

Transformation of Human Resource Practices Following Evolving Needs of the Modern Workforce in Arusha City

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Abstract

This study examined the transformation of human resource practices following the evolving needs of the modern workforce in Arusha City. The study employed a quantitative research approach where a closed-ended questionnaire was used to collect data from 370 respondents. The respondents were sampled using stratified and purposive sampling techniques. Collected data were analysed using SPSS, where frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were computed. The findings revealed low implementation, with an overall mean of 2.73, indicating that employees perceive limited adoption and effectiveness of digital transformation in recruitment, automation efficiency, flexible work arrangements, work-life balance, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, and leadership commitment to DEI. Additionally, the findings revealed a high perception of integration with automated tools and flexible work policies. Based on the findings, this study recommends that organisations should strengthen digital HR infrastructure, redesign flexible work policies with guidelines, and establish DEI frameworks supported by leadership commitment, resources, and training to enhance efficiency, inclusivity, and alignment with modern workforce needs.

Key terms: Evolving needs, human resources practices, modern workforce, transformation.

INTRODUCTION

In this study, Human Resource Management (HRM) refers to the integrated set of practices aimed at attracting, developing, motivating, and retaining employees to achieve organisational goals. The transformation of HR practices involves a strategic and technological reorientation of HR functions from administrative routines to data-driven, employee-focused, and innovation-supportive systems. This transformation entails the adoption of digital tools (e-HRM), flexible work policies, DEI initiatives, and employee well-being programs that collectively enhance organisational performance and employee satisfaction (Malleck & Kitula, 2023; Kibanga & Nzulwa, 2022).

Globally, Human Resource Management (HRM) is undergoing a significant transformation as organisations strive to adapt to an increasingly dynamic and complex work environment. This change is driven by the swift technological advancements, globalisation, demographic shifts, and evolving employee expectations (Venkatesh et al., 2022). Traditional HR practices like recruitment, industrial relations and performance management, which are primarily centred around administrative tasks, are being transformed into digital tools such as E-recruitment portals to enhance talent acquisition, better performance management, work-life balance, and flexible work arrangements as expected by employees (Alzoubi, 2022; Kambur & Yildirim, 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic sped up this shift, leading organisations to adopt flexible and hybrid work setups while focusing on work-life balance and employee mental health (Hamouche, 2023; Kniffin et al., 2021).

In many developing countries, including Tanzania, HR transformation remains slow and fragmented due to contextual challenges such as insufficient digital infrastructure, informal labour markets, limited institutional capacity, and ongoing skills mismatches (Awad, 2021; Aluko & Burgess, 2025). Tanzanian organisations, in particular, struggle to shift from traditional administrative systems to modern, technology-based, and employee-focused HR practices. As a result, the adoption of digital HR tools, remote work policies, and inclusive workplace programs continues to be inconsistent and

underdeveloped across both public and private sectors (Bajraliu & Qorraj, 2023; Haque, 2023).

Although HR transformation has gained scholarly attention in global discussions, empirical research in Tanzania and East Africa remains limited and fragmented. Most current literature focuses on traditional HR areas such as training and development, compensation, and human resource planning (Manenzhe & Ngirande, 2021; Malleck & Kitula, 2023). Few studies explore the adoption of digital HRM systems, flexible work policies, and DEI integration in Tanzanian organisations. Similar gaps are present in East African countries where digital HR implementation varies widely (Rwigema, 2020; Wakabi & Matovu, 2024). As a result, there is limited empirical evidence on how organisations in Tanzania, especially in Arusha City, are transforming HR practices to meet the changing needs of the modern workforce.

This study examined how human resource practices evolve in response to the changing needs of the modern workforce in Arusha City. Specifically, how organisations are adopting digital HR tools, implementing flexible work arrangements, and incorporating inclusive and employee-focused practices. The results add to academic discussions on HR transformation in developing economies by offering localised insights into Tanzanian organisational practices. Moreover, the study guide HR policy development and organisational strategies encourages more adaptive, fair, and innovative HR systems in Tanzania and similar East African regions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature Review

This study was anchored in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Davis (1989), to explain and predict how users come to accept and use new technologies (Venkatesh et al., 2022). This model asserts that two factors influence technology adoption: Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU). PU denotes the extent to which a user believes that a technology will enhance their performance or make tasks easier. PEOU, in contrast, is the extent to which a person believes using the technology will require minimal effort. The more useful and easier a technology is perceived to be, the

more likely users are to foster a positive attitude toward its use.

This attitude, in turn, influences the behavioural intention to use the technology, which predicts actual system usage. TAM suggests that a user's intention to use a technology is influenced by their attitudes toward it, which are shaped by their perceptions of its usefulness and ease of use. As such, the ultimate goal of TAM is to explain how users move from initial perceptions to actual technology adoption. TAM has strengths because it is simple to use and focuses on only two factors: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, which contribute to making it easy to understand, apply, and test in different situations. However, its weakness lies in oversimplifying the complex process of technology adoption because it does not consider environmental factors that may influence the adoption of technology. Despite its weakness, TAM has been used to guide studies in different areas, including education, business, healthcare, E-commerce, and Online Services.

TAM guided this study because it examined the extent to which HR professionals in Arusha City perceive and adopt digital HR tools. As organisations increasingly rely on technology to optimise functions such as recruitment and training, understanding their perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of the digital tools in the workplace is essential.

Empirical Literature Review

Setiawan et al. (2025) examined how HR practices intersect with digital transformation, focusing on how digital tools boost workforce resilience and promote organisational innovation. A mixed-method research approach was employed, integrating qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The findings revealed that digital transformation in HR is not merely operational but a strategic necessity that enables organisations to remain flexible, adaptive, and competitive in a rapidly changing environment. This research concluded that digital transformation in HR is more than just an operational change; it is a strategic necessity. Although this study provides valuable global insights, it relies heavily on data from technologically advanced regions, which limits its relevance to developing economies like Tanzania, where resource and infrastructure constraints may hinder similar

progress. In Arusha City, where many organisations are still shifting from manual to digital HR systems, the findings highlight the importance of examining how digital HR tools can be locally adapted to improve workforce agility and innovation.

Zhang and Chen (2024) investigated the digital transformation of human resource management within the digital economy. Their study examined key aspects of this transformation, including the digital workplace, digital HR processes, and digital employee services. The findings revealed that while digital transformation brings notable benefits, including increased efficiency, improved service delivery, and better alignment with employee expectations, it also poses challenges, including how organisations convert legacy and new HR systems, and possible negative side-effects of the new systems, such as ethical concerns and adjustment costs. While the study contributes significantly to theoretical understanding, its context in China's mature digital economy presents limited relevance for Tanzania's relatively nascent digital infrastructure. For Arusha-based organisations, this highlights the importance of understanding how digital HRM can be implemented incrementally to overcome cost and skills barriers while maintaining ethical data practices.

Gadzali et al. (2023) examined human resource management strategies in organisational digital transformation. The study aimed to identify HRM best practices that can assist organisations in addressing the challenges of digital transformation and succeed in adopting new technologies. The study used a qualitative research approach. Data was gathered through interviews and documentary reviews. The study found that effective strategies include improving employees' digital skills, implementing strong leadership, restructuring the organisation efficiently, proactively managing talent, measuring performance with relevant metrics, promoting flexibility, and practising effective risk management. Although insightful, the study's small and non-representative sample limits the generalizability of its findings. Nevertheless, it emphasises that digital transformation is both a technological and a human process. This perspective aligns closely with the current study, as organisations in Arusha similarly require leadership commitment, digital upskilling, and

structured change management to drive effective HR transformation.

Abbasi et al. (2025) examined the challenges associated with adopting Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Human Resource Management (HRM) systems in Pakistan, with particular focus on organisational, technological, ethical, and cultural barriers. This study employed a quantitative research approach, surveying 460 HR practitioners from private companies, multinational corporations, public sector institutions, and startups using a random sampling method. The data were analysed using SPSS version 28 and then presented in bar charts and tables, with descriptive statistics including mean, median, and mode calculated. Only 15 per cent of organisations surveyed reported using AI at full capacity, indicating an alarming gap in AI adoption. While the study provides useful comparative data, its national context differs from Tanzania's economic and technological landscape. The findings, however, resemble challenges faced in Arusha, where technological infrastructure, financial constraints, and low digital literacy similarly hinder the full integration of AI and automation into HR processes.

Ridzuwan et al. (2025) conducted a study on flexible working hours in balancing opportunities and challenges in the modern workplace. This study examined the multifaceted benefits and challenges of flexible working hours, supported by evidence from diverse industries and practical case studies. The findings revealed that flexible working hours enhanced employees' ability to manage caregiving responsibilities to reduce stress and improve overall well-being. The findings suggest the need for inclusive policies, technological investment, and results-driven management practices to fully realise the potential of flexibility while addressing its inherent complexities. However, the study mainly focused on large, technologically advanced firms and did not address implementation challenges in low-resource settings. This limitation relates to Arusha, where many organisations lack the digital tools or managerial structures needed to support flexible work arrangements effectively. Hence, the current study extends this line of inquiry by exploring the feasibility and impact of flexible work models within the Tanzanian labour market.

Iyer (2022) conducted a study to understand advantaged groups' opposition to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies. The study revealed that three types of perceived threat drove opposition. First, resource threat, where individuals fear losing access to opportunities. Second, symbolic threat, which involves concerns that DEI initiatives may challenge their group's values, culture, or established norms. Third, ingroup morality threat, where individuals perceive that acknowledging inequalities or supporting DEI policies could cast their group as morally responsible for past or present injustices. The study further found that opposition can be mitigated by framing DEI initiatives around fairness, justice, and merit, rather than focusing solely on redistribution. While conceptually rich, the study was conducted in a Western context, where DEI discourses are more institutionalised. In contrast, DEI implementation in Arusha is still emerging, often influenced by cultural norms and institutional hierarchies. Therefore, this study offers theoretical insights but lacks applicability to the Tanzanian socio-cultural environment, necessitating local empirical exploration of how DEI is perceived and practised in organisational settings.

Rosa (2025) examined the critical role of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and the negative effects of Anti-DEI Policies. Using a narrative policy analysis and targeted literature review, the study incorporated insights from Critical Race Theory, Social Learning Theory, Constructivism, Self-Determination Theory, and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy to explain why DEI strengthens institutional performance. Evidence across education, workplaces, healthcare, and the justice system revealed that DEI fosters innovation, builds trust, and reduces inequities, while its absence reinforces systemic barriers and weakens social cohesion. Additionally, the findings revealed that eliminating DEI imposes social and economic costs, and recommend that DEI be embedded as a permanent pillar of policy and practice. Although this work provides compelling conceptual evidence, it lacks primary data and contextual grounding in African or Tanzanian settings. Thus, while it reinforces the relevance of DEI to HR transformation, it fails to address how such principles can be practically embedded within resource-constrained environments like Arusha.

The review of the above literature provides inadequate insights into the transformation of human resource practices in response to the evolving needs of the modern workforce. This gap indicates the need to examine how HRM practices are transformed and integrated into digital platforms to address current organisational workforce demands, including diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, as well as flexible work arrangements.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research approach and a descriptive research design to examine the transformation of human resource (HR) practices following the evolving needs of modern workforce in Arusha City. The design was specifically chosen to align with the study's objective of examining how organisations are adopting and integrating digital HR tools, flexible work arrangements, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives in response to evolving workforce needs. Data were collected from diverse organisations, including Arusha City Council, Mount Meru Hospital, and the Tanzania National Parks Authority, to ensure a broad understanding of HR practices across both public and semi-autonomous organisations. The descriptive design enabled the researcher to systematically capture the current status of HR digital transformation without manipulating variables, thereby providing an accurate picture of existing practices, challenges, and emerging trends. This approach was particularly suitable as it allowed for quantitative analysis of employees' perceptions and organisational practices, offering empirical evidence to support conclusions about the extent and nature of HR practices transformation in Arusha City.

This study used the Yamane formula to determine a sample size of 370 respondents from a 5,000-member target population, which included HR Managers, HR staff, and employees from various organisations in Arusha City. Whereby;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

n = Sample Size,

N = Total Number of Population (5000)

e = Sampling error in this study, researchers use a 0.05 sampling error

To ensure representativeness across functional areas, stratified random sampling was employed. The population was divided into relevant strata such as administration, finance, operations, and human resources. From these strata, 355 respondents were selected through random sampling to ensure balanced participation across departments and capture diverse insights into HR practices and digital transformation initiatives. In addition, purposive sampling was employed in the selection of 15 Human Resource Managers and senior HR officers who possess direct experience and expertise in workforce transformation and digital HR adoption. Their inclusion provided valuable managerial perspectives that complemented the broader employee data obtained through stratified sampling. This combination of sampling techniques strengthened the validity and reliability of the study by integrating both general workforce perceptions and strategic managerial insights, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the transformation of HR practices in Arusha City.

A closed-ended questionnaire was administered to respondents from selected departments and units to examine the transformation of human resource (HR) practices following the evolving needs of the modern workforce. The questionnaire comprised three main sections: digital HR practices, flexible work and employee well-being, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices. Items on digital HR practices assessed the use of e-recruitment, HR information systems, and performance management tools, linking to the construct of HR digital transformation.

Flexible work and well-being items captured policies on remote work, flexible schedules, and employee support programs, reflecting workforce adaptability. DEI items measured perceptions and implementation of inclusive and equitable practices. Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale, enabling quantifiable analysis of employees' experiences and perceptions. The collected data were analysed using SPSS, where descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, were computed.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, several measures were implemented. The questionnaire was carefully designed based on

established HR technology frameworks and reviewed by experts, who evaluated the clarity, wording, and arrangement of items and provided feedback for refinement. The instrument was then piloted with 80 participants who were not part of the main study, allowing further adjustments to enhance clarity and eliminate ambiguity. To assess internal consistency, the study's Cronbach's alpha was computed using SPSS, and its value was 0.85. According to Kennedy (2022), a Cronbach's alpha coefficient value of 0.85 or

above is considered reliable and acceptable, as it indicates strong internal reliability.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study examined the transformation of human resource practices following the evolving needs of the modern workforce in Arusha City. A questionnaire with items on a 5-Likert scale, which ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), was employed in data collection. The findings from the respondents are in Table 1.

Table 1: Human Resources Practices as Perceived by Respondents in Arusha City

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Standard Deviation
Digital transformation has influenced recruitment and talent acquisition processes in Arusha City organisations.	20% (74)	25% (92)	30% (111)	15% (56)	10% (37)	2.7	1.23
HR professionals integrate with automated tools for HR functions.	17% (62)	28% (104)	25% (93)	18% (67)	12% (44)	2.8	1.26
Automation has improved HR efficiency in areas such as payroll, performance management, and employee engagement.	19% (70)	25% (92)	35% (130)	13% (48)	8% (30)	2.66	1.16
Flexible work arrangements positively impact employee job satisfaction and productivity in Arusha City.	17% (62)	32% (119)	28% (104)	14% (52)	9% (33)	2.66	1.18
Flexible work arrangements have been effective in improving work-life balance for employees in Arusha City.	16% (59)	35% (130)	31% (115)	11% (41)	7% (26)	2.58	1.10
HR managers face challenges in implementing and monitoring flexible work policies.	15% (56)	20% (74)	27% (100)	21% (78)	17% (62)	2.95	1.30
Diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in HR management face	12% (44)	25% (92)	33% (122)	18% (67)	12% (44)	2.93	1.17

significant barriers in Arusha City.							
Employees perceive DEI initiatives as effective in promoting a fair and inclusive workplace.	18% (67)	29% (108)	30% (111)	13% (48)	10% (37)	2.68	1.20
Arusha City organisations have successfully implemented DEI initiatives, leading to positive outcomes.	15% (55)	28% (104)	32% (119)	14% (52)	11% (41)	2.78	1.19
Leadership commitment is a crucial factor for the success of DEI initiatives in organisations in Arusha City.	18% (66)	36% (133)	28% (104)	10% (37)	8% (30)	2.54	1.14
Overall Mean						2.728	

Table 1 shows an overall mean score of 2.728, suggesting that, on average, respondents have a slightly positive to neutral perception of the transformation of human resource practices. This indicates that while there are positive views on the changes taking place, there is still a degree of uncertainty.

The mean score for the items falling below the overall mean of 2.728, such as digital transformation in recruitment (2.70), automation efficiency (2.66), flexible work arrangements improving job satisfaction (2.66) and work-life balance (2.58), effectiveness of DEI initiatives (2.68), and leadership commitment to DEI (2.54), suggests low employee perceptions. Based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), this reflects the limited perceived usefulness of digital HR systems, flexible work arrangements, and DEI initiatives; employees may not yet fully recognise these practices as improving performance or enhancing work outcomes (Davis, 1989). These areas reveal limited confidence in digital HR tools, flexible work policies, and DEI effectiveness, pointing to gaps in implementation and leadership support. These findings imply that Arusha city has yet to fully realise the transformative potential of digital HR systems in talent acquisition. The findings align with Zhang & Chen (2024), who found that in many developing countries, HR digitalisation lacks depth and is often confined to basic administrative functions. Similarly,

the current findings support those of Abbasi et al. (2025), who found that the benefits of automation are often underutilised when organisations lack readiness, adequate training, or system user alignment.

On the other hand, this study revealed high perceptions among HR professionals regarding the integration of automated tools (2.80), challenges in implementing flexible work policies (2.95), and recognition of barriers to DEI (2.93). This indicates that employees perceive the potential usefulness of these innovations but encounter obstacles in ease of use, as TAM predicts: technologies and systems are more likely to be adopted successfully when they are perceived as both useful and user-friendly. These findings provide a critical gap between policy intentions and actual implementation, pointing to the need for stronger managerial oversight, digital infrastructure, and clear performance evaluation mechanisms to support sustainable, flexible work models. These findings align with Ridzuwan et al. (2025), who emphasised that flexibility in itself does not guarantee improved outcomes unless supported by well-defined structures, effective communication, and leadership training.

Furthermore, the findings regarding DEI align with Iyer (2022) and Rosa (2025), indicating that without institutional commitment and strategic embedding, DEI programs remain symbolic rather than

transformative. Employees' low perception of leadership commitment (2.54) and DEI effectiveness (2.68) suggests limited perceived ease of use, as staff may find it difficult to engage meaningfully with policies that are poorly communicated or inconsistently applied. These results reinforce TAM's proposition that adoption and effectiveness depend not only on perceived usefulness but also on the simplicity and accessibility of implementation.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion: The study concludes that the transformation of human resource practices in Arusha City is low, with employees expressing generally neutral to slightly positive perceptions (overall mean = 2.728). Areas such as digital HR adoption, automation efficiency, flexible work arrangements, and DEI initiatives scored below the overall mean, suggesting low implementation. While some progress is acknowledged, particularly in the integration of automated tools and recognition of DEI barriers, the findings indicate a gap between policy intentions and

actual implementation. Leadership commitment and institutional support are low, limiting the transformative potential of HR practices.

Recommendations: Based on the current findings, this study recommends that organisations should strengthen digital HR infrastructure and implement capacity building programs for HR professionals to enhance the effective use of automated tools in recruitment, payroll management, performance monitoring, and employee engagement, thereby improving overall efficiency. In addition, organisations should review and redesign flexible work policies with guidelines to address challenges faced by HR managers while ensuring alignment with both employee needs and organisational objectives. Finally, institutional frameworks for diversity, equity, and inclusion should be established, supported by leadership commitment, adequate resource allocation, and continuous training, as leadership is crucial for the successful implementation of DEI and a conducive working environment.

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