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The Acceptance and Practicality of Digital HRM in Nigeria

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Introduction

The concept of digital human resource management and other related concepts such as the digitisation of human resource management (Meijerink et al., 2018; Kuusisto, 2017), the digitalisation of human resource management (Dixit, 2017; Parry & Strohmeier, 2014), the digital transformation of human resource management (Bissola & Imperatori,

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2018; Vardarlier, 2020), and the digital disruption of human resource management (Larkin, 2017; Platanou & Mäkelä, 2016) are gaining prominence in both academia and practitioners' discussions. Many organisations have wrestled with digital transformation and technological disruptions to their operations since the 1980s (Bondarouk et al., 2017) and have now firmly rooted in all aspects of HR functions and to the stream of HR literature. In other words, information technology and digital possibilities have completely infused HRM processes and HRM departments in today's global networking systems (Bondarouk & Ruël, 2009). Therefore, organisations around the world are now investing in digital HRM so that they are not left behind.

Digital HRM currently lacks clarity in terms of definition and concept (Suddaby, 2010). While some authors assumed that readers would naturally know the meaning of digital HRM and failed to give a clear definition of the concept (e.g. Bajer, 2017; Larkin, 2017), others have given a multiple and, sometimes, contradictory meanings of the concept (Platanou & Mäkelä, 2016) or used it in a proliferating manner (Martini & Cavenago, 2018; Thite, 2019)—thus leaving readers confused. Since the early works on the links between web-based technologies and HRM (see DeSanctis, 1986), several definitions have been proposed regarding the concept. Digital HRM has been interchangeably coined with e-HRM, HR Information System (HRIS), virtual HR(M), web-based HRM, and intranet-based HRM. For the purpose of this study, however, we define digital HRM as the practice of infusing, integrating, and utilising technology in HRM practices and activities in accordance with the general digitalisation of an organisation in order to improve services, achieve efficiency, and gain competitive advantage. Digital HRM has taken off in the Western-developed world as many organisations have since switched from the traditional ways of delivering HRM services to modern IT-based ways otherwise known as digital HRM. Furthermore, many studies have been undertaken on digital HRM and other IT or internet-related methods of delivering HRM services (e.g. Dixit, 2017; Parry & Strohmeier, 2014; Strohmeier, 2020). However, research on digital HRM is somewhat scarce in Africa, specifically Nigeria. This chapter, therefore, examines digital HRM in Nigeria. Our aim is to explore the acceptability and practicability of digital HRM in Nigeria—whether organisations still

maintain the traditional methods of delivering HRM or they have embraced the new technological methods of delivering HRM services. In order to achieve this, we used a qualitative research approach by interviewing 31 HR (in some organisations personnel) managers in Lagos, Ibadan, Ilorin, and Abuja. Given the lack of studies on digital HRM in Nigeria because this area of study has been largely ignored and based on our findings, we surmise that lack of digital HRM may slow down organisational progress and efficiency and argue that organisations in Nigeria might struggle to operate at the same pace of development and success, and may also fail to achieve competitive advantage as their Western-developed world counterparts unless they fully embraced digital HRM. We speculate that doing so would strategically help develop the organisations and their human resources and help them to achieve competitive advantage.

Our study, therefore, makes two contributions. First, in exploring digital HRM in Africa, using Nigeria as a research context, we expand the research agenda on digital HRM in the Global South beyond its usual Western-centric context. Second, employing an explorative qualitative research approach, this chapter enhances our understanding of the phenomenon by interviewing HR managers to share their stories and experiences and opens up possibilities of rethinking methods of delivering HRM service in Africa—that is, moving from the traditional methods to new digital methods. The rest of the chapter is organised as follows. In the next section, we review the literature on digital HRM. This is then followed by the examination of the past, present, and future HRM in Nigeria. We then discuss our methodology after which we set out the findings from the study. In the final section, we set the agenda for future research.

Digital HRM

Digital human resource management (digital HRM) is a concept gaining increasing attention in the HR profession and scholarly discourse. The concept has been used interchangeably with the digitalisation of HRM, digital transformation of HRM, and digital disruption of HRM (Bajer,

2017; Dixit, 2017; Larkin, 2017). Whichever way they are used, these concepts connote the significant changes and development of HRM, including integrating and utilising technology in HRM practices and activities (Strohmeier, 2020). Digital HRM constitutes the technical processes and conversion of analogue information into digital information necessary for faster and quicker results and outcomes for HR purposes (Bissola & Imperatori, 2018). For example, converting paper-based information about employees and storing them on the computer with a particular assigned code gives quicker access to information users rather than looking through a cabinet or pile of paper files. The role of digital HRM is to support organisations, employees, and HR professionals to exploit digital technologies in their operations and strategic goals (Marler & Fisher, 2013). Contrastingly, Strohmeier (2020) argues that the operational aspect of digital HRM may have been substantially exploited but lacks realisation in strategic purposes. The digital transformation agenda for HRM is to ensure that technology augments the capabilities of HRM, both to its core and peripheral functions. Therefore, the automation of HR processes enables organisations to collect and analyse data for making data-driven decisions, as well as pursuing cost savings and time efficiency (Amladi, 2017).

The goal of digital HRM is to create value for organisations by using digital technologies in the formulation and execution of HR strategies; thus, achieving its strategic purpose is critical for the digital transformation of HRM (Bissola & Imperatori, 2018). Digital HRM has been deemed to be revolutionary, not evolutionary, given its radical change in the way managers and employees experience digital disruption in the all-digital world (Stephan et al., 2016). Thus, HR is challenged with helping employers and employees shift to a digital mindset that embraces using digital technologies to manage, organise, and lead change. It also transforms the whole employee experience by redefining HR processes, systems, procedures, and practices and promoting easier, more productive, and more rewarding work (Stephan et al., 2016).

To fully understand the importance of digital HRM, Strohmeier (2020) calls for clarity of concepts and provides four typologies of digital HRM. First, organisations in which HR practices and strategy are not augmented by digital technologies and are fully analogue are miles away

from digital HRM. Second, the operational application of digital technologies is a state of using digital technologies to support operational HR practices geared towards cost reduction, quicker operations and processing, and improved quality (DiRomualdo et al., 2018; Strohmeier, 2020). For example, digital technologies are employed for HR core functions, including staffing, compensation, and training and development. The third is the strategic alignment of digital technologies to pre-formulated HR strategies. This typology of digital HRM is concerned with digital technologies supporting the execution phase of HR strategies, but not the formulation of the strategies (Marler & Fisher, 2013). Digital technologies then align HR strategies in their execution after the formulation of HR strategies. For example, after developing a strategy to appraise employees' performance, digital technologies are employed to execute the strategy. Fourth is the strategic integration of digital technologies at the stage of strategy formulation. At this stage, digital technologies are used in formulating HR strategies that provide value and competitive advantage to organisations and their HRM processes (Strohmeier, 2020). Currently, digitalisation potentials are yet to be substantially exploited at this phase, as most organisations are yet to integrate digital technologies into providing HR strategies that align with the overall business strategy (Amladi, 2017). Nevertheless, there is progress in ensuring the digitalisation of HRM. For instance, HR analytics—an analytical process within HR functions aimed at setting goals, measuring success, and optimising HR processes for improved employee performance, cost savings, and business growth (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2018)—is gradually gaining prominence at the strategic integration phase of digital HRM (Strohmeier, 2020). Essentially, these typologies allow us to locate the phase where the Nigerian digital HRM currently lies and uncover the degree of acceptance and practicability of digital HRM in Nigeria.

Digital HRM also offers numerous benefits to organisations. Organisations can use employee data collected and analysed through digital technologies to determine and recognise significant information about employees' performance, such as identifying those with high and low performances (Manuti & de Palma, 2018). The outcomes of such analysis can help organisations in their strategy formulation and decision-making processes. For example, building and sustaining an effective

talent pool. Digitalisation of HRM is critical to understanding employees' work attitudes and emotional and behavioural tendencies to effectively stimulate employee's motivation and enthusiasm (Zhou et al., 2021). Amladi (2017) suggests that digital HRM helps to identify prospective hires, automate manual HR processes, create a more effective learning environment for employees, promote a diverse workforce, optimise resources, ensure worker safety, facilitate a culture of information sharing, and increase business profitability. Digital HRM has a strategic purpose of ensuring that organisations take into cognisance the VRIO components (valuable, rare, inimitable, and organised) for sustained competitive advantage (DiRomualdo et al., 2018; Pantelidis, 2019).

Despite its numerous benefits, digital HRM poses significant concerns for organisations and employees. Frey and Osborne (2013) note that digitalisation disrupts organisational structure and processes and has heightened concerns about the displacement of HRM and substantial loss of employees due to digitalisation-based automation and external digitalisation activities. Furthermore, digital technologies incite organisations to replace a large part of their workforce with self-employed individuals and increase labour market segmentation, which provokes big challenges for HRM, especially regarding managing complex workforce (Dixit, 2017). However, Zhou et al. (2021) argue that the maturity of an organisation's HRM system determines the effectiveness of HRM digitalisation. For example, the more mature an organisation's HRM system is, the more likely its HR practitioners can understand and utilise relevant information for its operations and strategic integration. More so, a less matured HR system is vulnerable to confusion and persistent resistance to change in its digital transformation of HRM (Bondarouk et al., 2017). In addition, Rasmussen and Ulrich (2015) argued that digital HRM in an immature organisation may be used as a tool for gaining power and accumulating personal benefits against the organisation's values and at the detriment of stakeholders. Therefore, the digital HRM's endeavour to reduce bureaucracy requires organisational policies and processes that are practicable and sustainable (Bondarouk et al., 2017). Fundamentally, structural embeddedness is crucial to the digitalisation of HRM. A high-level strategic involvement of the HR unit indicates HR's central role in the organisation and gives more credence to HR functions

(Zhou et al., 2021). This will give HR managers a comprehensive understanding of business strategy to generate more strategic HR value for business growth (Jia et al., 2020). Also, relational embeddedness is required for an effective digitalisation of HRM. Being at the central role of an organisation requires that HR establishes high-quality relationships with other units. It allows HR to derive more knowledge and understanding of the operations in other units, particularly those that are HR related (e.g., employee performance and employee relations) and contribute to both individual unit performance and the overall business performance (Cabello-Medina et al., 2011; Zhou et al., 2021).

HRM in Nigeria: Past, Present, and Future

Nigeria is a sub-Saharan African nation with the largest population in Africa—estimated at over 200 million people, and a labour market of about 60 million people (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Its large population is the primary strength of its human resource and catalyst for being one of the attractions for foreign investment in Africa (Okpara & Wynn, 2008). The increase in local and foreign business operations in Nigeria has significant implications for work, employment, and HRM practices in Nigeria (Fajana et al., 2011). The historical development of HRM in Nigeria is associated with several institutional factors, social and cultural factors, especially culture, diverse ethnicity, education and religion (Azolukwam & Perkins, 2009). As a collectivist society, Nigeria is made of communities with distinct cultural and social values and traditions, particularly those associated with work relationships even before the advent of HRM in Nigeria (Ovadge & Ankomah, 2001). For instance, during the era of traditional employment or personnel management, local chiefs or traditional rulers and elders were at the helm of affairs of settling work and employment disputes between employers and employees (Azolukwam & Perkins, 2009). Employment issues were resolved around what seemed best for warring parties and favoured the community, deemphasising self-centredness and individualism (Okpara & Wynn, 2008). However, these collectivist ideologies have been critiqued for only promoting relationality, collectivity, reciprocity, and

connectivity; while limiting individual goals and achievements (Van Hooft & De Jong, 2009).

However, the Nigerian colonial and post-colonial experiences have contributed to the patterns of work relationships. The Western management style introduced in Nigeria and Africa at large supports individualistic ideologies such as autonomy, freedom, self-interest, entitlement, and competition (Hofstede, 1980). It also gives credence to standardisation of work functions and the ability to compete globally (Kamoche et al., 2004). The acculturation of Westernised ideologies and values spread to people management in Nigeria, particularly through the multinational companies that inculcated the industrialised organisational approach and practices to managing the Nigerian labour force (Fajana et al., 2011). Moreover, the receptiveness to Western normative people management given the growth in literacy, the federal political system, and the push for structural adjustment by international allies (e.g., the International Monetary Fund and World Bank) have contributed to the popularisation of HRM in Nigeria (Azolukwam & Perkins, 2009). This is not to say that counter-trends to HRM in Nigeria are non-existent. In fact, the Nigerian socio-cultural ideologies, especially ethnicity, language, gender, religion, and social morality, have pushed the boundaries of HRM practices in Nigeria (Adisa et al., 2021). For instance, socially constructed issues like patriarchy and hypermasculinity, where men dominate the political, economic, and social systems in the society, facilitate the divergence of HRM in Nigeria (Adisa et al., 2019). As a result, HRM in Nigeria is associated with cross-vergence pragmatism that embraces the interconnectivity of externally driven convergence and divergent internally institutional and social factors, leading to a hybridised blend of HR practices (Azolukwam & Perkins, 2009; Gomes et al., 2012).

Furthermore, lack of funding for HRM research and development across organisations in Nigeria has resulted in over-reliance on the Western approaches (Fajana et al., 2011). Despite Nigerian organisation's efforts to apply new management techniques and skills to enhance HRM, these efforts are undermined by the peculiarity of the social-cultural factors influencing work and employment (Ituma et al., 2011; Okereke et al., 2018). Similarly, organisational culture is beginning to pave way for better employment relationship in Nigeria despite the challenges

posed by the internal and external business environment (Akanji et al., 2020). Many Nigerian organisations have recently begun to facilitate increased and continued learning, training, and educating their employees to help develop their skills and capabilities and to enhance global competitiveness. Nonetheless, Fanimihin and Popoola (2013) argued that globalisation, through the adoption of Western HRM approaches/model, has helped in facilitating the development of HRM in Nigeria (Fanimihin & Popoola, 2013). For example, Nigeria is characterised by the growth of labour market segmentation through the proliferation of permanent, fixed, and temporary employment contracts (Oruh et al., 2020b). Although these developments have their consequences for HRM, it is not peculiar to Nigeria and Africa as many organisations in the industrialised economies also suffer a loss of the psychological attachment, commitment, loyalty of their employees, and legitimisation due to labour market segmentation (Fajana et al., 2011; Oruh et al., 2020a).

Although still requiring some amendments, Nigeria's labour and employment legislation have laid down regulations for work and employment in Nigeria. Issues related to remuneration and compensations, fairness, and equity are primarily dealt with by collective bargaining between the unions and employers (including the government) (Ovadge & Ankomah, 2001; Okpara & Wynn, 2008). The shift from compulsory to voluntary union membership in 2005 has impacted the degree to which Nigerian employees know and stand for their labour rights (Azolukwam & Perkins, 2009). Although occupational health and safety remain a primary issue for organisations in Nigeria, the unavailability of reliable statistics on the number of fatalities in Nigerian organisations make it difficult to ascertain the depth of the problem (Fajana et al., 2011).

Against this backdrop, the future of HRM in Nigeria may seem promising with priority given to technology and global competitiveness, as well as the increasing demands for HR professionals in Nigeria to cope with changing trends and conditions. The challenge of skills shortages to cater for resource demands further intensifies concerns regarding technological innovation and its operationalisation across organisations in Nigeria (Azolukwam & Perkins, 2009). More so, despite been ranked among the most creative countries in Africa in the 1960s, recently, Nigeria's underperformance in creativity capabilities costs the economy

the ability to drive sustainable businesses (Ogbeibu et al., 2018). Therefore, embracing digital HRM in Nigeria is key to boosting and sustaining competitive advantage in many Nigerian organisations and for the future of HRM in Nigeria (Ogbeibu et al., 2021).

Research Methods

The methodological design of this study draws from an interpretive—social constructivist paradigm of which its strength lies in providing rich narrative data from peoples' lived experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The rationale for adopting this approach is to explore in-depth understanding of hitherto an under-researched phenomenon or under-researched area of study (Saunders et al., 2016). Moreover, the paucity of existing research on digital HRM in Nigeria may suggest generalising digitalisation of organisations and their HRM delivery services, which is inappropriate. Thus, the adoption of a qualitative design enabled us to explore this neglected and important area of study in a non-Western context by exploring the participants' lived experiences (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Furthermore, taking an interpretivist approach enabled us to understand human actions, motives, feelings, and experiences from the perspective of organisational members rather than that of the researchers (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Data Collection

A combination of purposive and chain-referral sampling was employed in recruiting the participants for this study (Heckathorn, 2011; Ritchie et al., 2003). This sampling method was selected based on assumptions that qualitative researchers should have reasonable knowledge of the sample size to be used and as a result targets those samples sought (Patton, 2002). Data for the study were collected through semi-structured qualitative interviews, conducted over a two-month period. This type of interview allowed us to collect data flexibly, capture original points made by the participants, and probe for more information and clarification (Wengraf, 2001). This design

was appropriate for two reasons: first, because we were seeking to understand the acceptability and practicability of digital HRM from HR managers' point of view and, second, because there has been no published research investigating digital HRM in Nigeria. A total of 31 interviews were conducted with HR managers working in both public and private organisations in Nigeria. Interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and were conducted at the participants' preferred locations and times. All interviews were recorded and transcribed, and participants were provided with a brief overview of the study and assurance of confidentiality and anonymity. While all participants showed high interest in the study, they were also informed of their rights to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any stage of the interview process.

The nature of the interview style, based on open-ended questions, gave us room for flexibility in discussions and allowed individual experience to be explored. It also facilitated easy identification of participants' verbal dispositions. Researchers met from time to time to compare interview notes and ensure all interview protocols were completely covered so that dependability on primary data is not compromised. Questions were framed around the main study enquiry. Participants were asked the same questions at different times and locations in order to check for authentic explanations in reducing chances of biases (Creswell, 2013). The interview questions include: what are the current methods of delivering HRM services in your organisation and how would you describe your organisation in terms of digitalisation? Given the semi-structured nature of interviewing, questions were modified based on participants' responses. After conducting 40 interviews, it was felt that 'saturation point' had been reached in that no information was added that could further enhance the findings of the study (Bowen, 2009). In order to improve the reliability of the interviews and to ascertain that no important themes were missed, seven further confirmatory interviews were conducted. However, the additional interviews merely corroborated the existing themes emerging from previous ones.

Our sampling techniques have advantages and limitations. Purposive sampling allows researchers to use their personal judgement to choose participants who are suited to achieve the research objectives of a small, exploratory study and is both cost-effective and time-effective. The chain-referral process allows researchers access to samples that may be difficult to

reach using other sampling techniques and is also a cost-efficient way of locating and recruiting participants. However, purposive sampling is vulnerable to errors in researchers' judgement, and both purposive and chain-referral sampling have the potential for sampling bias; because the researchers selected the participants, and participants then tend to nominate people they know well, it is possible that the sample will share characteristics to a greater degree than would be found in a random sample of the target population. As such, a sample generated from purposive and chain-referral methods cannot claim to be representative, or generalisable.

Data Analysis

Our data analysis was informed by thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), where all authors followed the iterative process of initial coding (which was done independently of one another) and then collectively searching, reviewing, and defining themes before presenting the final findings in the section below. Table 13.1 presents the key themes and illustrative extract.

Table 13.1 Key themes and illustrative data extracts

Key themes (codes)	Illustrative data extracts
Clinging to analogue HRM approach	<i>I am aware of the digitalisation of HR functions and operations but perhaps not for me. It's like asking an adult to start learning how to use his left hand. I am use to how we do things here and my company is also pleased with it. Though old-fashioned but working for us</i>
Lack of required skills to go digital	<i>I have read a number of books and articles about digital HRM and its associated benefits for employees and organisations. However, we are still using analogue because we don't have the right skills to operate digitally. Personally, as the HR manager, I have no digital skills whatsoever</i>
Lack of digital mindset	<i>...the attitude towards embracing and incorporating technology into HR process and functions is not right. For example, I prefer the old analogue ways – I don't think we are going to switch to digital methods of performing HR functions any time soon</i>

The qualitative data analysis consisted of preparing data and organising it for analysis, reducing data into themes, and representing the data (Creswell, 2013). Miles et al. (2014) refer to qualitative data analysis as the process of data reduction, data display, and report writing. Consistent with an inductive approach, interview data were first read, taking each sentence at a time and examining it, then categorising into codes. Thus, the second interview was coded with the first interview in mind, and subsequent interviews were coded accordingly. These codes were then grouped into themes and once a theme has enough properties, in that no new properties emerge from the data, the theme becomes an integrative category with defined sets of dimensions. Constant comparatives were used throughout the analysis, on the coding level, the concepts level, and the themes level which eventually produced the main categories of the study (Cassell & Symon, 2006).

Research Findings

The analysis of the narratives uncovered three major themes regarding the acceptability and practicability of digital HRM in Nigeria. These themes provide clear insights into the reality of digital HRM in Nigeria. The themes are (1) *Clinging to analogue HRM approach*, (2) *lack of required skills to go digital*, and (3) *lack of digital mindset*. Despite the call for HRM and every HR professional to be digitally literate, analytically capable, and to embrace digitalisation in their operations (Styr & Bailie, 2020), our findings revealed that Nigeria is still locked in analogue HRM. The fine details of the findings are presented below.

Clinging to Analogue HRM Approach

Results show that HR managers and organisations in Nigeria are still very attached to the old methods of delivering HR functions. Even though digital disruptions to HR functions and operations have been on for more than a decade, participants commented on their organisations being comfortable with the analogue methods of delivering HR

functions. For example, one of the participants liking switching to digital to learning to be left-handed in adulthood.

I am aware of the digitalisation of HR functions and operations but perhaps not for me. It's like asking an adult to start learning how to use his left hand. I am used to how we do things here and my company is also pleased with it. Though old-fashioned but working for us. (Participant #9)

Another participant commented on the lack of desire on the part of the organisation to digitalise HR functions and operations.

I think the company is comfortable with our analogue modes of delivery HR functions and operations. I highlighted the need for us to go digital in our HR delivery at the last management meeting but it was not well received. (Participant #2)

One participant gave a holistic perspective of organisations' views of digital HRM.

Based on my experience, I think many organisations are clinging to the analogue approach for two reasons: (1) many organisations perhaps see no need to digitalise their HR functions and operations because the analogue methods are still working for them and (2) I think the cost of going digital is also another factor that that perpetually keeps them analogue. (Participant #15)

Another participant also commented on the issue of cost associated with going digital.

I think it's good. My organisation has identified the need for us to go digital and we are working on it. About 15% of our HR functions and operations have now been digitalised. The switch has to be gradual because its expensive. (Participant #1)

The findings revealed that the participants and many organisations in Nigeria still cling to the old analogue methods of delivering HR functions and operations even though many organisations across the world,

especially in the Western-developed countries, have switched and adapted to digital HRM. This exposes a lack of sufficient fund, lack of desire to go digital, and the culture of 'we are used to it'.

Lack of Required Skills to Go Digital

The digital revolution that has characterised the world of work over the past ten years clearly require skills and knowledge to join and thrive. Lack of required skills to switch from analogue to digital HRM emerged from the study. Many participants express their willingness to go digital but complained about having the required skills.

I have read a number of books and articles about digital HRM and its associated benefits for employees and organisations. However, we are still using analogue because we don't have the right skills to operate digitally. Personally, as the HR manager, I have no digital skills whatsoever. (Participant #20)

Another participant mentioned some of the skills and the need for organisations to upskill their workforce in order to reap the benefits of digital HRM.

Technology has continued to change the mode, the system, and the pace of work. So digitalisation of an organisation means digitalisation of its workforce. This means that HR personnel must be equipped with skills such as technology aptitude, analytic skills, lead intelligent digital process skills, and other technology-based skills. At the moment, neither me nor anyone in my team have these skills – making digitalisation of our HR practices and processes difficult. (Participant #25)

Similarly, another participant commented on the lack of the required skills to go digital and the associated organisational levity with digitalisation.

We simply do not have the skills to operate digitally. We have not been trained about digital HRM and nobody is talking about it. I think digital

HR is an important organisational strategy to survive and stay competitive in the current global market and organisations should take digitalising their systems, operations, and employees seriously...at the moment, I think they are serious about it. (Participant #23)

The digital era has forced many organisations to rethink their HR functions and operation from top to bottom from job ads all the way to the sustainability of the whole organisation. However, the skills required to digitalise HR system, processes, and operations are key not only to digital HRM but also to facilitate an enduring interaction with digital technologies that has shaped a new generation of people with distinctively different attitudes, qualifications, behaviours, and expectations (Parry & Strohmeier, 2014).

Lack of Digital Mindset

The changing world of work requires HR managers to be technology conscious and to be aware of data and analytic tools, which will enable faster, more accurate, more confident business decision-making and enhance commercial credibility and viability of HR functions. Digital mindset means a digital attitude and approach towards discharging organisational and HR functions. The participants commented on a lack of digital mindset as a barrier for acceptability of digital HRM in Nigeria. The quotation below helps to explain this point:

I think HR managers (myself included) have no digital mindset that will help to see through the technological change and disruptions in the world of work. For example, I still prefer the old analogue ways of performing HR functions. (Participant #30)

Another participant commented:

...the attitude towards embracing and incorporating technology into HR process and functions is not right. For example, I prefer the old analogue ways – I don't think we are going to switch to digital methods of performing HR functions any time soon. (Participant #7)

Other participants also commented on the need for a change in mindset:

It is hybrid in my organisation...like 30% digital and 70% analogue. The mindset is still very attached to the old analogue ways but I think we are making a steady progress towards going full digital but the mindset has to change. (Participant #19)

...the new world of HR means that Nigerian organisations need to rethink their HR model and embrace mindset shift. This will enhance digital learning, change in behaviour and change in perspective...all of which is crucial to digital HRM. Change of mindset from analogue to digital is very important. (Participant #17)

These findings depict what we termed as ‘growth mindset’, which is the digital and analytical method of performing HR functions and ‘fixed mindset’, which is the old analogue approach. The capabilities and mindsets of HR practitioners need to evolve. In the present world of work, HR needs to demonstrate its value with data and analytic thinking and methodology.

Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter sets out to examine the acceptability and practicability of digital HRM in Nigeria; and to investigate whether organisations still maintain the old methods of delivering HR functions and operations or whether they have embraced digital HRM. Following the pace of technological developments and the radical manner by which information technology infuses HRM processes and HRM departments (Bondarouk et al., 2017; Bondarouk & Ruël, 2009), organisations around the world continue to embrace digitalisation. Styr and Bailie (2020) contend that HR has a significant role to play in guiding organisations through the digital transformation. However, our findings highlight the reality of digital HRM in Nigeria where HR functions and operations are still bolted on to old HR approaches. HR managers in Nigeria have yet to be fully digitalised in their operations. Lack of fund and desire to digitalise

HR functions and operations have been found to be majorly responsible for their clinging to old methods. This means that the use of Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 technologies to carry out HRM activities such as training and development and other HR functions are still not fully operational in Nigeria.

The digital era has forced many organisations to rethink their HR functions and operation from top to bottom from job ads all the way to the sustainability of the whole organisation. However, our study found that the majority of HR managers in Nigeria lacks the required skills to digitalise their functions and operations. These skills are required to collate and integrate HR information and to streamline HR policies and procedures within and across organisations and geographical boundaries (Burbach & Royle, 2014). According to Insight for Professionals [IPF] (2018), digital skills and digital literacy ensure that organisations achieve competitive advantage, achieve their target audience and enhance their brand in the best, most effective way possible.

At its core, this study finds that the participants' mindset towards digital HRM is discouraging. This suggests a lack of 'growth mindset', which is the digital and analytical method of performing HR functions. Participants tend towards 'fixed mindset', which is the old analogue approach. Research evidence that is consistent with these reported findings identifies that an effective digitalisation of HR functions and operations requires a change in employees' mindsets (Ruël et al., 2004). The capabilities and mindsets of HR practitioners need evolve and change towards 'growth mindset'. This will facilitate cost savings, improved HR services, and strategic reorientation of the HR department (Bondarouk et al., 2017).

Contributing to the literature on digital HRM in Africa, specifically Nigeria, this study shows that digital HRM has yet to fully take off in Nigeria with the majority of the participants and their organisations leaning towards old analogue method of delivering HR functions and operations. More importantly, it extends understanding of digital disruptions of HRM in the global south, specifically Nigeria, which may serve as an anticipatory invitation to engage in digital HRM.

In summary, this chapter has provided nuanced insights into digital HRM in Nigeria and highlighted the importance of 'growth mindset' in

achieving full digitalisation of HR functions and operations in Nigeria. Undoubtedly, digital HRM has the potential to improve HR service provision and strategically reorientate HR departments (Marler, 2009) such that employee and organisational goals will be seamlessly accomplished (Bondarouk et al., 2017). Therefore, the need to embrace and adopt digital HRM for organisations in the global south, specifically Nigeria, cannot be overstated. This study has some limitations. For instance, our sample size is small which may make generalisability of the result difficult. Also, the use of semi-structure interview might distort the participants' self-disclosure during interviews by inducing selective responses in order to present themselves in the best possible light (Patton, 2002). Thus, future research may use a large sample and quantitative approach to investigate digital HRM in a different global south context.

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