to the end-user (yourself)?
4. In your opinion how does eThekweni Municipality enjoy the benefits of using HRIS?
5. In your own words explain the perceived usefulness of HRIS on employees at eThekweni municipality?
6. In your opinion how does the perceived ease of use influence employees at eThekweni Municipality?

Annexure E: Language Editor Certificate



Mr SFS Mdluli
1731 Unit 13, Imbali
Pietermaritzburg
3201

13 July 2020

LETTER OF EDITING

This report serves to state that the dissertation submitted by Primrose Sinazo Gwambe has been edited.

The dissertation was edited for errors in syntax, grammar, punctuation and the in-text referencing system used. The edit will be regarded as complete once the necessary changes have been affected, and all of the comments addressed.

Thank-you for your business.


Siyabonga Mdluli
Master of Development Studies
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Howard College Campus
Durban