

HOW DID COVID19 INCREASED RELIANCE ON E-HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: JORDANIAN INSURANCE SECTOR CASE

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ABSTRACT

Current study aimed at measuring the attention that was given to E-HRM during COVID 19 pandemic the need to move towards managing the working teams virtually. Variables of E-HRM taken into consideration included (E-Recruitment, E-Training, E-Performance Management and E-Compensation). Through adopting the quantitative methodology, an online questionnaire was answered by (365) manager and employee within insurance sector in Jordan. SPSS was used to tackle and handle the gathered primary data, results indicated that now more attention is given to E-HRM practices after it succeeded in supporting internal operations of organization during the pandemic lockdown, and many organizations are willing to keep using E-HRM practices as according to tis convenient. Among the chosen variables of E-HRM; all managed to score a high and positive relationship to independent variable except for e-compensation which scored a medium relationship to COVID 19. Study recommended the need to reconsider human resource practices in the Jordanian insurance sector by intensifying training on managing remote workers and a mechanism for solving problems that may arise in a virtual work environment. Including that, study found out that operating virtually and remotely isn't enough; there is a must to automate the organizational culture not only its operations.

Keywords: Digitization, Automation, Electronic Human Resource Management E-HRM, E-Practices, Virtual Environment, Telework.

INTRODUCTION

Beginning of 2019 was not good for China, as an epidemic called the COVID 19 epidemic spread in the country and attacked the respiratory system of individuals in a fatal way, and it was not known at that time what it was and the nature of its spread and the vaccines that could contribute to its elimination, which led to imposing Complete closures in China of schools, universities, institutions and organizations in all their forms in an attempt to stop the spread of virus (Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés, 2020).

And at beginning of 2020, the world in several countries began to detect the presence of infected people in many countries and the spread of epidemic, to the point of imposing comprehensive closures in many countries in the world, including Jordan, which imposed many defense laws that led to complete closures of commercial sectors, Education and insurance, and the health sector was excluded as the first line of defense against this pandemic (Contreras et al., 2020).

From here, the world began the journey of working remotely from behind computers and various applications as an attempt to reduce mixing and avoid transmission of infection between individuals (Tavares et al., 2020). This step was fatal for the Jordanian economy, as many were affected by these closures, including day laborers who suffered from poverty, and small shops, including many small and medium organizations that did not find an alternative but to complete

closure and exit from the local market due to their inability to keep up with the new situation it found itself involved in.

Problem Formulation

According to Cooke et al (2020) transition of labor from actual work to remote work is based on many challenges and obstacles that could lead to a decrease in the level of performance. Actual work is not the same as remote work, and monitoring the performance of employees in the workplace is significantly different from following them remotely through web as what Butterick & Charlwood (2021) have stated earlier.

Fraij (2021) saw that the electronic human resources proved from the moment of its use until the moment that it could be an alternative for following the practices of human resources management in its actual form, and many controls led to proving that electronic human resources have an effective impact on continuity and sustainability of human resources management systems in a way Significant, but not within the same expected results from the actual human resource management.

With emergence of Corona pandemic in 2019 and its spread to the world since 2020 until the moment, the initial and last reliance was on work, management of work and employees remotely. Therefore, the current study aspires to show the impact of the spread of Covid-19 pandemic on necessity of electronic human resources management, in other words, many entities have had to adopt remote electronic human resources practices during the pandemic period, is it possible for this adoption to continue even after completion of the pandemic, and has the Corona virus contributed to directing attention towards effectiveness of electronic human resource management practices?

LITERATURE REVIEW

E-Human Resources Management

Ali & Weli (2020) defined E-HRM as integrated group of electronic systems which target to transform normal managerial work from conventional management to computer-based management, through depending on well-built information systems which help in making managerial decisions as fast and at lowest costs. Zureikat (2017) defined E-HRM as a method of implementing and following human resources plans, systems and policies depending on web technology and all the tools and devices supporting it. As for Girisha & Nagendrababu (2019) it was found that E-HRM is development strategies related to supervising human cadres and implementation of these strategies through modern technical systems with all its programs and devices.

In a simplified form, Agarwal & Lenka (2018) indicated that electronic human resources is the case in which human capital management practices have moved from the traditional method (paper and pen) to the fast and efficient technical method.

The Invade of COVID 19

During 2020-2021, many organizations struggled to withstand the Corona pandemic and changed many of strategies used in them including work and employee management, down to stage of remote work and imposition of physical distance, including the wage cut that came with reducing working hours and Stop the recruitment and recruitment processes (Morikawa, 2020). Sulaiman et al. (2020) indicates that departments of HR and human capital management were among departments most affected by the pandemic, as human resources practitioner was required

to manage individuals remotely, and pay attention to training, appointment and compensation processes also remotely from behind screens, this is including a solution Problems with workers and managing their organizational affairs in a way that satisfies the purpose, still, it is not the traditional way.

Reliance on E-HRM

Reliance on electronic human resources management was inevitable, as organizations made it clear that the only solution for sustainability of work is to manage employees at a distance, and this represented in many areas, including Chandra (2021); RasaL & Al Naiem (2020); Al-Momani (2021); Nguti & Mose (2021); Ullah et al., (2021); Nachit & Okar (2020):

1. Electronic support and guidance: where many countries imposed a complete or partial lockdown and accompanied by idea of working remotely and reducing working hours, this matter was taken over by the Department of Electronic Human Resources by providing training for workers on how to work from distance and maintain performance through programs various such as Skype and Zoom.
2. Training and development: where many entities have provided virtual training programs so as to improve results of working individuals and to ensure their ability to understand the new mechanism of work, especially those whose work requires dealing with specific programs such as customer service programs and financial and accounting management. On other side, many training organizations have offered virtual training programs that don't require going to a specific place for training, but rather attending training courses through web, and this was what other organizations have exploited by participating in these programs and involving their employees so as to obtain the greatest amount of benefit.
3. Recruitment and appointment: Despite the decrease in level of polarization and appointment during the pandemic period, which was accompanied by the dismissal of many employees, there are many cases in which organizations needed new workers and carried out process of recruitment, interviews and appointments through web, and this matter was identical with results of polarization and actual appointment.

Hypotheses Development

According to Fraij (2021) COVID 19 pandemic has affected the world so greatly that employees have turned into remote working individuals from behind computer screens and through web, so as to reduce the mixing that may lead to transmission of the virus among society. The study focused to identifying impact that virus played on HRM practices in a developing country such as Jordan. HR practices were selected that included recruitment, training, performance management and compensation. Through the qualitative approach based on interview questions through web, (30) managers of human resources practitioners were interviewed based on video and voice calls through the web, and the study proved that organizations dispensed with appointment and electronic polarization, but training through web and managing Electronic performance was useful, but it became more difficult and complex, that monitoring employees and their performance through web was a complex and difficult process, but it contributed to reducing losses as much as possible, which increased necessity of electronic human resources management.

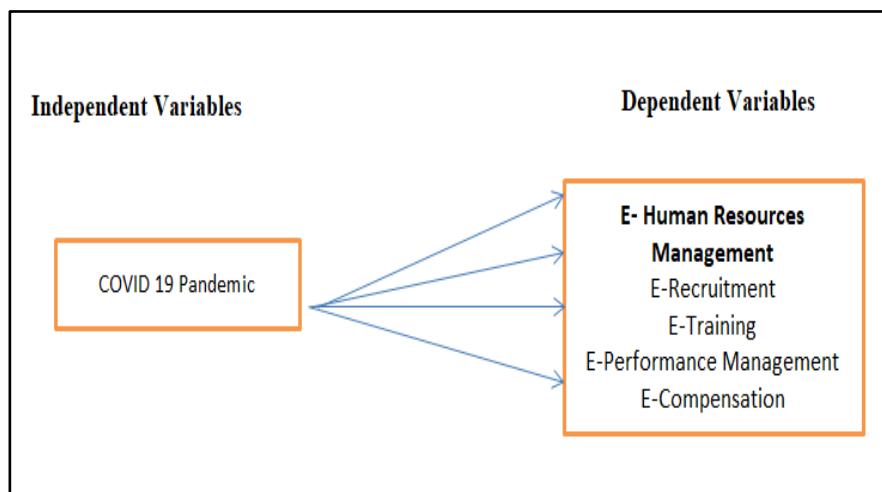
On another side, Hamouche (2021) indicated that the spread of Corona virus had shaken the world in an unimaginable way, on the day the World Health Organization declared COVID 19 as a pandemic, the world turned upside down, this effect extended to the practices of human resource managers, where Contribute to the formation of an administrative environment for human resources that may be difficult and complex for some stage. Accordingly, the literary review in the current study proved that the electronic human resources concept constituted an opportunity to save human resource practices as a system from destruction due to the pandemic,

and contributed in a readable and visual way to facing the obstacles that accompanied the pandemic, even if in a small percentage that led to maintaining the limit. The lowest results of human resource practices in organizations that insisted on working remotely during the pandemic period.

In a study by Al-Harazneh & Sila (2021) aimed to shed light on the influence of E-HRM on effectiveness of human resources in general. The quantitative methodology was applied by collecting responses from (282) employees of two telecom companies in Jordan. Outcomes of the study found that electronic performance management has a good impact on effectiveness of E-HRM practices, as it had a positive influence on intention of employees, and therefore the study proved that the adoption of E-HRM practices has a positive impact on effectiveness of the human resources system in entire organization.

Model and Hypotheses of Study

So as to formulate the problem in an academic and supportive approach, researcher has built a model that explained relationship between variables (Figure 1):



Source: Fraij (2021); Hamouche (2021); Butterick & Charlwood (2021); Al-Harazneh & Sila (2021)

FIGURE 1
STUDY MODEL

Based on above model, researcher extracted following hypotheses:

Main Hypothesis

H COVID 19 pandemic increased organizational reliance on E-HRM practices

Sub-Hypotheses

H_1 COVID 19 pandemic increased organizational reliance on e-recruitment

H_2 COVID 19 pandemic increased organizational reliance on e-training

H_3 COVID 19 pandemic increased organizational reliance on e-performance management

H_4 COVID 19 pandemic increased organizational reliance on e-compensation

METHODS

Developing aim of current study was based on revising previous studies and find out how variables (E- Human Resources Management including E-Recruitment, E-Training, E-Performance Management and E-Compensation including dependent variable of COVID 19 pandemic) can be gathered in one academic problem. The researcher for that sake chose to depend on quantitative methodology, a questionnaire was utilized as a study tool – due to COVID 19 health precautions – based on liker 5 scale (1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly agree. The questionnaire consisted of two main parts, the first was demographics of the study sample (gender, age, experience and qualifications), while the second part took into account variables of study (E-Recruitment, E-Training, E-Performance Management and E-Compensation including dependent variable of COVID 19 pandemic).

Population of study included managers and employees within insurance sector in Jordan. A convenient sample of (400) individuals were chosen to represent population of study from managers and employees within insurance organizations. Due to COVID 19 obstacles, questionnaire was uploaded online for 5 weeks through Google Forms. After 5 weeks an excel sheet was downloaded from the website containing responses of (365) individuals indicating a response ratio of (91.25%) as statistically accepted.

SPSS v. 23rd was used so as to fill and analyze collected primary data, Cronbach's Alpha was employed so as to test reliability to study tool and it was found out that $\alpha = 0.95$ was good because since it was higher than accepted percent 0.60. Other statistical tests included:

1. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentages)
2. simple linear regression

Analysis

Demographics

It appeared from demographic analysis in Table 1 that majority of sample was males forming (75.9%) of total sample compared to females who only formed (24.1%) of total sample. Including that, it appeared that majority of sample aged more than 27 years forming (55.1%) of sample with experience of + 11 years forming (32.9%) of total sample followed by those who had an experience of 8-10 years forming (31.5%) of the sample.

Table 1		
SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS		
Gender		
	f	%
Male	277	75.9
Female	88	24.1
Age		
25-30	43	11.8
31-36	121	33.2
37+	201	55.1
Experience		
2-4	40	11.0
5-7	90	24.7
8-10	115	31.5
11+	120	32.9
Total	365	100.0

Questionnaire Analysis

Table 2 below presented results of means and standard deviation of responses to study statements in questionnaire. It can be noticed that all statements registered higher than mean of scale 3.00 which was statistically accepted. However, the highest statement *“We confess that even though we were teleworking, some online training helped us a lot”* scored 4.10/5.00 compared to the lowest statements *“Most training workshops and seminars were cancelled due to the pandemic, e-training solutions saved us”* which scored 3.47/5.00, but statistically significant in a positive approach.

Table 2		
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF QUESTIONNAIRE		
	Mean	Std. Deviation
COVID 19 Pandemic		
The pandemic paralyzed many activities among organizations	3.55	1.090
Work has been transformed into telework due to the pandemic	3.83	1.247
All activities became virtual due to the pandemic	3.76	1.039
The main aim was to save individuals from getting infected but performance reached its lowest point	3.60	1.096
Online activities helped to save a lot of losses	3.99	1.042
Even though it helped, but telework isn't as productive as real work	3.59	1.165
Due to COVID 19 some entities were closed and employees were fired	3.81	.941
E- Human Resources Management: E-Recruitment		
Most organizations lost their interest in recruitment to avoid gathering of individuals	3.91	.953
If recruitment was needed, e-recruitment was the answer	3.96	1.006
e-recruitment wasn't used that much as organizations operations slowed down	3.91	.953
The good thing about e-recruitment is that it didn't need actual gathering it can all happen electronically	3.94	1.027
We depended on e-recruitment long before the pandemic appeared	4.04	1.143
E-Training		
Most training workshops and seminars were cancelled due to the pandemic, e-training solutions saved us	3.47	1.360
Most of training sessions were done through Zoom and other online applications	3.71	1.209
We confess that even though we were teleworking, some online training helped us a lot	4.10	1.111
We were aware how e-training was helpful during the pandemic	3.63	1.034
There was no talents loss during eh pandemic as training was online all the time	3.82	1.075
E-Performance Management		
Monitoring short term performance of employees online was easier and attainable more than long term performance	3.78	.996
Many online applications helped us to monitor and hunt any performance malfunction	3.87	.937
HRM manager was always able to control the manage higher performance from employees online	4.01	.990
E-performance management was a life saver for us	3.83	1.109
Some governmental restrictions were an obstacle to monitoring performance of employees	3.97	.975
E-Compensation		
e-compensation enabled organizations to assign unpaid leaves for employees until the pandemic is over	4.00	.962
Many online financial programs helped HR to manage pays and salaries	3.65	1.187
Meeting online with financial managers and HR managers helped to find a solution for cutting working hours	3.94	1.029
The pandemic complicated the gathering between financial and non-financial decisions	3.60	1.233
e-compensations was so helpful in maintaining employees with a percentage of salaries	3.97	1.013
Through e-compensation, short term rewards were maintained more than long term rewards	3.67	1.200

Variable Analysis

Same statistical tests were applied in variables of study as a way to uncover its mean and standard deviation, following Table 3 indicated that all variables scored a mean that is higher than mean of scale 3.00 which was also seen as a positive thing. The highest mean was for (E-Recruitment) which scored 3.95/5.00 compared to the lowest COVID19 which scored 3.73/5.00 but still statistically significant.

Table 3		
VARIABLE DESCRIPTIVE		
	Mean	Std. Deviation
COVID19	3.7319	0.78287
E-Recruitment	3.9518	0.87773
E-Training	3.7458	0.71161
E-Performance	3.8915	0.80483
E-Compensation	3.8046	0.85780
E-HRM	3.8463	0.71886

Hypotheses Testing

Simple linear regression was used so as to test the validity of study hypotheses, following results came into perspective:

Table 4						
TESTING MAIN HYPOTHESIS						
Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square		Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	0.789a	0.622	0.621		0.44242	
ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	117.048	1	117.048	597.996	0.000b
	Residual	71.052	363	0.196		
	Total	188.100	364			
Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.143	0.113		10.122	0.000
	COVID19	0.724	0.030	0.789	24.454	0.000

Simple linear regression was used to test the above hypothesis. Table 4 showed that t-value was significant since p-value was less than 0.05. Also $r = 0.789$ reflected high positive relationship. That meant COVID 19 pandemic increased organizational reliance on E-HRM practices

Sub-Hypotheses

H_1 COVID 19 pandemic increased organizational reliance on e-recruitment

Simple linear regression was used to test the mentioned hypothesis. Above Table 5 showed that t-value was significant since p-value was less than 0.05. Also $r = 0.781$ reflected high positive relationship. That meant COVID 19 pandemic increased organizational reliance on e-recruitment.

H_2 COVID 19 pandemic increased organizational reliance on e-training

Table 5	
TESTING 1ST SUB-HYPOTHESIS	

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	0.781a	0.610	0.609	0.54883		
ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	171.089	1	171.089	567.987	0.000b
	Residual	109.343	363	0.301		
	Total	280.431	364			
Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.684	0.140		4.880	0.000
	COVID19	0.876	0.037	0.781	23.832	0.000

Table 6 TESTING 2 ND SUB-HYPOTHESIS						
Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square		Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	0.750a	0.563	0.561		0.47132	
ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	103.688	1	103.688	466.763	0.000b
	Residual	80.638	363	0.222		
	Total	184.326	364			
Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.202	0.120		9.986	0.000
	COVID19	0.682	0.032	0.750	21.605	0.000

Simple linear regression was used to test the second hypothesis. Above Table 6 showed that t- value was significant since p -value was less than 0.05. Also $r=0.75$ reflected high positive relationship. That meant COVID 19 pandemic increased organizational reliance on e-training.

H_3 COVID 19 pandemic increased organizational reliance on e-performance management

Table 7 TESTING 3 RD SUB-HYPOTHESIS						
Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	0.701a	0.491	0.490	0.57493		
ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	115.795	1	115.795	350.314	0.000b
	Residual	119.988	363	0.331		
	Total	235.784	364			
Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.203	0.147		8.196	0.000
	COVID19	0.720	0.038	0.701	18.717	0.000

Simple linear regression was used to test the 3rd hypothesis. Above Table 7 showed that t- value was significant since p -value was less than 0.05. Also $r=0.701$ reflected high positive relationship. That meant COVID 19 pandemic increased organizational reliance on e-performance management.

H_4 COVID 19 pandemic increased organizational reliance on e-compensation

Table 8 TESTING 4 TH SUB-HYPOTHESIS						
Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	0.581a	0.338	0.336	0.69895		
ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	90.499	1	90.499	185.246	0.000b
	Residual	177.338	363	0.489		
	Total	267.837	364			
Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.428	0.178		8.001	0.000
	COVID19	0.637	0.047	.581	13.611	0.000

Simple linear regression was used to test the 4th hypothesis. Above Table 8 showed that t- value was significant since p -value was less than 0.05. Also $r=0.581$ reflected medium and positive relationship. That meant COVID 19 pandemic increased organizational reliance on e-compensation

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

COVID 19 changed the face of the whole world; many closures were done and resulted with a lot of organizations going out of business and people losing their jobs. Other organizations which managed to survive depended on teleworking and managing work environments that are virtual which increased the obstacles in getting the needed results. Current study sought to examine how COVID 19 increased the attention towards benefits of E-HRM practices and applications during the pandemic, it aimed at measuring if organizations are willing to increase their attention towards using E-HRM practices.

Depending on quantitative methodology, an online questionnaire was uploaded and a convenient sample of (365) managers and employees within insurance sector organizations in Jordan. SPSS was used to extract results and study was able to reach following findings:

1. Respondents showed a good level of awareness regarding how E-HRM practices based on their answers, there were aware that E-HRM helped a lot during the pandemic which increased the level of management and support within teleworking
2. Main hypothesis was accepted and it was found that COVID 19 increased the attention to the benefits of E-HRM during unstable situations
3. Variables of E-HRM (E-Recruitment, E-Training, E-Performance Management and E-Compensation) proved that they were influential during the pandemic as all of them scored a high and positive relationship with independent variable except for E-compensation which showed a medium relationship with
4. Independent variable due to its connection to finances which decreased greatly during the pandemic.

The study proved that the use of E-HRM during the pandemic period contributed significantly to saving the situation and sustainability of work and management, even if it was weaker than before, and also helped human resources management practitioners to complete process of supervision and follow-up to the performance of employees remotely based on emergency variables That occurred, whether in the field of work or outside its scope, such as the absence of a worker, taking sick or regular leaves, resignation, stopping work and many other things that may happen.

In general, the study was able to prove that E-HRM contributed significantly during the pandemic period to sustainability of work within the organization by default through the management of remote work and attention to the matters and affairs of working individuals so as to obtain high performance outputs and at the same time Avoid mixing in the workplace and the transmission of infection between members of the organization, and this is what agrees with both Nguti & Mose (2021) and Ullah et al. (2021).

Also, the necessity of E-HRM during the pandemic period was represented in the training aspect, as many entities have involved their personnel in training programs that don't require attendance to the place of training, but are capable of improving performance, especially with reduced working hours, and this result is consistent with Rasal & Al-Naiem (2020) and Al-Momani (2021).

E-HRM department has also maintained communication between different departments and departments by linking departments, workers and managers, including following up on customer service and ensuring that the best service is provided to them rhyming with what came along according to Nachit & Okar (2020):

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The “digitization” of human resource management practices is an urgent requirement, not only so as to face emergency or critical situations that may arise, but also to enhance effectiveness of the functions associated with it such as recruitment, appointment, training and compensation, Also, the transfer Digital human resource management has many positive effects economically, socially and environmentally, besides being the most appropriate option for managing crises that require distancing or not staying in the workplace.

The study recommended reconsidering human resource practices in the Jordanian insurance sector by intensifying training on managing remote workers and a mechanism for solving problems that may arise in a virtual work environment. Including that, study found out that operating virtually and remotely isn't enough; there is a need to automate the organizational culture not only its operations.

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