



E–HRM: A REVIEW OF CONTEMPORARY ENGINE FOR ORGANISATION TRIUMPH

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ABSTRACT

Globalisation and technological amelioration in the 21st century has accelerated the concept of electronic management. In this fast changing era, in order to cope with the environmental modifications, the term personnel management was revamped and termed as 'Human Resource Management'. But, with the integration of electronic management with human resource management, the concept of Electronic Human Resource Management (E-HRM) was born. Nowadays, this contemporary engine i.e. E-HRM, is one of the most prominent & acceptable organisational system. It has been implemented by various organisations worldwide for attaining organisation triumph.

This paper highlights the concept of E HRM. It is an attempt to study the need of E- HRM for facilitating a more efficient and strategic way of working for HR professionals. It also intends to identify the various challenges for implementing E-HRM in an organisation. A review of the qualitative and quantitative efforts made by various researchers from 1998 to 2015 is undertaken.

The major finding of the study is that, today there is an urgent need for every organization to imbibe E-HRM as it helps in decision-making, affects market share, improves administration and saves cost. It is also found that employee orientation, work culture, security reasons, etc., are some of the commonly faced challenges for implementing E-HRM.

Keywords: Electronic Human Resource Management (E-HRM), Human Resource (HR), Human Resource management (HRM).

Introduction

Since the early 1980's (Heikkilä, J. (2013).), expeditious development in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (Rawash et al., 2012) elevated the effective relationship between electronic management and human resource. The concept of Electronic Human Resource Management (E-HRM) has overhauled the entire concept of human resource management and its system used for embellishing organisational performance. It is also known as virtual HRM (e.g., Lepak & Snell, 1998), web based HRM (e.g., Ruël et al., 2004), digital HRM, etc.

E- HRM, a contemporary engine can be defined as “the complete integration of all HR systems and processes based on HR data and information and interdependent tools and processes.”¹ Ruel et al., (2004) also defined E- HRM as a way of implementing HRM strategies, policies and practices in organisations through the conscious and direct support of and with the full use of web technology based channels (Prasad et al., 2015) Stromehier, (2007), defines E- HRM as most universally accepted term, according to him, “it is the application of information technology for both networking and supporting at least two individual or collective actors in their shared performing of HR activities”. It states that this contemporary engine utilises data processing in two fold manner. Firstly, data processing enables interactions among employees and employers. Secondly, data processing fully supports employees and employers in operating and executing HR activities. “With the emergence of “e-wave” reaching the area of HRM, the term e-HR or e-HRM is being used increasingly when referring to the next development stage in IT-based HRM [Karakanian,

¹Aswathappa, K. (n.d.). E - HRM. In *Human Resource Management: Text and Cases* (Fifth ed., p. 691). New Delhi: Tata McGraw Hill Publishing Company Limited.

(2000) cited in Mishra, (2009)]”. Electronic Human Resource Management (E-HRM) is generally of three types such as operational, relational and transformational. (Table1)

S.No.	Types of E-HRM	Meaning
1.	Operational E- HRM	This type of E-HRM is concerned with administrative functions like salary management, payroll, employee personal data, etc.
2.	Relational E- HRM	This type of E-HRM is concerned with supportive business process by the means of training, recruitment, performance management etc.
3.	Transformational E- HRM	This type of E-HRM is concerned with strategic HR activities such as knowledge management, strategic reorientation, etc.,.

Table1: Types of E-HRM

Source: Menka, (2015) op.cit. p.95

As per Gueutal et al. (2005), “Fully developed E-HRM could provide the data gathering tools, analysis capabilities, and decision support resources for HR professionals to hire, pay, promote, terminate, assign, develop, appraise and reward employees in ways that fully engage them in managing their own outcomes, maximises the contribution of each employee and support execution of the firm’s strategy.” According to Suramardhini (2012), E- HRM is relatively a contemporary engine which intent to mutate the conventional HR functions which intent to mutate the traditional HR functions into one that is paperless, malleable and resource efficient. Sinha et al. (2014) also stated that “E-HRM has made few buzzwords like automation, transparency, empowerment, paperless office, least human interference a reality which was once supposed the panacea for all the ills of workplace”. Therefore, application of web based technologies in HR systems, facilitates amiable synergy between the employees and the employer.

Research Questions

Why there is need to implement E-HRM for HR professionals?

What are the various challenges faced while implementation of E-HRM?

Objectives of the study

1. To study the need of E- HRM for facilitating a more efficient and strategic way of working for HR professionals.

2. To identify the various challenges for implementing E-HRM in an organisation.

Research Methodology

The study is based on various research papers and articles published in online and print journals. It include data from the year 1998 to 2015 based on E- HRM.

Discussion

Need of E- HRM for facilitating a more efficient and strategic way of working for HR professionals

Rawash et al., (2012), aimed at identifying significant relationship between E-HRM and market share. Researchers reviewed various articles, but due to absence of theoretical framework study developed a research model (Figure 1) by applying simple linear regression technique to the data collected through survey method. Research model states that E-HRM is an independent variable, whereas market share is a dependent variable. The study concluded that E-HRM plays a significant role in increasing market share of the organisation.

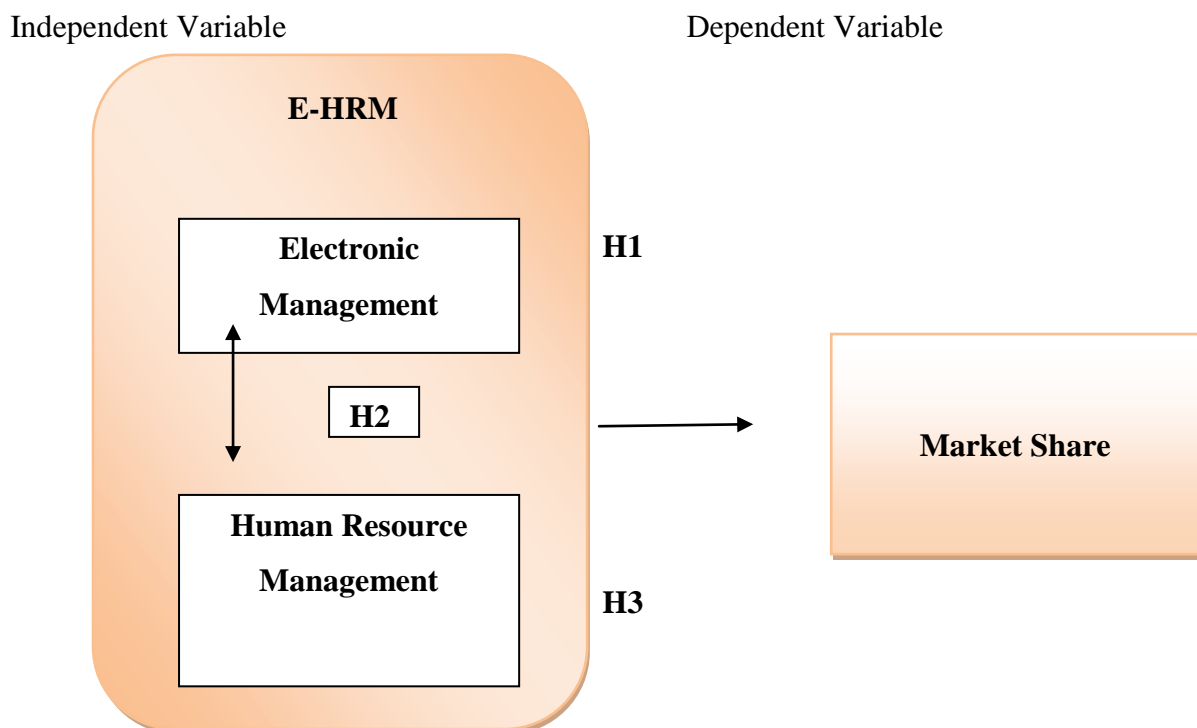


Figure 1: A Research Model

Source: Rawash et al., op.cit, p.119.

Suramardhini, (2012), focused on identifying various objectives, benefits, outcomes, etc., of E- HRM. To analyse the objectives of the study, researcher focused on descriptive study and secondary data was collected through the internet. Researcher, concluded that to compete this dynamic environment, there is an imperative need for organisations to adopt E-HRM for effective functioning as E-HRM brings more accuracy & transparency in the structure, curtails the cost, develops a better work culture, develops standards and also helps in carrying various HR activities such as E- recruitment, E- selection, E-assessment. Therefore, E-HRM improves overall strategic orientation of human resource management. Sagum, (2015), emphasised on analysing the need for educational institutions to implement E-HRM. Researcher while reviewing various articles found that now-a-days, various educational institutes are adopting E- HRM tools and practices in their HR department [Ruel et al., (2007), Stone et al.(2006)] as E-HRM is effective decision making tool, develops better programs due to accuracy in information processing. E-HRM also strengthens relationships due to better communication channels among employees. Choochote, et al., (2015) opined that aim of the research paper was to study the application of E-HRM in the hotel business. Researchers suggested that for large hotel industries, it is crucial to apply E-HRM practices within the organisation to expatiate various skills and competency among employees in order to attain potent & productive results. Menka, (2015) aimed at exploring the various benefits of E-HRM tools for HR professionals to improve functioning. Author concluded that E- HRM reduces the paper work, maintains quality standards due to improvement in administration. It also enables easy access to HR data. “The main function of HR professionals is to be a high quality service provider to the internal customers of the organization (Lepak and Snell, 1998). E-HRM can meet these relational goals by increasing the timeliness and improving client service orientation. (Snell, Pedigo, and Krawiec, 1995; cited in Lepak and Snell, 1998).²” Therefore, this contemporary engine is an innovative and reliable tool which exerts positive influence towards the organisational goals and its employees. Ruel et al., (2004) believed that E-HRM helps the organizations in attaining globalization aims and objectives. Nivlovei, (2014) also emphasised that E-HRM system plays an essential role in capacitating globalisation paradigm as E- HRM leads to high commitment workforce, builds high competence among employees which enables them to learn new tasks and skills. It also leads to higher congruence and also helps in maintaining e-employee profile, establishes e-training programs, etc. Ukandu, et al., (2014) opined that E-

²Sareen, P., & Subramanian, K. (2012). E-HRM: A Strategic Review. *International Journal of Human Resources Studies*, 2(3), p.122. Retrieved January 9, 2016, from <http://www.macrothink.org/journal/index.php/ijhrs/article/viewFile/2100/1937>

HRM accommodate the HR departments in order to provide decisive services to the stakeholders. Researchers found that E-HRM system or practices enables the organisation in gathering accuracy of data, improves record keeping system, and enables the organisational team in making decisions at a faster rate. Therefore, E-HRM system optimises the value of organisation functions by delivering effective services. “In 2002 e-HR survey, Watson Wyatt laid down the four factors which support the case for e-HR: productivity improvements, cost reductions, return on investment and better employee communications. Sareen, et al, (2012)”

Challenges for implementing E-HRM in an organisation

Banerjee, (2013) opined the various challenges which affect the implementation of E-HRM in HR activities through reviewing the various researches and concluded that employee orientation, work culture, security concerns, cost factor, training and learning and technical limitation are some of the barriers which affects the acceptance of E-HRM systems. Prasad et al, (2015) emphasised on the crucial factors which affect the successful implementation of HRM practices. They applied correlation and regression techniques for testing, which resulted that user involvement, top management support, change management, planning & strategy and training and education are some of the challenges which affect successful implementation of E-HRM activities. Stone and Lukaszewski, (2009) cited in Gonzalez et al., 2011, stated that communication within the company (Chourishi et al, 2011), workplace environment, information effectiveness and Masum et al., (2015). contributed a research model (Figure 2) by reviewing various literature which stated that “employee’s individual attribute (Delorme & Arcand, 2010; Troshani et al., 2011; Richter et al., 2013), IT infrastructure (Kwon & Zmud, 1987; Hoon Yang et al., 2007; Oliveira & Martins, 2010; Masum, 2015), complexity (Thong, 1999; Rogers, 2003), compatibility (Rogers, 2003 ; Teo et al., 2007), top level management support (Teo et al., 2007; Altarawneh & Al-Shqairat, 2010; Troshani et al., 2011; Masum, 2015); Industry pressure (Thong, 1999; Teo et al., 2007; Kittipong, 2009; Masum, 2015), and IT expertise (van Veldhoven & Ruël et al., 2004 Voermans, 2007; Masum, 2015).” are some of the challenges which affect the implementation of E-HRM but while conducting quantitative study they added culture is also major challenge.

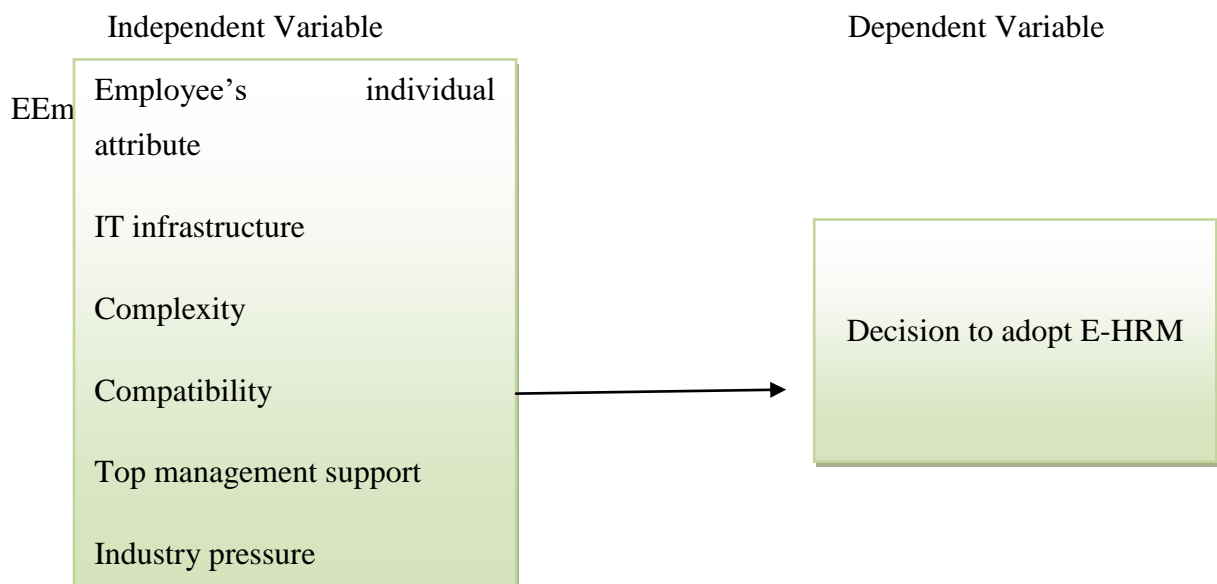


Figure 2: A Research Model

Source: Masum et.al, (2015) p.119

Sareen et al., (2012) based on the existing literature stated that high costs, technology acceptance, change management, control, security, etc., are some of the decisive challenges for HR managers to adopt E-HRM practices. They also highlighted the Mercer Consulting report, which depicted that “Over half the survey respondents report that they are ineffective or very ineffective at realizing the expected ROI from technology investments. HR people openly acknowledge that they frequently under-use technology and therefore do not gain full benefit” (Theaker & Vernon, 2006 cited in Sareen et al., 2012). Mishra (2009) & Nivlouei (2014) (Table 2), accentuated that the cost of investment, users, managers and employee resistance due to inadequate documentation, compatibility (Mishra,2009) are few crucial challenges faced while enforcing E-HRM practices into HR systems.

Challenges Title	Effectiveness percent in E-HRM
Cost of investment in electronic human resource management systems	11%
Managers' resistance against fulfilling some tasks	17%
Users' resistance due to the unconventional user interface	25%
The lack of planning and thinking about the accordance of the	

new E-HRM system	
with current systems in organization	27%
Managers' and employees' resistance due to the lack of documentation and education	20%

Sources: (Soltani & Mirzanejad, 2007 cited in Nivoulei, 2014 p.153)

Table 2: Challenges in the Electronic Human Resource Management

Nivoulei also mentioned that about “62% of the challenges were related to the resistance and its different reasons. The statistics showed that while implementing the E-HRM in an organization, paying attention to the concepts and experiences regarding resistance management is of extreme importance”.

Sagum, (2015) identified and ranked the internal and external factors which affect the implementation of E-HRM. Internal factors include Perceived IT benefits and barriers such as lack of expertise, lack of IT professionals, Organisational readiness & commitment, organisational resources, demographic factors such as type, size, & experience and organisational sharing culture whereas external factors include macroeconomic factors, industry characteristics and government policies & support.(See Figure 3)

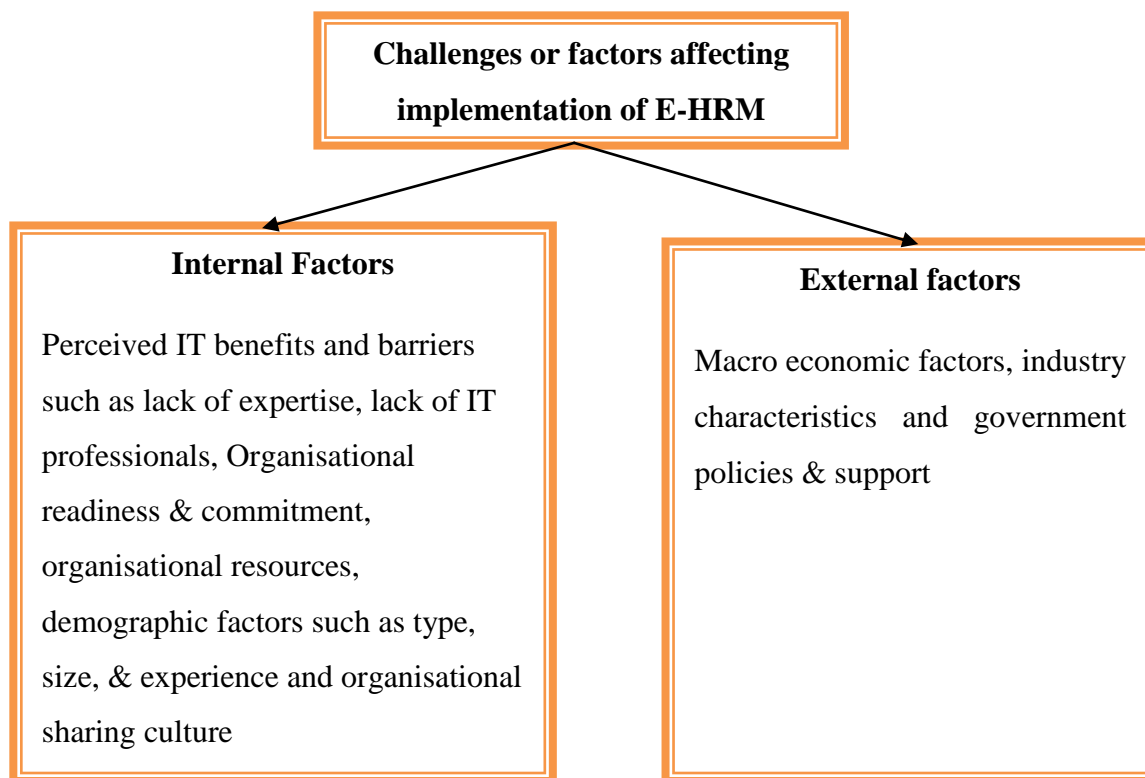


Figure 3: Challenges or factors affecting implementation of E-HRM

Therefore, while reviewing the extensive literature and discussion, lay down some relevant challenges faced by HR managers while implementing the E-HRM practices.

Findings

The review of contemporary engine led to certain findings, which are as follows: There is a clamant need of E- HRM for facilitating a more efficient and strategic way of working for HR professionals as it helps the HR managers in strategic decision making, increases market share of the organisations, builds company image, better employee development and retention through maintaining an E- Employee profile, establishing better training standards. It also helps the HR managers in achieving organisation productive results as it manages quality standards, reduces paperwork, strengthens the relationship between employees and employers.

“E-HRM as an umbrella term covering the integration of HRM and IT, aimed at creating value for targeted employees and managers. (Bondarouk et al., 2009)” but faces various **challenges in implementing E-HRM in an organisation which are as follows –**

1. Employee orientation or its individual attribute.
2. Demographic factors: Type, Size & Experiences
3. Lack of Security.
4. Inappropriate Work culture.
5. Inadequate Training and learning,
6. Absence of User involvement.
7. Lack of Top management support.
8. Change management.
9. Ineffective Planning and strategy.
10. Absence of Information effectiveness.
11. Lack of IT infrastructure.
12. Absence of compatibility.
13. Complexity.
14. Industry pressure.
15. Lack of IT expertise.
16. High costs.
17. Inadequate resistance management.
18. Government policies and support.

Conclusion

On the basis of extensive review work done it can be concluded that for achieving organisational prosperity and fame, there is an essential need to implement E-HRM practices in the organisation so as, to reap the benefits of E-HRM. The study led to the proposal of new research model for implementing E-HRM which affect organisational productivity and success, but when effective strategies are laid down to overcome the challenges, it will lead to proper functioning of E-HRM practice and thus, this contemporary engine will help in achieving organisational triumph (Figure 4). This research model will help the HR managers to understand the various barriers in implementing E-HRM and will try to formulate suitable strategies in order to achieve their organisational goals.

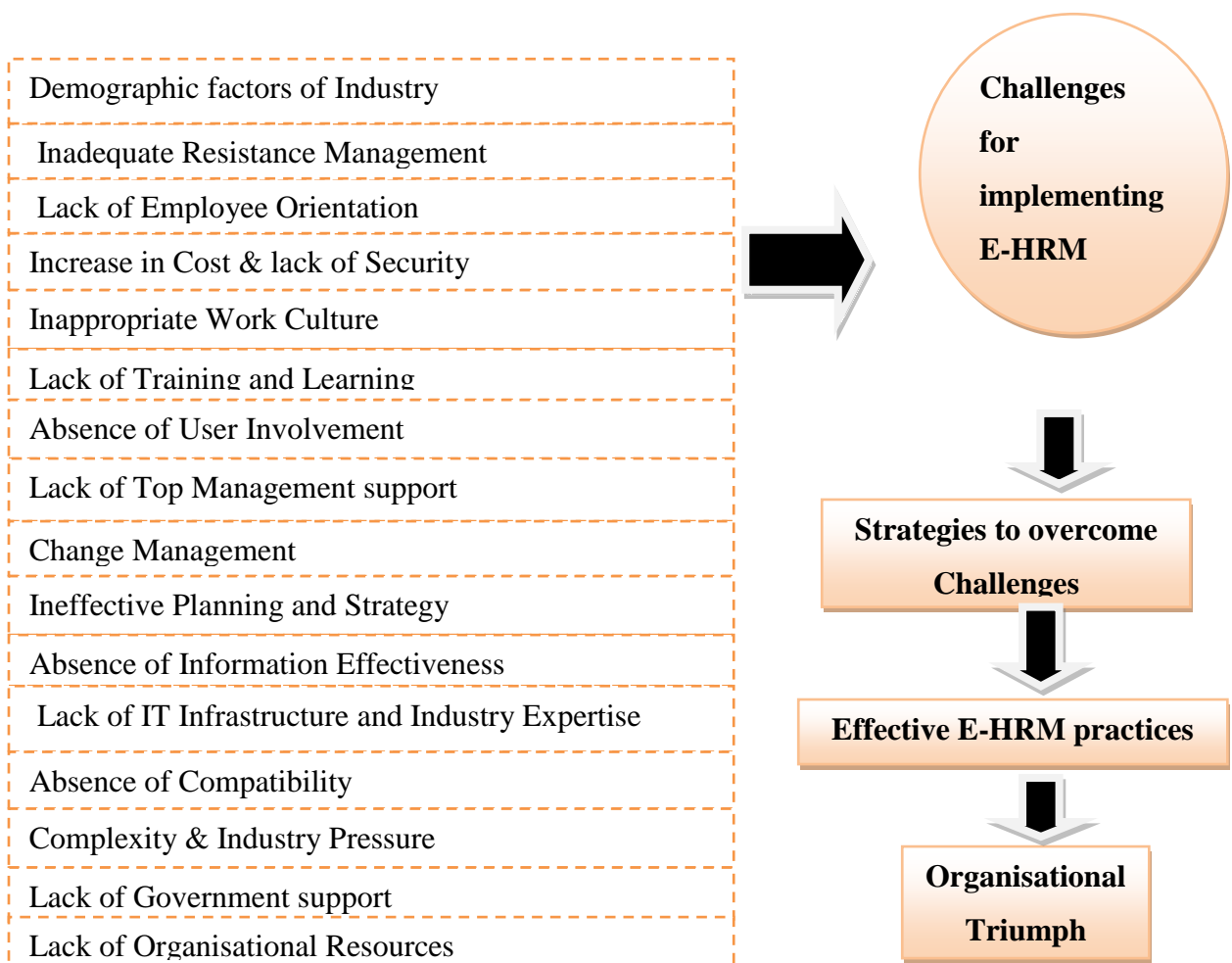


Figure 4: Proposed Research model of challenges for implementing E-HRM

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