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## Article

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## Article

# The Influence of E-HRM on Modernizing the Role of HRM Context

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**Abstract:** Human Resource Management (HRM) practitioners must play multiple roles to achieve both functional and organizational objectives. In the current business environment, Electronic Human Resource Management (E-HRM) is a pervasive application of Information Technology (IT), and its global adoption is now widespread. This study's primary objective is to determine the effect of E-HRM implementation in Sri Lanka on the evolving HRM function. The study employed a qualitative methodology. On the basis of prior research, a study framework was formulated. After collecting the findings, the researcher analyzed the data using the study framework. To answer the research question and attain the research objectives, the researcher compared the theory to the findings during the analysis. The researcher determined that HRM was unfamiliar with E-HRM applications but was utilizing E-HR tools in their daily operations. According to the study, HRM places a greater emphasis on administrative tasks. The greatest benefit of implementing E-HRM practice is that it liberates HRM from intermediary roles, allowing them to focus on strategic planning in HR organizations and transforming HR practitioners from administrative paper handlers to strategic planners.

**Keywords:** electronic HRM (E-HRM); HR practitioners; administrative expert; strategic partner



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## 1. Background of the Study

Individuals are what make an organization function. As a result, it is necessary to recruit, hire, and retain potential employees (Laumer et al. 2010). Human Resource Management (HRM) departments manage all personnel-related issues affecting an organization's workforce, including employee performance, training, recruitment, staffing, and payments (Stolt 2010). Stolt (2010) defines HRM as a method for strategically managing the organization's most valuable asset, the individual who contributes to the business's success individually or collectively. HRM has historically been critical to an organization's performance improvement. According to Opatha (1995), HRM is the efficient and effective use of HRs to accomplish an organization's goals. There is a strong correlation between organizational effectiveness and HRM.

The evolution of technology over the past few decades has resulted in creative commercial developments. In addition, technology has altered how HR practitioners communicate, work, and manage employees. It has two direct effects on businesses: (1) an increase in efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity, and (2) a shift in the way people create, organize, manage, and operate a business (Zhang and Wang 2006). These significant technological developments and modernizations, together with the expansion of the internet and other specialized equipment, have compelled organizations to maximize their potential for performing and enhancing the performance and efficiency of their HRM departments. Consequently, Human Resource (HR) practitioners must adapt to the growing competition, changing employee attitudes, and rapid advancements in HR technology.

Since the invention of the internet, a new era of HRM known as Electronic Human Resource Management (E-HRM) has begun, radically reengineering HR practices and strategies in order to compete in an intensely competitive market. [Strohmeier \(2007\)](#) defines E-HRM as the “use of information technology to connect and support at least two individual or collective actors in performing HRM activities collaboratively”. With the aid of E-HRM, it is anticipated that HR practitioners would be able to work more strategically and efficiently. Under this scenario, technology enables HR departments to address the organization’s HR requirements through web-based channels. It allows the employees and HR practitioners to monitor, view, and make the required adjustments for more efficient and effective HR management. In addition, the implementation of E-HRM reduces the demand for HR specialists due to the fact that E-HRM eliminates the “HR middleman” ([Lengnick-Hall and Moritz 2003](#)). Now, firms can accomplish their duties with fewer staff.

HR practitioners interact with employees and participate in human resource activities to increase the effectiveness of their organization’s provision of technical guidance and other human capital services. Traditionally, HR practitioners have been required to physically accomplish an abundance of administrative and paperwork tasks. In brief, this is ineffective and inaccurate comparatively. According to [Beadles et al. \(2005\)](#), E-HRM enables top management and HR practitioners to act as strategic partners as opposed to administrative specialists. Consequently, the role of HR practitioners has evolved alongside technological developments.

According to [Ha \(2011\)](#), the use of information systems in HRM is not novel; however, the rapid evolution of such technology inspired HRM. Consequently, the use of technology in HRM has increased in popularity. [Kemske \(2008\)](#) confirms that the pressures and priorities placed on HR departments are responsible for the abandonment of traditional practices and the emergence of organizational innovation.

The contemporary HR professional is anticipated to be more strategic and adaptable and economically and customer-focused ([Snell and Lepak 2002](#)). E-HRM initially focuses on the recruitment, selection, compensation, and evaluation processes even though it currently aims to implement all operational HRM activities. E-HRM initially focuses on the recruitment, selection, compensation, and evaluation processes even though it currently aims to implement all operational HRM activities. However, some scholars claim that even though the new E-HRM brings a significant challenge for the HR profession, in some instances, E-HRM capabilities have some similarities with traditional HRM duties, such as organizing organizations and jobs for people, obtaining HRs, enhancing employee motivation, and maintaining HRs ([Fisher et al. 1996](#)).

According to [Ruel et al. \(2007\)](#), a high level of commitment to moving HRM tasks, particularly administrative ones, to the electronic version has a significant chance of shifting the focus to one that is more strategically oriented. HR consultants have reported that both the number of companies implementing E-HRM and the scope of applications within organizations are consistently rising. Businesses are just starting to use information technology (IT) to deliver superior HRM services ([De Alwis 2010](#)). The adoption of E-HR changed HR’s focus from operational HR to being a more strategic partner to the organization by becoming more involved in strategic decision-making, where before, HR practitioners served as administrative experts and employee champions ([Bell et al. 2006](#)). The importance of technological advancements in shifting the HR department’s role from administrative to strategic has been emphasized in numerous studies worldwide.

According to [De Alwis \(2010\)](#), 70% of companies have moderate knowledge and usage of E-HR at different levels. However, some of them are still in the beginning stages by only using a small number of their functions, such as managing leave. This study attempts to provide critical points that, hopefully, will help to clarify the role of E-HRM in HRM in the Sri Lankan context. Again [Marler and Fisher \(2013\)](#) conducted a study titled “Influence of E-HRM on Renovating HRM’s Role” and disclosed that they were unable to find empirical evidence that E-HRM predicts strategic outcomes in Sri Lanka. In 2017, [Mdhushani and De](#)

Alwis (2017) reaffirmed their earlier findings. HR pioneers and local findings are in conflict with one another.

Chandradasa and Priyashantha (2021) found that employees are not overly concerned with the compliance level and satisfaction received by utilizing E-HRM when deciding whether to use E-HRM for their work. Obeidat (2016) conducted a study titled “The link between E-HRM use and HRM effectiveness: an empirical study” and discovered that the use of E-HRM has a positive impact on HRM effectiveness at both the policy and practice levels. Furthermore, it confirms the role of user intention in mediating the relationship between E-HRM determinants (both performance expectancy and social influence) and E-HRM use. Thathsara and Sutha (2021) discovered that E-HRM practices have a substantial and favorable effect on organizational performance and that organizational agility mediates the link between E-HRM practices and operational performance. Mdhushani and De Alwis (2017) concluded that managers have some understanding of HR technology, but many are unfamiliar with the phrase E-HRM. It is projected that they would automate more HR processes and implement modern HR technologies in an effort to obtain more significant benefits. According to the conclusions of Kumara and Galhena’s research, the major factor influencing HRIS program utilization is top management support (Kumara and Galhena 2021). In addition, it was determined that perceived utility, IT skill, and subjective standards are key HRIS utilization factors. Another study on the efficacy of E-HRM systems in Sri Lanka was undertaken by Weerasuriya (2006), and the results revealed that the type of these systems and their utilization levels or frequency varied from one company to another. Additionally, it demonstrated that there was a difference between actual and ideal deployment levels, suggesting that existing systems or modules could still benefit from additional enhancements. The researcher identified the work systems that are significantly impacted by the deployment of E-HRM. De Alwis et al. (2019) discovered that internal environmental factors were once again substantially correlated with the amount of HRIS application adoption in 2019. This, in turn, has an effect on the level of application adoption for HRIS. There are different varieties of E-HRM-related research studies. However, no study has examined how E-HRM influences the evolution of HR professionals’ roles, especially in a Sri Lankan Context.

## 2. Problem Statement

This study is aimed at how E-HRM influences HR practitioners’ roles. Because of technological changes, HR practitioners had to learn to deal with changing attitudes in the workforce and become more flexible and cost-effective. Thus, when E-HRM is implemented and developed, it is critical to monitor both positive and negative effects, such as changes in the roles and capabilities of HR practitioners. As such, the research will concentrate on the following issues: What are the HR functions that E-HRM has primarily served, and how many HR practitioners have transformed as E-HRM has been implemented in Sri Lanka?

## 3. Significance of the Study

In a growing number of organizations, electronic HRM is replacing face-to-face HR duties, albeit at varying levels. Additionally, E-HRM enables the HR function to be dynamic and efficient. In this context, a comprehensive examination of the evolution of technology in human resources and its implications is required.

Initially, it is essential to determine the significance of the study for organizational effectiveness. E-HRM enhances the internal profile of the HR department, thereby improving the work environment. E-HRM improves system visibility. It increases the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of human resources and positions HR as a strategic partner in achieving organizational objectives. It is obvious that information technology is currently transforming the HR department, especially in terms of how HR services are provided. Even medium-sized businesses now have internet access, which is used to provide HR services. E-HRM appears to be integrated into every aspect of HRM, including planning, administration, and communication.

Studies on the use of E-HRM typically concentrate on American and European examples. Despite the complexity and cultural shifts, they exhibit some consistency. The majority of developed countries, however, are spread out across distinct cultural regions. Jordan's E-HRM is still in its early stages, so the country's IT environment is evolving (Obeidat 2016). This study will assist in understanding HR professionals' current role in developing nations regarding transfer-HRM. It will contribute to the expansion of knowledge in the literature.

The primary benefit of implementing E-HRM is that it liberates HR practitioners from intermediary roles, allowing them to focus on strategic planning within their HR organization and the changes brought about by HR practitioners' transition from administrative paper handlers to strategic planners. This study can help HR professionals by improving their understanding of E-HRM practices. Furthermore, they can be more confident in implementing E-HRM practices. By increasing knowledge about minimizing the risk associated with E-HRM and demonstrating the benefits of E-HRM, the study benefited a variety of parties, including the organization's top management, HR practitioners, and software vendors.

Finally, it aided in understanding the history of E-HRM and its relationship to the role of HR practitioners.

#### 4. Literature Review

There is little doubt that "people" are a critical asset that determines an organization's success or failure, and thus the importance of those people's knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors are very important for the organization's advancement (De Alwis 2010). According to Gebauer (2003), the company's staff, which is equipped with all of the necessary skills and knowledge, has become a critical factor in its success. According to Buckley et al. (2004) and Mdhushani and De Alwis (2017), effective management of human talent and intellectual capital will be a critical factor in determining shareholder value. According to Attwood (1989), personal management is the aspect of management concerned with the management of people at work. Human Resource Management (HRM) is the process of attracting, selecting, retaining, developing, and utilizing human capital to achieve personal and organizational goals (Cascio and Awad 1981). Human Resource Management (HRM) is defined by Fisher et al. (2006) as "all management decisions and practices that have a direct impact on or influence the people, or HRs, who work for the organization".

In any organization, HR professionals play a critical role. The more roles it fulfills, the more likely that it will be effective in increasing the organization's productivity, enhancing the organization's quality of life at work, and adhering to all applicable laws and regulations governing HR utilization (Kramar et al. 1998). According to Opatha (2009), traditionally, HR practitioners were responsible for developing staffing plans, providing specific job training, managing annual performance appraisal programs, and handling day-to-day administrative tasks. According to Fisher et al., many firms retain a traditional personal department, which is frequently physically and psychologically isolated from the organization's "real work", and personal activities and staff are relatively isolated from the organization's "profit-making heart".

Numerous academics and practitioners have identified two primary roles for HR professionals: the administrative and traditional role and the strategic role (Beer 1997; Truss 2008). According to Fisher et al. (2006), HR professionals must be involved in identifying better ways to share services and reengineer administrative and other processes within the firm and across the organization.

E-HRM is a method of implementing HR techniques, policies, and practices in organizations by utilizing and/or maximizing the use of web-based technology-based channels (Ruel et al. 2007). E-HRM technology creates a portal that enables practitioners, employees, and HR practitioners to view, extract, and modify data required for managing the organization's HRs. Strohmeier (2007) defines E-HRM as the use of information technology to

facilitate networking and to assist at least two individual or collective actors in performing HRM activities collaboratively. According to surveys, the number of organizations adopting E-HRM is increasing, as is the breadth of applications within those organizations.

“E-HRM has the potential to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of the HRs function”. Reducing office work cycle times, increasing data accuracy, and reducing the HR workforce can increase efficiency. Improving practitioners’ and workers’ ability to make better, more appropriate decisions can increase efficiency.

Furthermore, E-HRM enables HR to explore innovative ways to contribute to organizational effectiveness through knowledge management and the development of intellectual and social capital (Lengnick-Hall and Moritz 2003).

Based on the previous definitions, we can say that E-HRM is the use of information technology in HR practices to make it easier for employees and employers to communicate with one another and for organizations to improve their HR skills.

Since the inception of research on the relationship between web-based technologies and HRM, a variety of definitions have been proposed to explain the phenomenon dubbed E-HRM, which was previously referred to as an HR information system, virtual HRM, or web-based HRM (Fisher et al. 2006). The term was coined in response to the rise of e-commerce in the business world, and E-HR is highly specific to internet usage. Thus, Kettley and Reilly (2003) suggest that the more accurate term is “online HRM”. Some users are initially perplexed by the terms HRIS and E-HRM. However, HRIS refers to systems used within the HRs department to enhance HR processes, whereas E-HR is intended to benefit non-HRs personnel such as employees and practitioners (Ruel et al. 2007). E-HR and E-HRM appear to be synonymous terms in some contexts. Academics frequently use the term “E-HRM”, whereas practitioners, IT professionals, and software suppliers frequently use the terms “self-service” and “E-HR” (Panayotopoulou et al. 2007).

There is little consensus on how to define E-HRM, and the concept varies depending on the researcher’s viewpoint (Strohmeier 2007; Bondarouk and Looise 2009). According to Kettley and Reilly (Panayotopoulou et al. 2007), E-HRM is “the use of traditional, web, and voice technologies to improve HR administration, transactions, and process performance”. E-HRM is “the administrative support of the HR function in organizations through the use of Internet technology”, according to Voermans and Van Veldhoven (2007). They also mention how the implementation of E-HRM might change how the HR function is carried out.

E-HRM is described as “the application of any technology that enables practitioners and employees to have direct access to HRs and other workplace services for communication, performance reporting, team management, knowledge management, and learning” (Opatha 1995) in addition to administrative applications. “Planning, implementing, and applying information technology for the purpose of networking and assisting at least two individual or collective actors in performing HR activities collaboratively”, according to Strohmeier (2007), is what is meant by the term “E-HRM”. A “completely integrated, enterprise-wide electronic network of HR-related data, information, services, databases, tools, applications, and transactions”, according to Foster (2009), is what the phrase refers to.

E-HRM should be approached more strategically, per some definitions. E-HRM is “an umbrella term that encompasses all possible mechanisms and content for integrating HRM and information technology with the objective of creating value for targeted employees and management within and across organizations”, according to Bondarouk and Looise (2009). This definition will be used in this study because it covers both the broad strategic outcomes that are the focus of this investigation as well as the administrative elements of E-HRM.

E-HRM is both a theory and a practice in HRM (Ruel et al. 2007). E-HRM can be viewed as a synthesis of HRM and information technology, above and beyond any of these definitions. Employing technological tools or web-based technologies can help organizations improve the efficacy and efficiency of their HR practices and policies.

In recent years, an increasing number of HR practitioners have placed a premium on technological advancements in HR functions, most notably in the reorganization of HR roles and responsibilities. Evidence of this shift has been discovered in studies (De Alwis 2010), which confirmed that HR practitioners' roles will significantly change as strategic partners in business. As per De Alwis (2010), HR professionals serve as strategic partners (50%), employee champions (30%), and administrative experts (20%).

By reducing administrative burdens, HR technology enables a shift in the emphasis of HR work from transactional to strategic. This is the main impact of HR technology on HR roles. Technology is seen by HR professionals as a way to advance their careers and take on a more strategic role within their organizations. As E-HRM eliminates the HR middleman, the switch from traditional HRM to E-HRM may also point to a reduced need for HR practitioners (Lengnick-Hall and Moritz 2003). It is also evident that before the adoption of E-HRM, HR professionals served as administrative experts and employee champions, and that after the adoption of E-HRM, HR's focus shifted away from operational HR and toward being a strategic partner to the organization by participating more in strategic decision making (De Alwis 2010). Retained HR professionals can assume more strategic responsibilities as a result of this transformation, which can be seen as an opportunity.

This shows the general scenario. The small number of earlier researchers who conducted their research in the Sri Lankan context, however, discovered conflicting findings. They assert that regardless of how E-HRM is applied, there is no proof that the role shifts from an administrative expert to one with a strategy-focused mindset.

For instance, the author cited a finding from a survey of web self-service deployment (Marler 2009) that companies have tended to use the web as a tactical tool to deliver HR services rather than as a means of rethinking fundamental operations and strategy and achieving more intangible benefits that come with the large and sustained investment. His argument about the possibility of E-HRM transforming HR into a strategic function is, in reality, a hard sell to the majority of practitioners who remain unaware of the potential and outcomes of E-HRM. Parry and Tyson (2011) recently reported on additional E-HRM outcomes, examining whether organizations actually accomplished the transformational goal of E-HRM. They argued that while there was no subjective evidence of a shift in HR's strategic role, the introduction of E-HRM did facilitate a shift in HR focus in terms of time spent on administrative versus strategic tasks in businesses.

To summarize, academics and practitioners disagree on whether HR practitioners have evolved into strategic partners as a result of E-HRM. While some researchers believed in the ability of E-HRM to elevate the HR role, others argued that E-HRM had not been recognized as a strategic decision maker in the HR department.

## 5. Methodology

This was a cross-sectional field study in which the researchers exerted little control over the sample. The inductive approach was used in this study because the researcher was concentrating on a single subject and attempting to reach a conclusion through analysis. Interviews were conducted to ascertain the public's perception of E-HRM practices because this is an exploratory study in which data was gathered using qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews.

The primary study included organizations that had already implemented E-HRM functions. However, it did not specify whether they had completed the shift or were still in the process. Therefore, this study's population included all HR practitioners working in E-HRM-enabled organizations in Sri Lanka. The request is then forwarded along with our requirements. Additionally, we have made a strong request to designate one practitioner who is directly responsible for E-HRM operations. As a result, the study enrolled eight randomly chosen HR practitioners from companies who confirmed their involvement with E-HRM and were willing to participate in the subsequent discussion.

Due to ethical considerations, we will not recognize the organizations by name (they would be referred to as “company”, “1”, “2”, etc.), and Table 1 exhibits their current position and number of years of experience.

**Table 1.** Profiles of the Interviewees.

No	Position	Gender	Company	Time Working at the Company
01	Assistant Manager—HRIS	Male	Company 1	2.5 years
02	Assistant Manager—HR	Female	Company 2	6.5 years
03	Assistant Manager—HR	Male	Company 3	2 years
04	Assistant Manager—HR	Female	Company 4	4.5 years
05	Manager HR and Administration	Male	Company 5	10 years
06	Senior Manager—HR	Male	Company 6	11 years
07	Manager HR and Administration	Male	Company 7	5 years
08	Manager—HR	Male	Company 8	4 years

Source: Research Data, 2022.

Multiple techniques are used to collect the data, a process called triangulation. Triangulation verifies that the data produced is accurate. Interviews and documentation reviews were conducted in this case. Documentation reviews are used to gain a thorough understanding of the current state of E-HRM adoption. The interview questions are based on Ha’s survey (Ha 2011). All interviews took place over the phone, and the audio was captured using software. During the interviews, notes on significant responses were taken and incorporated into the transcripts.

The most efficient method for gathering data for this study is an interview because it is qualitative and inductive. We contacted HR practitioners who are experts in E-HRM in order to speed up the process of achieving goals and conducting research. This method of data collection had the advantage of allowing respondents to give thorough information about the subject. Each interview took place over a brief period of time. The questions can be rearranged in whatever order to suit the topic of the conversation. Clarifications and explanations were given to interviewees to help prevent misunderstandings.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed for further analysis. Although the data were analyzed using a process categorization technique. This procedure builds on the framework of the study, which is based on the literature. To begin, the data were organized according to the framework of the study. To gain a basic understanding of the data, the data analysis process began with a quantitative analysis of listings and categorizations.

It is critical for all researchers to be aware of ethical research practices. The term “ethics” refers to two distinct groups of people: those conducting research and those with fundamental rights that should be protected. As a result, this study had to be conducted fairly and impartially, avoiding all potential risks. Respondents must be informed of their legal rights. Respect for the individual is a fundamental human right. They have the option of participating or not participating in the research. Respondents were given the opportunity to act independently by providing pertinent information in order to participate in the study. Prior to that, the purpose of the study was thoroughly explained to them in the language they preferred. Confidentiality is a fundamental ethical principle, and anonymity is one way to maintain confidentiality. Anonymity was achieved in this study by omitting names from the study. The interviews took place in a private office and over the phone with their permission, and no third party was present during the conversation. Preventing harm is another fundamental human right to consider. To accomplish this, the researcher kept the interview time with the participants to a minimum. Keeping the interview private, confidential, and anonymous also prevented psychological harm. Participants in this study were treated fairly by providing them with information prior to their participation. Further,

because the sample was chosen based on the guidelines for the study, everyone who met the criteria had a fair chance of being picked to take part in the study.

## 6. The Impact of E-HRM on the Roles of HR

The primary impact of HR technology on HR roles is that it allows HR work to shift from transactional to strategic by reducing administrative burdens. Human resource practitioners see technology as a source of revenue that allows them to play a more strategic role within their organizations. The interview questions were designed to elicit HR practitioners' perspectives on the benefits and drawbacks of E-HRM for the HR Manager role.

"This technology enables us to manage our leaves efficiently, and employees can access their over-times via employee portals. We can save time, increase our effectiveness and efficiency, and reduce labour costs automatically. However, in the past, we were required to perform all tasks manually. It takes a long time, and occasionally the data is incorrect. Additionally, it lowers labour costs. For instance, we operate five businesses and utilize five payroll systems. As a result, we must employ five employees to monitor the system." (Assistant Manager, Human Resources-Company 1)

"... I am no longer bound by monitor leaves. As a result, we save time. Prior to the system's implementation, we had to monitor leaves on a weekly basis... now it's simple to manage our administrative work." (Assistant Manager, Human Resources, Company 8)

"It is extremely simple and quick for us. Additionally, it saves us time." (Director of Human Resources and Administration-Company 7)

According to the surveys of HR consultants, both the number of companies adopting E-HRM and the intensity of applications within those organizations continue to grow. IT is in the middle of assisting businesses in providing superior HR services. It is self-evident that information technology is transforming the HRs department at present, particularly in terms of the way HR services are delivered. Even medium-sized businesses now have access to the internet, which is used to provide HR services. E-HRM seems to be involved in every part of daily HRM, from planning and administration to communication.

All respondents agreed that their roles had been reshaped as a result of implementing the systems. E-HRM enables employees and HR practitioners to monitor, view, and make necessary adjustments to HRM. Additionally, with the use of E-HRM, fewer HRs professionals are required, as E-HRM eliminates the "HRs middleman" (Lengnick-Hall and Moritz 2003).

Ha (2011) asserts that today's Assistant Manager—HR must be more strategic, adaptable, cost-effective, and customer-oriented.

## 7. The Level of Influence That HR Technology Causes on the Role of HR

Much of the research emphasized the critical role of HR technology advancements in recasting the HR department's role from administrative to strategic. As a result of the adoption of E-HR, HR practitioners have taken on the roles of administrative expert and employee champion, and the adoption of E-HR has shifted HR's focus toward being a strategic partner of the organization by becoming involved in strategic decision-making (De Alwis 2010). The individual who fills this role should be capable of providing high-quality services at the lowest possible cost. Human resource practitioners view technology as a revenue stream that enables them to take on a more strategic role within their organizations. The shift from traditional HRM to E-HRM may also indicate that fewer HR practitioners are required, as E-HRM eliminates the HR middleman (Lengnick-Hall and Moritz 2003).

Ulrich's (1997) model outlines the various roles that HR departments play, including change agent, strategic partner, employee champion, and administrative expert. An administrative expert refers to the traditional HR role of designing and implementing HR processes such as recruiting, rewarding, training, hiring, and compensating. The majority

of respondents agreed that implementing E-HRM would simplify administrative processes and improve HR service delivery. Since the HR professional will no longer have to worry about administrative tasks, he or she will be able to focus on the big picture.

As a result, I can devote my free time to strategic work. I am capable of supervising employees and making decisions regarding development, leadership development, and training. (Assistant manager-HRs-companies 8) As a result, I can devote my free time to strategic work. I am capable of supervising employees and making decisions regarding development, leadership development, and training. (Assistant Manager—HR HRs-companies 3) It's extremely simple for us, and it significantly reduces our manual workload and saves us time. That time can be used for analysis. (Assistant Manager—HR-Human Resources-Company 2) It alleviates some of our administrative burdens. (Assistant Manager—HR-Company 8).

The responses imply that HR practitioners are increasingly shifting their focus away from administrative expertise and toward strategic analysis. The strategic role is responsible for aligning HR strategies and practices with business strategies. This role identifies the organization's top talent, assists in filling job vacancies, communicates HR goals to employees to ensure they are implemented across the organization, and contributes to overall workplace productivity and harmony. Further, it puts strategies into action as quickly as possible by using the business's intended strategic direction and showing how HR's unique set of skills and competencies can help put strategies into action (Kirkbride 2003). Human resource practitioners emphasized the importance of utilizing the time saved for employee training programs and administrative tasks.

“As a result, I can devote my free time to strategic work. I am capable of supervising employees and making development, leadership, and training decisions”. (Assistant Manager, Human Resources, Company 5)

This finding indicates that HR's role as a strategic partner is evolving, though it supports HR's emphasis on the role of employee champion. Due to the reduction in workload, one respondent implies that he can gain new knowledge because of technological advancements. Paying special attention to the agent of change in the role of HR practitioners, E-HRM also lets the HR department investigate new ways of improving the effectiveness of the organization, such as knowledge management and building up intellectual and social capital (Lengnick-Hall and Moritz 2003).

“We can acquire new knowledge about emerging technologies and generate new ideas about technological advancements”. (Company 6 senior Manager—HR)

All respondents agreed that the implementation of the systems had reshaped their roles. Employees and HR practitioners can use E-HRM to monitor, view, and make changes to HRM.

A change agent is tasked with the responsibility of facilitating changes in other departments in order to maintain a company's competitive edge. This position communicates organizational changes to the rest of the organization. Ulrich (1997) advocated the use of change agents to assist with adjustment. They comprehend critical approaches to change, cultivate a commitment to those strategies, and ensure that proposed changes occur. These individuals coordinate training opportunities for employees to acquire new skills.

The organizational application of E-HRM practitioners must influence employee attitudes. As a result, they must organize awareness and training programs to ensure that the system is understood clearly. The Asst. manager—HRIS (Company 1) confirmed this notion by stating,

“As a result of E-HRM adoption, we must train employees. As HR practitioners, we are confronted with a massive problem when it comes to training them. Therefore, we conduct awareness campaigns and educate employees about the system's benefits, gradually changing their mindset.”

Change agents are concerned with the collective, whereas employee champions are concerned with individuals. A change agent essentially assists an organization in adapting

to its next stage. Furthermore, prior to the implementation of the E-HRM, HR practitioners served as administrative experts and employee champions, and the implementation of the E-HRM shifted HR's focus from operational HR to be a strategic partner to the organization by involving HR in strategic decision-making (De Alwis 2010). This transformation can be viewed as an opportunity because retained HR practitioners will be able to take on more strategic roles. According to Ulrich (1997), the most desirable position for an HR manager is that of a "business partner", a term that is sometimes used instead.

However, the senior manager of HRs (Company 4) asserts that the implementation of technology has had no effect on the HR function. It has no effect on their changing responsibilities.

"It does not allow us to improve the quality of our human resources department while not reducing our responsibilities. This allows me to obtain accurate data from the system as an HR manager. It speeds up my analysis and simplifies the report-creation process. As a result of technology implementation, our responsibilities have shifted. Because of the fluid nature of the HR manager's role".

Human resource practitioners appear to be taking a more proactive role and adding value to the organization by developing employee capabilities.

Technological advancements have changed how various HR functions are carried out. As a result, the typical HR job will be reshaped, shifting from administrative to strategy development. The most well-known business benefit of E-HR is that it allows HR professionals to refocus on their role as strategic business partners.

According to Edward and Mohrman (2003), when an organization has a fully integrated HRM system, HR is more likely to be a full partner in the strategic process. Having such a system, however, does not guarantee that HR will be a strategic partner, as some of the companies comparatively close to finalizing the integration confirm that now they have an opportunity to participate in decision-making.

Most respondents agreed that web-based tools for payroll, employee databases, and leave management were fully utilized. The majority of businesses in Sri Lanka are still in the process of upgrading their systems. The systems will be upgraded.

"Indeed, we attempted to use an oracle system, but it failed due to its inability to capture our environment. We're currently attempting to install the h-senid system . . . ". (Assistant manager, Company 8)

"Now, we are utilizing HRIS Micro Image. However, we intend to migrate it to a group-based system. Additionally, we utilize Micro Image's previous version as well as their new version, dubbed "Cloud Version System". (Assistant Manager—HR, Company 2)

More companies in Sri Lanka are incorporating electronic tools into their HRM processes. Additionally, businesses considering implementing these new forms of HRM should determine whether the results are superior to those obtained through previous HR processes. It is clear that the changes in technology in HRs and their impact should continue to grow. The main benefit of E-HRM is that it frees HR practitioners from intermediary roles and lets them focus solely on strategic planning in HR organizations. This changes HR practitioners from administrative paper handlers to strategic planners. The summarized findings are illustrated in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Summary of findings.

Dimensions	Main Findings
The impact of E-HRM on the roles of HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low applications of technology</li> <li>• A transition from administrative expert to change agent and strategic partner</li> </ul>

Source: Discussion Findings, 2022.

## 8. Conclusions

The majority of HR professionals' time is currently spent as administrative experts; however, the primary benefit of implementing E-HRM practices is that it frees HR professionals from intermediary roles, as a result of which the typical HR professional's responsibilities will shift from administrative to strategy development. It reaffirmed the findings of (Marler and Fisher 2013). In addition, businesses contemplating implementing these new forms of HRM should evaluate whether the outcomes outweigh those of previous HR procedures. The findings suggest that modifications to HR's role as a strategic partner may facilitate the shift in HR's focus to the role of employee champion. Online resources are rarely used for human resource activities such as learning and training. E-HR tools are mainly utilized in the recruitment and performance review processes.

Following are a few recommendations that the researcher would like to make in light of the analysis portion of the research's findings. E-HRM has an impact on how HR practitioners perform their jobs, so businesses should make more investments in it and aim to buy the most recent models. Organizations should concentrate increasingly on strategic HRM issues and on achieving strategic HR objectives by utilizing new technology and mastering administrative effectiveness. It is advised that senior management in the organizations make sure adequate funding is set aside for training activities to increase understanding of the term "E-HRM" and the significance of the E-HR tools.

This study sets the stage for future research in this area, which should focus on a variety of issues. First and foremost, more in-depth research with a larger sample size should be conducted to investigate the role of E-HRM in organizations. They also advise future researchers to supplement the study with quantitative methods.

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