



**ADDIS ABEBA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF COMMERCE  
DEPARTMENT OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

**THE PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES OF PROJECT HUMAN RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT IN IT PROJECTS AT AWASH BANK**

**A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO SCHOOL OF GRADUATE  
STUDENTS, ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MA DEGREE IN  
PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

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**JANUARY, 2025**

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University, School of Commerce, Department of Project Management  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters in  
Project Management**

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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this project work, titled “Project Human Resource Management Practices and Challenges in Awash Bank IT Projects,” is my original creation. It has not been submitted to any other institution for the award of an academic degree, diploma, or certificate. I have adhered to all ethical and technical standards of scholarship throughout the data collection, analysis, and preparation of this report. Additionally, all sources used or referenced in this work have been properly cited and acknowledged.

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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## STATEMENT OF CERTEFICATION

This is to certify that Yadessa Miressa has conducted a study on the topic “Project Human Resource Management Practices and Challenges in Awash Bank's IT Projects” under my supervision. The work is original and meets the necessary standards for submission as part of the requirements for the award of a Master’s degree in project Management.

Solomon Markos(PhD)Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

## APPROVAL SHEET

This is to certify that the project work titled “Project Human Resource Management Practices and Challenges in Awash Bank's IT Projects,” submitted to the Department of Project Management in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master’s in Project Management, has been reviewed and approved as meeting the required standards of scope and quality.

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**Approved on:**

**Department Head**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First and foremost, I offer my countless praise to God for granting me the capacity and strength to undertake and complete this thesis. Several individuals and organizations deserve my heartfelt acknowledgment for their invaluable contributions.

My foremost appreciation and gratitude go to my major advisor, Dr. Solomon Markos, for his valuable guidance and support, starting from the topic selection to the preparation of this thesis.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my beloved wife, Merertu Amdisa, for her constant support, encouragement, and understanding, which have been my greatest source of strength throughout this journey. I am also deeply thankful to my amazing children, Milki and Faya, who have been a constant source of joy and inspiration for me.

Special thanks to my family, friends, and colleagues, who provided me with insightful comments, encouragement, and assistance at various stages of this work. Your presence and support have been a cornerstone of this accomplishment.

Finally, I sincerely appreciate everyone who cooperated with me by providing the necessary information and resources to complete this thesis proposal. I am deeply indebted to all of you, and may God bless each and every one who has helped me along the way.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

AB: Awash Bank

CSA: Central Statistics Authority

HRM: Human Resource Management

IT: Information Technology

MOTI: Ministry of Trade and Industry

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Science

## ABSTRACT

*The major purpose of this study was to assess the practices and challenges of project human resource management in IT projects at Awash Bank. It was a descriptive survey design. A random sampling technique was employed to 84 respondents, out of which 84(91.3%) responded to the questionnaire self-administered questionnaire developed through a comprehensive review of relevant literature indicating a high return-rate. Data were analysed quantitatively using SPSS version 23 showing Means and Standard Deviations The findings reveal generally employees have a positive perception of AB's recruitment and selection processes, with moderate satisfaction regarding recruitment channels for attracting IT professionals (mean = 3.96), indicating room for improvement. IT staff were perceived to possess the necessary technical skills (mean = 3.98), while the selection interviews and pre-employment checks scored moderately (mean = 3.63), suggesting potential refinement areas. Retention strategies for skilled IT professionals showed moderate effectiveness (grand mean = 3.91), highlighting the need for targeted improvements. The study also uncovered variability in responses regarding HRM performance in IT projects, with areas such as meeting timelines, communication effectiveness, and handling project scope changes requiring attention. Despite the moderate overall outlook, these findings emphasize opportunities for enhancing HRM practices. Finally, the study concludes that improving recruitment processes, addressing candidate skill gaps, and tackling retention challenges are crucial for strengthening HRM practices at Awash Bank. While selection interviews and pre-employment checks are effective, they require less immediate focus compared to other critical areas. Implementing these recommendations will support the bank in achieving better HRM outcomes and IT project success. The study, therefore, recommended that to ensure that new hires are better aligned with the specific needs of IT projects, Awash Bank should involve IT project managers in the interview process. By including project managers, the recruitment team can assess candidates' skills, experiences, and qualifications in the context of the bank's current and future IT project requirements.*

**Keywords:** *Human Resource Management (HRM) , IT Projects , Awash Bank*

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers several key aspects, including the background of the study, the problem statement, research objectives, study hypotheses, the significance of the research, its scope and limitations, and the overall structure of the study.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Human resource management practices are essential for the successful execution of projects within the banking sector. As technology continues to advance rapidly, banks are increasingly relying on IT projects to enhance their operations and services. AB, one of the leading banks in Ethiopia, has also been investing heavily in IT projects to stay competitive in the market (Dessalegn & Lemma, 2015). The importance of human resource management practices in project management cannot be overstated. According to research by Müller and Turner (2007), effective human resource management can significantly impact the success of a project. This includes activities such as recruitment, training, performance evaluation, and motivation of project team members.

Key debates in the global context around human resource management (HRM) in IT projects often revolve around finding the right balance between technical skills and soft skills. While technical expertise is essential, experts argue that project managers also need to develop strong communication, leadership, and conflict-resolution abilities (Huemann et al., 2016). Another key topic of discussion is the impact of agile methodologies on HRM. Agile methods, which prioritize flexibility and collaboration, have introduced new ways of managing teams. However, the constant changes in project requirements and the fast pace of agile projects present challenges for HR managers in keeping teams stable and performing well (Kerzner, 2017). One notable gap in research is the lack of focus on how specific HR practices like recruitment strategies, training, and performance management play a role in the success of IT projects.

Additionally, the impact of cultural diversity in global IT teams has become an important issue. While diverse teams can foster creativity and innovation, managing cross-cultural communication and resolving conflicts remain significant challenges that haven't been thoroughly explored in the existing literature (Ochieng & Price, 2009).

In the national context, the challenges and practices of Project Human Resource Management in IT projects reflect some global trends but also highlight issues unique to local conditions. As many countries increasingly rely on IT and digital transformation, the demand for skilled IT professionals has surged. However, the shortage of qualified workers in the IT sector has become a major hurdle for HR managers in IT projects. Industry reports indicate that many countries are struggling to fill the demand for skilled IT talent, resulting in project delays and diminished quality of delivery (Xia & Lee, 2020). This skills gap is particularly pressing in emerging economies, where education systems and training programs haven't kept pace with the rapid changes in technology.

In the context of AB's IT projects, the bank faces unique challenges in managing its human resources effectively. IT projects require specialized skills and knowledge, and finding qualified professionals can be a challenge in the Ethiopian market (Tekleab & Belay, 2016). Additionally, managing a diverse team of IT professionals with varying backgrounds and expertise can be a daunting task. The success of IT projects in the banking sector is closely tied to the alignment of project goals with organizational objectives. According to studies by Thite *et al.* (2011), the lack of proper alignment between IT projects and business goals is a major challenge faced by banks. Human resource management practices can play a key role in ensuring that project team members are aligned with the bank's strategic objectives.

AB has a strong reputation for being a customer-centric organization. This commitment to excellence also extends to the bank's IT projects, where the bank strives to deliver innovative solutions that meet the needs of its customers (Mudzunga *et al.*, 2016). Human resource management practices that focus on recruiting and retaining top talent can help the bank achieve its project goals while maintaining its high standards of service. The dynamic nature of the banking sector means that IT projects are often subject to changing requirements and timelines. Managing these changes effectively requires a flexible and adaptive workforce. According to research by Dikamba *et al.* (2020), human resource management practices such as continuous training and development can help project team members stay agile and responsive to changing project needs.

The success of AB's IT projects also depends on the effective communication and collaboration among project team members. Studies by Bontha *et al.* (2014) have shown that communication

breakdowns and lack of teamwork can lead to project delays and cost overruns. Human resource management practices that focus on fostering a collaborative team culture can help mitigate these risks and improve project outcomes. Despite the potential benefits of effective human resource management practices, AB may face challenges in implementing these practices in its IT projects. Research by Gobeze et al. (2018) has highlighted those cultural factors, bureaucratic processes, and resistance to change can hinder the adoption of modern HR practices in Ethiopian organizations. Overcoming these challenges will be crucial for the bank's success in managing its IT projects.

As AB continues to invest in IT projects to drive its growth and innovation, it is essential for the bank to understand the unique human resource management challenges it faces in this sector. Research by Tesfaye et al. (2019) has shown that proactive HR strategies can help banks overcome project management challenges and achieve their strategic objectives. By studying the HR practices and challenges in AB's IT projects, this research aims to provide valuable insights for the bank's management team. By addressing the specific HR challenges faced by AB in its IT projects, the bank can enhance its project management capabilities and improve the success rate of its IT initiatives. Through a thorough understanding of best practices in human resource management, the bank can optimize its project team's performance, increase efficiency, and ultimately deliver high-quality IT solutions to its customers (Dereje et al., 2020).

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

Despite the critical importance of HRM in IT project success, banks often encounter significant challenges in this area. One prominent issue is the skills gap, particularly in emerging roles such as data scientists and AI engineers, which are crucial for IT project implementation. A 2016 PwC survey revealed that 70% of financial services CEOs viewed the availability of key skills as a threat to growth. This shortage is exacerbated by the industry's struggle to attract and retain millennial talent, with only 10% planning to stay long-term, leading to increased recruitment and training costs (HR Retail, n.d.).

Similarly, The IT sector faces significant challenges in recruiting and retaining skilled professionals. Companies often compete to attract and motivate competent IT specialists, which is critical given the high demand and competitive labor market (Krawczyk-Brylka ,2019).

Research by Armstrong and Taylor (2014) suggests that ineffective human resource practices can negatively affect the success of IT project implementation in commercial banks. When staff lack the required skills and qualifications, it can lead to delays in project execution. Additionally, if employees are not adequately compensated, this can also contribute to a slower pace in the completion of projects.

Additionally, The project-oriented nature of IT projects in banks presents unique challenges, such as the temporary nature of work processes and the need for dynamic adaptation to changing project requirements (Huemann *et al.*, 2007).

In Ethiopia, several challenges related to Human Resource Management (HRM) in the context of IT projects within the banking sector have been identified. One key challenge is the lack of alignment between HR practices and the strategic goals of IT projects. Studies have shown that many banks struggle to integrate HR activities with IT project objectives, which results in inefficiencies and project delays (Markos & Lemma, 2022). Additionally, organizational structures in Ethiopian banks often remain rigid, hindering the flexibility and agility required for the successful execution of IT projects. This issue is particularly evident in banks that maintain traditional hierarchical models, which do not support the rapid adaptation and collaborative work necessary for modern IT initiatives (Admasu & Zewdie, 2023).

Another challenge is the insufficient allocation of resources, including skilled personnel and training programs, for IT projects. As noted by Birhanu (2021), Ethiopian banks face significant gaps in the availability of IT professionals with the requisite technical skills to manage complex projects. This shortage of qualified IT staff is exacerbated by limited investment in continuous learning and development programs tailored to emerging technologies, making it difficult for banks to keep up with industry advancements. Furthermore, the lack of advanced HR technologies, such as AI-driven recruitment and employee management systems, hampers the ability to effectively manage talent in IT projects (Teshome, 2022). Addressing these HRM challenges is essential to improving the success and sustainability of IT projects in Ethiopian banks.

In the context of Ethiopia's banking sector, AB faces unique challenges due to increasing digitalization and the demand for technological innovation. These challenges include difficulties

in attracting and retaining qualified IT professionals, ensuring that selection processes accurately predict project success, and maintaining a competitive edge through effective HRM practices.

Therefore, this research aims to explore and address the specific HRM practices and challenges faced by Awash Bank in managing its IT projects. By investigating these issues, the study seeks to fill the existing research gap and provide valuable insights for improving HRM practices to enhance the success of IT projects within AB and, by extension, contribute to the competitiveness of the Ethiopian banking sector.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

1. How effective are AB's current recruitment and selection processes in attracting and hiring qualified IT professionals for its IT projects?
2. What is the impact of candidate literacy and technical skills on the success of IT projects at AB?
3. How do selection interviews and pre-employment checks contribute to aligning new hires with the project goals and organizational culture at AB?
4. What challenges does AB face in retaining skilled IT professionals and what strategies can be implemented to improve employee retention within IT project teams?

### **1.4. General Objective**

The general objective of this research is to explore and assess the Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and challenges related to IT projects at AB. The goal is to identify strategies that can improve HRM processes and increase the success rate of IT projects within the organization. Specifically, the study seeks to explore how recruitment, selection, and retention practices impact project outcomes and to provide actionable recommendations for optimizing HRM practices to better support IT project success at AB.

### **1.4.1. Specific Objectives**

1. To evaluate how effective, the recruitment and selection processes are in attracting and hiring qualified IT professionals for AB's IT projects.
2. To evaluate the impact of candidate literacy and technical skills on the success of IT projects at AB.
3. To analyze the role of selection interviews and pre-employment checks in ensuring the alignment of new hires with the project goals and organizational culture at AB.
4. To investigate the challenges faced by AB in retaining skilled IT professionals and recommend strategies to improve employee retention within IT project teams.

### **1.5. Significance of the study**

Significance for AB's IT Projects: This study will help AB better understand its current human resource management practices within its IT projects. By identifying challenges and areas for improvement, the bank can enhance the effectiveness of its IT projects, ensuring they have the right talent and skills to successfully meet their objectives.

Significance for the Business Community: The findings of this research will offer valuable insights for other organizations, especially those in the banking and IT sectors. By understanding best practices in project human resource management, businesses can develop strategies to attract, select, and retain top talent for their IT projects, leading to improved outcomes and overall business success.

Significance for Future Researchers: This study will serve as a foundation for future research on project human resource management in the banking and IT sectors. Researchers can build on these findings to explore new challenges and opportunities in managing human resources for IT projects, and develop innovative approaches and frameworks for more effective human resource management. This will contribute to advancing knowledge in the field and offer practical guidance for industry practitioners.

### **1.6. Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The scope of this study was delimited to examine and evaluate the human resource management (HRM) practices and challenges in IT projects of Awash Bank Share Company of Ethiopia. Moreover, content wise, the scope of this study limit itself to HRM practices, among the many

other facets within the HRM practices recruitment and selection processes, candidate literacy and technical skills, selection in interviews and pre-employment checks, challenges faced retaining in IT Professionals, performance of resource management (HRM) practices. It would have been better had the current research been covering various disciplines and content would have been more comprehensive,. However, because of the time and financial constraint the researcher faced, the research was delimited only to one private bank; i.e. AB S.C of Ethiopia. Hence, the researcher believes that making generalization to all governmental and private banks standing from the findings of this particular research would be difficult.

### **1.7.Organization of the study**

This study was organized into five chapters. The introduction, including the problem statement and objectives of the study, was presented in Chapter One. Chapter Two provided a literature review, covering both theoretical and empirical perspectives on the determinants of financial risks. Chapter Three outlined the research approach and methodology. Chapter Four detailed the descriptive statistics and regression analysis conducted in the study. Finally, Chapter Five presented the conclusions and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter focuses on reviewing literature related to project human resource management for Awash Bank's IT projects. A selection of relevant sources has been examined and evaluated. It provides insights into previous research and work that are connected to the topic of this study.

#### **2.1 Introduction**

AB, one of the leading commercial banks in Ethiopia, has undertaken several successful IT projects in recent years geared towards modernizing and enhancing its digital banking services. These projects have included the implementation of a robust core banking system, the introduction of mobile and online banking platforms, and the development of innovative digital payment solutions. By investing in cutting-edge technology and continuously upgrading its IT infrastructure, AB aims to provide its customers with convenient, secure, and efficient banking services while remaining at the forefront of the digital banking revolution in Ethiopia.

This literature review explores the HRM practices and challenges associated with managing human resources in Awash Bank IT projects, focusing specifically on the recruitment and selection processes, candidate literacy and technical skills, pre-employment checks, and the challenges faced in retaining IT professionals.

#### **2.2 Theories Underlying Human Resource Management in IT Project**

The theoretical frameworks that underpin the practices and challenges of Project Human Resource Management (HRM) in IT projects offer insights into how HRM practices can be optimized to ensure project success. These theories highlight the importance of human capital, recruitment strategies, and the management of team dynamics, particularly in the context of large, complex IT projects.

##### **2.2.1 Human Resource Development (HRD) Theory**

HRD theory emphasizes the continuous development of human capital through training, education, and organizational learning. In the context of Awash Bank IT projects, HRD theory suggests that ongoing training and capacity-building initiatives are crucial. These initiatives ensure that project

teams remain adaptable to emerging technological demands and are equipped with the necessary skills to address water, sanitation, and hygiene challenges (Stewart & Thomas, 2020). HRD also supports the idea that the development of local talent is central to the long-term sustainability of such projects, ensuring that communities are empowered with the necessary skills to maintain IT systems once the project concludes.

### **2.2.2 Resource-Based View (RBV)**

The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory focuses on the notion that an organization's resources, including its human capital, are a source of competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). In the case of Awash Bank IT projects, the theory suggests that the human resources involved, particularly those with specialized technical and managerial expertise, are key assets that determine project success. The ability to recruit, develop, and retain skilled professionals directly impacts the project's ability to deliver desired outcomes (Teece, 2007). The RBV highlights the importance of creating strategies that retain top talent, given the specialized skills required in IT and development projects.

### **2.2.3 Stakeholder Theory**

Stakeholder theory, initially developed by Freeman (1984), posits that an organization's success depends on its ability to manage relationships with all its stakeholders. For Awash Bank IT projects, HR managers must consider not only the internal project team but also external stakeholders, including local communities, government agencies, and international partners. Stakeholder theory in HRM emphasizes the importance of managing these relationships and ensuring that the workforce is aligned with the broader goals of the project. HR practices, such as recruitment, retention, and team development, must be tailored to ensure that all stakeholders' expectations are met while maintaining a positive organizational culture (Mitchell *et al.*, 1997).

### **2.2.4 Contingency Theory**

Contingency theory proposes that HRM practices must be adapted to fit the unique circumstances of each project. In the case of Awash Bank IT projects, this theory suggests that HR strategies must consider factors such as geographic location, cultural differences, project scale, and the technological demands of the project. For example, a project in a rural area with limited access to skilled labor may require different recruitment strategies compared to an urban setting where

technical skills are more readily available (Fiedler, 1964). Thus, HRM practices should be flexible and tailored to the specific needs of the project to ensure the best possible outcomes.

## **2.3. Empirical Literature**

### **2.3.1. Human resource management practice in IT projects**

AB follows best practices in human resource management for its IT projects to ensure the successful implementation and operation of technology solutions. Some key approaches include:

**Recruitment and Training:** Awash Bank ensures it recruits and hires skilled IT professionals who have the necessary technical expertise and experience to work on complex technology projects. The bank also provides regular training and development opportunities for its IT staff to keep their skills up-to-date and relevant to the latest technologies.

**Performance Management:** The bank has a robust performance management system in place to evaluate the performance of IT employees on a regular basis. This includes setting clear performance objectives and providing feedback to help employees improve their performance and achieve their goals.

**Teamwork and Collaboration:** Awash Bank encourages teamwork and collaboration among IT employees working on different projects. This helps to foster a culture of cooperation and communication, which is essential for successful project delivery.

**Employee Engagement:** The bank places a strong emphasis on employee engagement and satisfaction to ensure that its IT staff are motivated and committed to their work. This includes providing a positive work environment, opportunities for career advancement, and recognition for their contributions to the organization.

**Work-life Balance:** Awash Bank recognizes the importance of work-life balance for its employees and encourages them to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life. This helps to prevent burnout and improve overall job satisfaction among IT staff. By following these human resource management practices, AB is able to effectively manage its IT projects and ensure the successful implementation of technology solutions to support its business operations.

## **The Concept of Recruitment and Selection**

Recruitment and selection are critical functions within any organization. The survival and growth of an organization hinge on the quality of its workforce, as the success of a business is directly tied

to the performance of its employees. Ensuring that the right individuals are hired depends on the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection strategies and processes implemented. In today's competitive business environment, careful attention must be given to these policies and practices, as employers bear responsibility for the competence and suitability of the individuals they bring into the organization.

This concept encompasses two interconnected processes: recruitment, which involves creating a pool of qualified individuals interested in applying for positions within an organization, and selection, which refers to the use of specific tools and methods to identify the most suitable candidates from that pool, aligning with both organizational objectives and legal standards (Bratton and Gold, 2003). Armstrong (2009) further breaks down recruitment and selection into three key stages: defining requirements, attracting candidates, and selecting candidates. As one of the most critical functions of Human Resource Management (HRM), the recruitment and selection process serves as the primary entry point for individuals into an organization and is instrumental in acquiring the talent necessary to achieve organizational goals. It also mirrors the organization's values and priorities, as evidenced by the quality and fit of the individuals hired.

A variety of techniques are utilized in these processes, including interviews, assessment centers, curriculum vitae (CV) reviews, reference checks, and more. Recruitment is described as the set of activities and processes used to legally obtain a sufficient number of qualified people at the Recruitment ensures that the right individuals are available at the right place and time, enabling both the organization and potential employees to make decisions that align with their short- and long-term goals (Dessler, 1987, cited in Richardson, 2012). An effective recruitment strategy is essential for hiring capable employees who can enhance the organization's performance. According to Costello (2006), recruitment is defined as the series of activities and processes designed to legally attract a sufficient number of qualified candidates at the right place and time, allowing both the organization and individuals to choose each other in ways that best serve their mutual interests.

In essence, the recruitment process provides an organization with a pool of potentially qualified candidates, enabling careful selection to fill job vacancies. Successful recruitment starts with effective workforce planning and forecasting. At this stage, an organization develops strategies to address future job openings—whether filling or eliminating them—based on an analysis of future

needs, the availability of talent both internally and externally, and the resources required to attract and retain such talent. Equally important to the success of recruitment are the strategies an organization employs to identify and select the best candidates to build its human resource pool.

For entry-level positions, organizations often seek candidates with minimal qualifications and experience. These applicants are typically recent graduates from high schools, universities, or technical colleges, many of whom are undecided about their future careers or considering further education. Internal recruitment is commonly used to fill mid-level roles, such as senior administrative, technical, or junior executive positions. On the other hand, senior executive roles often require rare, high-quality talent, which is usually sourced externally. To ensure effectiveness across all levels, most organizations use a combination of internal and external recruitment methods.

According to Montgomery (1996), the primary goal of recruitment and selection is to align the skills, capabilities, and interests of potential candidates with the requirements and rewards of a specific job. As a critical human resource management function, recruitment significantly influences an organization's overall performance (Richardson, 2012). Hiring the right employees is a fundamental process for any organization aiming to enhance its competitiveness, as it serves as a gateway for introducing fresh ideas and perspectives. In today's dynamic business environment, companies must adapt their recruitment processes and methods to keep pace with ongoing changes. Continuous evolution in human resource management practices and organizational structures is essential to maintaining a competitive edge in the industry.

Jovanovic (2004) describes recruitment as the process of attracting a pool of highly qualified applicants to identify and select the best candidates. For this reason, top-performing organizations invest substantial resources and effort into developing robust and effective selection systems. These systems ensure that the most suitable individuals are chosen, ultimately contributing to the organization's success and sustainability.

Recruitment and selection are vital practices within human resource management and play a critical role in determining organizational success (Jovanovic, 2004). As organizations increasingly rely on information technology to enhance competitiveness, it is logical to leverage this technology to modernize traditional recruitment and selection processes. By integrating

advanced decision-making techniques, organizations can improve both the effectiveness and efficiency of these processes, leading to higher-quality hiring decisions.

Huselid (1995) defines a human resource information system (HRIS) as a tool used to gather, store, manage, analyze, retrieve, and disseminate relevant information about an organization's human resources. Such systems enable organizations to streamline recruitment and selection, ensuring that data-driven decisions are made to attract and retain the best talent.

The purpose of a human resource information system (HRIS) is to support HR functions across strategic, tactical, and operational levels. It addresses various decision-making challenges, including those related to recruitment and selection, by enabling automated or computerized processes. In the information age, such systems are essential as proactive tools for enhancing efficiency and decision-making. Researchers like Mullins and Turkson emphasize that effective recruitment practices and policies are crucial for securing the necessary workforce to meet organizational needs.

The HR function becomes particularly significant when recruiting and selecting new administrators. A key responsibility of human resource management is to foster positive candidate experiences, especially when discussing administrative roles. This ensures that the organization not only attracts top talent but also builds a favorable reputation among potential employees.

### **Definitions of Recruitment**

Numerous researchers have made significant contributions to the field of Human Resource Management (HRM), providing in-depth insights into its various branches, particularly recruitment and selection. Below are some key definitions of recruitment:

Gold (2007) defines recruitment as the process of creating a pool of qualified candidates who apply for employment within an organization. This implies that individuals whose experience and qualifications align closely with the job requirements are more likely to be selected.

Organizations place great emphasis on recruitment, especially when the cost of a hiring mistake is high. Armstrong (2006) highlights that the goal of recruitment is to attract, at minimal cost, a sufficient number of suitable and qualified candidates to meet the organization's needs. This involves identifying, evaluating, and utilizing the most effective sources of applicants.

El-Kot and Leat (2008) observe that the recruitment process typically begins with advertising job vacancies. This step is crucial for attracting potential candidates and initiating the selection process.

These definitions underscore the importance of recruitment as a strategic function within HRM, aimed at identifying and attracting the right talent to support organizational goals. According to Eze (2002), recruitment is the process of identifying and attracting qualified job candidates who are capable of effectively filling job vacancies. The goal is to encourage these individuals to apply for the available positions. Similarly, Costello (2006) defines recruitment as a series of activities and processes designed to legally obtain a sufficient number of qualified applicants at the right place and time, enabling both the organization and the candidates to make mutually beneficial decisions.

Additionally, the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria (CIPM, 2007) describes recruitment as the process of identifying, attracting, and encouraging individuals with the necessary skills and qualifications (potential candidates) to apply for existing or future job vacancies. This involves making candidates aware of the opportunities within the organization.

Another scholar, Jovanovic (2004), argues that recruitment is the process of attracting a large pool of high-quality applicants to select the best candidates from among them. Similarly, male (1992), in his work "Past Practice in Personnel Management in the Nigerian Civil Service: Issues and Procedures," defines recruitment as the process that begins when an applicant becomes interested in a job and a specific organization, prompting them to submit an application. The process concludes once the organization receives the application.

From the various definitions of recruitment provided by professionals and scholars, it is clear that recruitment focuses on the strategic planning and advertisement of existing job vacancies within an organization. The goal is to attract suitable and qualified candidates to apply for these positions. In essence, recruitment is a specialized and critical function within Human Resource Management (HRM) practices, as it requires specific techniques to effectively identify and engage a pool of skilled and high-quality applicants. The process ensures that the organization can select the best talent to meet its needs and achieve its objectives.

These definitions collectively emphasize that recruitment is a strategic and systematic process designed to source and engage qualified talent to fulfill organizational needs. Furthermore, these

perspectives underscore recruitment as a critical function that goes beyond merely attracting candidates—it ensures that the most suitable individuals are identified and engaged, ultimately contributing to the organization’s success. By aligning recruitment practices with organizational goals, companies can secure the right talent to drive growth, innovation, and competitiveness.

### **Factors affecting recruitment**

There are number of factors that affect recruitment. These are internal and external

#### **Internal factors**

The recruitment process is shaped by several internal factors that organizations must carefully consider. One of these factors is the size of the organization. Larger organizations typically have an easier time attracting candidates due to their established reputation, resources, and structured hiring processes. In contrast, smaller organizations may face challenges in drawing top talent because of limited visibility and resources (Armstrong, 2009). Another important factor is the organization’s recruitment policy, which decides whether to hire from within (existing employees) or externally (outside candidates). A well-balanced approach to both internal and external recruitment can help organizations meet their talent needs more effectively (Bratton & Gold, 2003).

The organization’s image also plays a significant role in attracting candidates. Companies with a positive reputation, built through ethical practices, strong leadership, and employee satisfaction, are more likely to appeal to qualified applicants (Richardson, 2012). Similarly, the perception of the job itself influences recruitment. Factors like competitive salaries, good working conditions, and opportunities for career growth make a position more attractive to skilled candidates (El-Kot & Leat, 2008).

To summarize, internal factors such as organizational size, recruitment policies, corporate reputation, and job image all play a part in shaping the recruitment process. These elements determine how well an organization can attract and retain the right talent, which ultimately impacts its success (Jovanovic, 2004). Understanding and optimizing these factors is key to developing effective recruitment strategies.

#### **External factors**

The recruitment process is influenced not just by internal factors but also by a range of external ones that are beyond an organization’s control. One of the most significant is the state of the labor

market. When the market is tight, with high demand for skilled workers, organizations may have a harder time attracting qualified candidates. On the other hand, in a market with an oversupply of workers, they may have a larger pool of applicants to choose from (Armstrong, 2009). Economic conditions are another key factor during times of economic growth, organizations may find recruiting talent easier, while during downturns, they might face reduced hiring or increased competition for fewer positions (Bratton & Gold, 2003). Legal and regulatory factors also shape how recruitment is done. Laws around equal employment opportunities, anti-discrimination, and labor rights all influence how organizations approach and structure their recruitment strategies (Richardson, 2012). Additionally, advances in technology have significantly changed recruitment. Tools like social media, online job portals, and applicant tracking systems now allow organizations to reach a broader audience and make the hiring process more efficient (El-Kot & Leat, 2008). Finally, societal and cultural trends play an important role too. For example, with growing attention to work-life balance, diversity, and inclusion, organizations are adapting their recruitment practices to reflect these values, making them more attractive to potential candidates (Jovanovic, 2004). In conclusion, external factors such as labor market conditions, economic trends, legal regulations, technological innovations, and societal expectations have a big impact on recruitment, and organizations need to stay flexible and responsive to these changes.

### **2.3.2. Recruitment and Selection Processes**

The recruitment and selection process plays a key role in the success of IT projects, especially when it comes to the quality of the people brought on board. Having strong recruitment strategies is crucial for attracting candidates who not only have the technical skills but also the managerial expertise needed for the job. In the case of Awash Bank IT projects, this means finding people who specialize in IT systems as well as water management and sanitation infrastructure.

A study by Stone (2018) on recruitment in international development projects points out that one of the biggest challenges organizations face is finding candidates with the right expertise, particularly in remote or conflict-affected areas. Additionally, the recruitment process must take into account local factors like language, cultural norms, and the socio-economic conditions of the region these all play a significant role in attracting and retaining top talent. The selection process is typically multi-faceted, involving skills assessments, interviews, and background checks. This helps ensure that candidates not only have the technical skills required but also fit well with the

project's unique needs. According to Hays (2019), for large IT projects, the selection process often includes competency-based interviews and practical tests to evaluate how well candidates can handle real-world challenges that may arise during the project.

### **Importance of Recruitment and Selection**

The recruitment and selection processes are the foundation of any successful HRM strategy. These processes ensure that the most qualified and suitable candidates are chosen for key roles. In Awash Bank IT projects, where the scope of work is often vast and the stakes are high, the quality of the workforce directly impacts the success of the project. It is crucial to recruit professionals who have both the technical expertise and managerial skills necessary to meet the project's goals, such as improving water infrastructure, sanitation systems, and public health outcomes (Zhang et al., 2020).

The recruitment process involves sourcing candidates from a variety of channels, including job postings, recruitment agencies, and networking events. Once candidates are identified, the selection process begins, which typically includes interviews, skills assessments, background checks, and reference verification. These steps are vital for evaluating a candidate's qualifications, cultural fit, and potential to contribute to the project's success.

### **Selection Process in IT Projects**

The selection process in WASH Bank IT projects is comprehensive and multi-stage, focusing not only on technical proficiency but also on the ability to thrive in the project environment. Key stages of the selection process typically include:

1. **Application Screening and Short listing:** After job advertisements are posted, HR managers review applications to assess basic qualifications, including education, experience, and technical certifications. For Awash Bank IT projects, candidates must demonstrate proficiency in areas like IT infrastructure, water management systems, and data analytics. Screening ensures that only qualified candidates move on to the next stage.
2. **Interviews:** Interviews are essential for assessing both technical skills and interpersonal abilities. Technical interviews often include scenario-based questions, where candidates are asked to demonstrate problem-solving abilities and technical knowledge. For instance, a software engineer might be asked how they would integrate a real-time water quality

monitoring system into an existing infrastructure. Additionally, behavioral interviews evaluate soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and adaptability—skills that are crucial for effective collaboration in multicultural and multidisciplinary teams (Hays, 2019).

3. **Skills Assessments and Practical Tests:** Practical assessments are integral to the selection process in Awash Bank IT projects. These assessments may include coding challenges, project management simulations, or technical problem-solving exercises. For example, candidates for IT management roles may be asked to devise project plans or risk management strategies based on hypothetical scenarios (Turner, 2021). These tests help determine how well candidates can apply their knowledge in real-world situations.
4. **Background Checks and References:** Verifying candidates' work experience, qualifications, and professional conduct is critical. In international development projects, background checks may also include assessing experience in similar regions or projects. Reference checks with previous employers or colleagues ensure candidates have a proven track record of success and professional behavior (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). For Awash Bank IT projects, this is especially important to confirm candidates' ability to succeed in resource-constrained environments.
5. **Cultural and Contextual Fit:** Many Awash Bank IT projects are implemented in regions with unique cultural, environmental, and socio-economic challenges. Therefore, evaluating a candidate's ability to adapt to these challenges is a crucial part of the selection process. HR managers must assess candidates' experience working in similar contexts and their cultural sensitivity, ensuring they are flexible and capable of thriving in challenging environments (Zhang et al., 2020).

### **Challenges in Recruitment and Selection**

Recruiting and selecting the right candidates for Awash Bank IT projects is not without its challenges. One major obstacle is the fierce competition for skilled IT professionals in the global market. Highly specialized IT experts are often in demand across multiple industries, making it difficult for development projects to attract and retain top talent. As Miller (2018) notes, IT professionals are often drawn to private companies that offer competitive salaries and benefits, putting non profit and development organizations at a disadvantage when it comes to recruiting skilled candidates.

Another challenge is the limited availability of skilled workers in certain regions, particularly in low-income countries where educational systems may not be adequately equipped to meet the demands of international development projects (Stone, 2018). In such cases, development organizations must invest in capacity-building initiatives, such as local training programs, to prepare the workforce for the technical requirements of the project.

Lastly, Awash Bank IT projects often require professionals who can navigate cross-cultural communication and adapt to environments with limited resources. As such, the recruitment and selection process must emphasize candidates' cultural competence, adaptability, and willingness to work in remote or challenging conditions. This ensures that the selected candidates are not only technically proficient but also able to collaborate effectively in diverse and demanding project environments.

### **2.3.3. Candidate Literacy and Technical Skills**

Candidate literacy and technical skills are crucial factors that impact the effectiveness of HRM in Awash Bank IT projects. Technical skills, such as expertise in IT infrastructure, project management, and water and sanitation technology, are essential to ensuring the successful delivery of projects. However, literacy, which encompasses both basic educational skills and specific knowledge relevant to the field, is also important for employees to perform effectively (Zhang et al., 2020). For example, in Awash Bank IT projects, candidates may be required to possess a combination of technical knowledge in IT and an understanding of water management systems. Research by Turner (2021) emphasizes that project managers must carefully evaluate candidates' technical literacy, particularly in projects that deal with cutting-edge technologies and large-scale IT systems.

#### **Role of Technical Skills in IT Projects**

Technical skills are essential for the success of IT projects, particularly in areas like Awash Bank's initiatives, where specialized knowledge and hands-on experience are needed to work with advanced technologies. These projects often rely on tools like Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for mapping water resources, data analytics to monitor sanitation systems, and automated systems for real-time data collection and analysis. To effectively use these technologies, the team must have workers who are proficient with complex software and understand system architecture (Harrison & Weiner, 2021).

One of the significant challenges Awash Bank faces in these IT projects is finding candidates with the right technical skills. There's a global shortage of skilled IT professionals, especially in specialized fields like system architecture, network management, and database administration. Finding qualified candidates in rural or remote areas can be particularly difficult (Stone, 2018). The World Bank's 2020 report on "Human Resources for Development" highlights that the lack of infrastructure in developing regions further exacerbates this shortage, making it harder to train and develop local talent. This shortage emphasizes the need for targeted HR strategies that go beyond recruitment to include training and development programs that can build local technical expertise.

In Awash Bank IT projects, the required technical skills span across various roles. For example, project engineers need to be proficient in designing and managing IT systems for water distribution networks, while data scientists must have skills in data modeling and statistical analysis to interpret health and sanitation data. In addition, familiarity with project management software, communication tools, and other IT-related systems is crucial for ensuring that teams function smoothly and projects are completed on time (Keenan & Richardson, 2017).

Given these demands, HR practices must be focused on thoroughly evaluating candidates' technical abilities through detailed selection processes, including technical interviews, practical tests, and reference checks. These measures ensure that candidates have not only the right academic qualifications but also the hands-on experience necessary to thrive in the field. According to Turner (2021), HR managers should also emphasize continuous learning, as the fast-paced nature of IT innovation often brings new tools and technologies into the project cycle. To keep the workforce up-to-date, HR strategies should integrate ongoing training and development opportunities.

### **Challenges in Assessing Candidate Literacy and Technical Skills**

Assessing both literacy and technical skills for international development projects, like those within the Awash Bank IT initiatives, presents a number of challenges. One key issue is the lack of standardized methods for evaluating technical skills across various regions. For example, a candidate with significant technical experience in one country might be unfamiliar with the tools or technologies used in a Awash Bank IT project, despite having strong expertise. In these cases,

HR managers need to adopt more flexible, context-specific evaluation approaches to make sure the candidates' skills align with the project's requirements (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009).

Cultural factors also play a significant role in recruitment and selection. In many developing countries, there is limited access to formal education and specialized technical training programs. As a result, HR managers may need to get creative with assessing technical skills, using alternatives like on-the-job assessments, peer reviews, or mentorship programs to better understand candidates' capabilities (Stewart & Thomas, 2020). Moreover, some candidates might possess excellent technical knowledge but lack other important skills, such as literacy, communication, or critical thinking, which are crucial for success in collaborative, complex projects. HR practices, therefore, should focus on identifying candidates who offer both technical expertise and the necessary soft skills to work effectively within a team.

#### **2.3.4. Selection in interview and pre employment checks**

Pre-employment checks, including background verification, criminal record checks, and medical examinations, are critical in ensuring that potential employees meet the project's requirements. These checks not only ensure the candidate's integrity but also verify that they are fit to handle the demands of the job. For Awash Bank IT projects, pre-employment checks can also include an evaluation of a candidate's previous experience in similar projects or regions, as this can impact their ability to adapt to the challenges posed by the project (Keenan & Richardson, 2017).

#### **Significance of Selection in Interviews**

Interviews remain one of the most critical stages in the recruitment process, particularly for specialized projects like those at Awash Bank. During interviews, candidates' technical abilities, problem-solving skills, and interpersonal qualities are evaluated to ensure they are prepared for the specific demands of the project. In the context of Awash Bank IT projects, which involve addressing pressing water, sanitation, and hygiene challenges through technology, the interview process serves to assess both the candidates' technical expertise and their capacity to work in a cross-cultural, international development environment, often under pressure.

One of the primary objectives of the interview process is to evaluate a candidate's problem-solving skills with real-world scenarios they may encounter on the project. For example, a candidate for an IT role might be asked how they would approach a technical issue related to water quality monitoring systems or design a solution for managing decentralized data across remote locations.

Scenario-based questions like these, as Turner (2021) notes, help assess not only technical knowledge but also creativity and critical thinking skills essential for tackling complex problems in resource-constrained environments.

Additionally, the interview provides an opportunity to assess a candidate's communication skills, teamwork abilities, and cultural adaptability. Given that Awash Bank IT projects often involve collaboration with local governments, NGOs, and community organizations, selecting candidates who can effectively communicate and work in multidisciplinary teams is crucial for project success (Harrison & Weiner, 2021). Behavioral interview questions such as asking candidates to describe their experiences working in cross-cultural teams or handling high-pressure situations—can offer valuable insight into their interpersonal and problem-solving abilities, which are vital for success in such challenging environments (Keenan & Richardson, 2017).

Furthermore, for leadership roles, interviews are used to assess a candidate's leadership potential, particularly their ability to manage diverse teams and navigate the complexities of international development. Effective leadership in Awash Bank IT projects involves managing teams, making critical decisions, and ensuring the project stays on track (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). Behavioral and situational questions in interviews help assess decision-making skills, conflict resolution abilities, and the capacity to manage competing priorities.

### **Pre-Employment Checks**

Pre-employment checks are another critical part of the selection process. These checks verify that candidates are not only qualified but also trustworthy, reliable, and suitable for the unique challenges of the role. In the context of Awash Bank IT projects, pre-employment checks are vital for ensuring that selected candidates possess the skills, professional background, and personal qualities needed to meet the project's high standards.

1. **Verification of Qualifications and Experience** One of the most important pre-employment checks is verifying a candidate's educational qualifications and professional experience. This ensures that the credentials listed by the candidate match their actual qualifications and prior work history. In Awash Bank IT projects, where specialized technical knowledge is essential, it is important to confirm candidates' expertise in areas like water resource management, data analytics, or infrastructure development. Verification can be conducted by directly contacting academic institutions or previous employers. For example, candidates with past experience in

similar international development projects should have their roles and contributions validated by their former employers (Miller, 2018).

2. **Criminal Background Checks** Given the international nature of the work, and especially in regions where Awash Bank IT projects may be implemented, criminal background checks are crucial for ensuring that candidates have no history of behavior that could jeopardize the project's integrity. This process includes verifying criminal records and checking for any legal violations that may affect the candidate's eligibility to work in certain regions or with sensitive data. According to Stone (2018), conducting criminal checks is especially important for international projects where personnel must comply with strict ethical standards and local regulations.
3. **Reference Checks** Reference checks are another key part of the pre-employment process. In Awash Bank IT projects, candidates often take on significant responsibilities, so verifying past performance and professional conduct is essential. Reference checks typically involve contacting previous employers, supervisors, or colleagues who can provide firsthand knowledge of the candidate's work ethic, contributions, and behavior. Aguinis and Kraiger (2009) emphasize that this step is vital for confirming the candidate's reliability and suitability for high-stakes project environments, particularly in settings that demand a high level of professionalism.
4. **Assessment of Cultural Fit** Evaluating a candidate's ability to adapt to the cultural and operational environment of the project is another important pre-employment check. In many cases, Awash Bank IT projects are implemented in challenging locations, often with limited infrastructure and unique social or political contexts. Therefore, the ability to adapt to and thrive in these environments is crucial. This adaptability can be assessed through a combination of references, prior international development experience, and in some cases, psychometric testing (Hays, 2019). A candidate with experience in similar settings or regions is typically preferred for roles in these projects, as they are more likely to understand the local challenges and work effectively with local communities.
5. **Health and Fitness Checks** In some cases, particularly in remote or high-risk areas, pre-employment health checks are necessary to ensure that candidates are physically fit to handle the demands of the role. Awash Bank IT projects may require staff to work in locations with limited medical facilities, and ensuring the physical health of employees is critical for the

continuity of the project. Health checks ensure that employees are not only physically capable of working in such environments but also less likely to experience health-related disruptions (Zhang et al., 2020).

### **Challenges in Selection and Pre-Employment Checks**

While interviews and pre-employment checks are crucial to the selection process, they also present several challenges. One of the primary difficulties is the time and resources required to conduct comprehensive background checks, particularly for international candidates. According to Miller (2018), verifying qualifications, conducting criminal checks, and contacting international references can be time-consuming, especially in regions where access to reliable information may be limited.

Another challenge is the need for thorough cultural assessments. The candidate's past experience in similar settings may not always predict their adaptability to the specific context of a given Awash Bank IT project. Therefore, assessing cultural and situational adaptability often requires a more nuanced approach, which could involve multiple rounds of interviews, extended reference checks, and perhaps specialized assessments.

Lastly, the high demand for skilled professionals in IT and international development means that Awash Bank IT projects may face stiff competition when trying to secure top candidates. As Miller (2018) notes, the selection process must be efficient, rigorous, and fair to avoid losing the best talent to competing projects or organizations, especially given the global shortage of skilled IT professionals.

### **2.3.5. Challenges in Retaining IT Professionals**

Retaining IT professionals in Awash Bank projects presents significant challenges, particularly in the context of international development initiatives such as WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) IT projects. These projects require highly specialized IT professionals who often have unique skill sets in areas like GIS systems, water management technologies, and data analytics. Unfortunately, the retention of these professionals can be complicated by several factors.

One of the primary challenges is the high demand for IT professionals in the global market. Given the rapid advancement of technology, skilled IT workers are sought after by various sectors, including private enterprises, other international development projects, and government initiatives. The competition for top talent often results in frequent turnover, which disrupts project timelines and leads to a loss of valuable institutional knowledge (Sharma & Sharma, 2018). Furthermore, many IT professionals are drawn to the private sector, where salaries and benefits may be more competitive than those offered by international organizations like the World Bank. This ongoing churn can impact the continuity and efficiency of Awash Bank IT projects, making retention a pressing concern.

Another challenge in retaining IT professionals is the lack of career advancement opportunities in some roles. Employees who do not see a clear path for growth within the organization may become disengaged and look for opportunities elsewhere. Additionally, the work environment itself can be a factor; many WASH Bank IT projects are located in remote or underserved areas where resources may be scarce, and the living conditions may be challenging. While these environments offer rewarding experiences in terms of social impact, they can also contribute to professional burnout and dissatisfaction if not properly managed.

Thompson et al. (2019) emphasize that retention strategies must consider both tangible and intangible factors. They suggest that providing continuous professional development opportunities, offering competitive benefits, and creating a positive work environment are critical strategies for retaining talent. In particular, fostering a sense of ownership and purpose within the project can help mitigate turnover, especially in projects with social impact goals, such as those aimed at improving public health and sanitation (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). When IT professionals feel that their work is contributing to meaningful change, they are more likely to remain committed to the project.

### **Strategies to Overcome Retention Challenges**

Addressing the retention challenges in Awash Bank IT projects requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach. Below are several strategies that can help retain IT professionals in these projects:

1. **Competitive Compensation and Benefits** Offering competitive compensation packages is one of the most effective ways to retain IT talent. Since many of these professionals are often recruited away by the private sector or other development organizations, providing attractive financial incentives—such as housing allowances, healthcare benefits, and periodic paid leave—can help mitigate the impact of working in remote or resource-limited environments. These benefits make the challenges of the work environment more bearable and help to enhance job satisfaction.
2. **Career Development and Training Opportunities** One of the primary reasons IT professionals leave their positions is the lack of career growth. Offering clear career development pathways and professional development opportunities is essential for keeping employees engaged. This could involve funding certifications, providing access to training programs, or offering mentorship and coaching for career progression. Professionals are more likely to stay with an organization if they see opportunities for skill enhancement and upward mobility within the project or organization (Thompson et al., 2019).
3. **Creating a Positive Work Environment** A positive work environment is key to fostering long-term retention. This includes providing a workplace where employees feel valued, supported, and respected. Establishing an inclusive culture that encourages collaboration, open communication, and mutual respect can improve job satisfaction and reduce turnover (Harrison & Weiner, 2021). In addition, acknowledging and celebrating the achievements and contributions of IT professionals, regardless of their role, helps create a sense of purpose and pride in their work.
4. **Work-Life Balance and Mental Health Support** The high-pressure nature of IT projects, particularly those in international development, can lead to burnout if work-life balance is not properly managed. Programs that promote work-life balance, such as flexible working hours, remote work options (when feasible), and ample time off, can help reduce stress and increase overall job satisfaction. Additionally, providing support for mental health and well-being is critical in ensuring that employees are able to maintain their physical and psychological health while working in challenging environments (Harrison & Weiner, 2021). Employee assistance programs, stress management workshops, and access to counseling services can contribute to a healthier and more productive workforce.

5. **Managing Cultural Differences in Multinational Teams** Awash Bank IT projects often involve multinational teams that come from diverse cultural backgrounds. Managing cultural differences is crucial for fostering a harmonious and productive work environment. Promoting cross-cultural training and providing resources to help team members understand each other's cultural norms can reduce misunderstandings and improve collaboration. Additionally, creating an environment where employees feel respected and supported, regardless of their background, enhances their sense of belonging and loyalty to the organization.
6. **Fostering a Sense of Ownership and Purpose** Lastly, fostering a sense of ownership and purpose is particularly important in the context of social development projects. IT professionals working on Awash Bank projects are often motivated by the knowledge that their work directly contributes to improving public health, sanitation, and the well-being of underserved communities. Ensuring that employees feel they are making a meaningful impact can increase their job satisfaction and motivation to stay with the project long-term (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). Regular communication about the project's progress, challenges, and success stories can reinforce this sense of purpose and keep employees motivated.

In conclusion, the retention of IT professionals in Awash Bank IT projects is a multifaceted challenge that requires a combination of financial incentives, career development opportunities, a positive work culture, and well-being support. By addressing the various factors that contribute to employee dissatisfaction and turnover, organizations can reduce attrition rates and maintain a skilled and motivated workforce. Implementing strategies to retain IT professionals is not only crucial for the continuity of the project but also for ensuring that it remains on track to achieve its social development goals.

#### **2.4. Research Gaps**

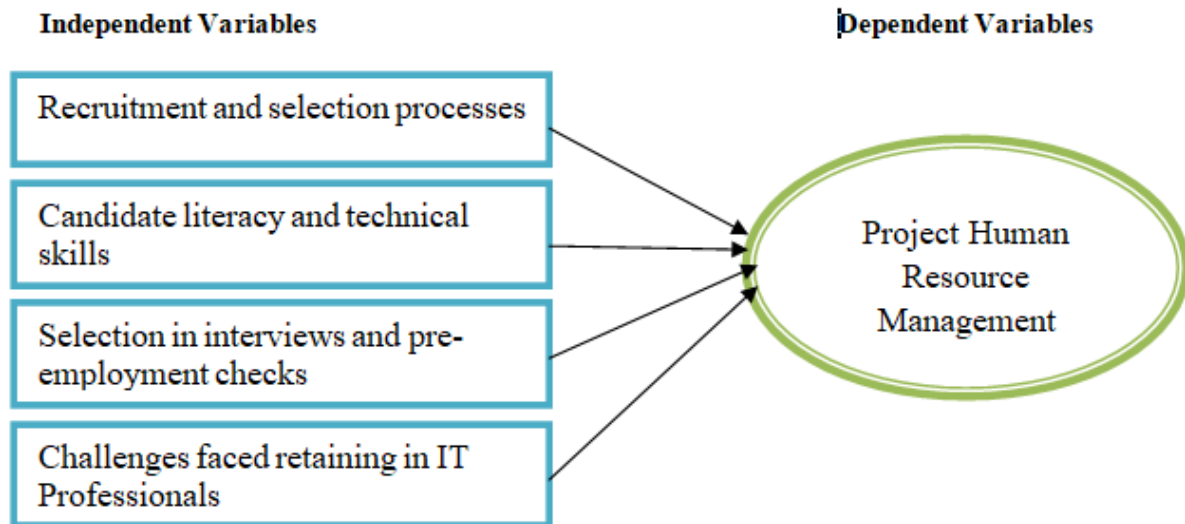
Although there is a substantial body of literature on Project HRM, several gaps remain when it comes to understanding its practices and challenges in Awash Bank's IT projects. For instance, there's limited research on how HRM practices are specifically adapted to address the unique challenges faced by Awash Bank's IT teams. The influence of cultural differences on recruitment, selection, and retention strategies, especially in cross-cultural or international settings, has yet to be fully explored. Moreover, further studies are needed to understand how HRM practices can be tailored to tackle the challenges of working in conflict-prone or resource-limited areas. Long-term

research, particularly longitudinal studies, would also be valuable to assess the lasting impact of HRM practices on project success, including the sustainability and ongoing effectiveness of IT systems after the project has ended.

### 2.5. Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework is essential as a guideline in identifying important variables and for effective and efficient data collection. Scarborough and Kydd (1992) suggest that such a framework should help to indicate the most useful area in which to focus the limited research resources and ensure that data collected are relevant to meet the objectives of the research.

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 illustrates the interrelationships variables incorporated in the study.



Source: Own construction, 2024

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study**

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This section aims to outline the key components of the research process, including the research design, the target population and sampling technique, the types of data to be collected, and the tools or instruments that will be used for data collection. It will also detail the steps involved in gathering the data, the methods for analyzing it, and the ethical considerations that will guide the study. By covering these elements, this section provides a clear roadmap for how the research will be conducted, ensuring transparency and rigor throughout the process.

#### **3.3. Description of the Study Area**

Awash Bank, established as Ethiopia's first private commercial bank, was founded following the collapse of the military regime and the introduction of market economy policies in 1991. The bank was initially established by 486 founding shareholders, with a paid-up capital of Birr 24.2 million. It received its official license on November 10, 1994, and began its banking operations on February 13, 1995. The bank was named after the Awash River, one of Ethiopia's most important rivers, widely used for irrigation and hydroelectric power.

By June 2020, the bank had experienced significant growth, with its shareholder base increasing to over 4,369 and paid-up capital rising to Birr 5.87 billion. Its total assets also grew to Birr 95.6 billion, with more than 700 branches spread across the country. Today, Awash Bank remains a leading private commercial bank in Ethiopia.

The bank offers a comprehensive range of banking services and is recognized as the most accessible private bank in the country, thanks to its expansive network of branches. In addition to physical branches, Awash Bank provides customers with 24/7 access to services through ATMs, point-of-sale terminals, mobile banking, internet banking, and agency banking, ensuring convenience and accessibility for all its clients.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The study used a descriptive research design to explore and assess the human resource management (HRM) practices and challenges within IT projects at Awash Bank. According to Best and Kahn (2006), a descriptive survey involves gathering information from a sample that is drawn from a specific population, with the data being collected at a particular point in time. This approach aligns with the study, as all relevant data were collected within a defined period. Additionally, Aggarwal (2008) explains that a research design focusing on current phenomena—such as conditions, practices, beliefs, processes, relationships, or trends—is typically referred to as a descriptive survey study.

### **3.3. Research Approach**

This study used a quantitative research approach to carefully examine the connection between recruitment and selection processes, literacy skills of candidates, selection in interviews and Pre-employment checks, challenges faced retaining in IT Professionals and Performance of HRM practices. The approach enables the collection of numerical data and its subsequent analysis through statistical methods, ensuring objectivity and reliability

### **3.4. Sample Design**

#### **3.3. Participants of the Study**

The target population for this study consisted of IT project staff members from the head office of Awash Bank of Ethiopia. The bank was selected over others in the country due to its longstanding reputation as a prominent private bank, as well as the significant role it has played in the economic development of Ethiopia. Besides, Addis Ababa was selected as a research setting for two major reasons. First, because the city is the working center of the researcher, it was found to be convenient to the researcher to collect the essential information with manageable cost of time and finance. This was inevitably contributing a lot to obtain valuable information easily, which ultimately enhances the quality of the study in turn. Second, because Addis Ababa is the home of many branches of Awash Bank of Ethiopia and the head office is located.

#### **3.1. Sampling Techniques**

This study employed purposive and simple random sampling techniques respectively. Awash Bank head office was selected using a purposive sampling technique. This was because all IT project team members were located only in the Addis Ababa head office. Furthermore, the sample subjects in the bank were determined by employing the random sampling technique. This meant that the

total number of individuals in the head office was determined by relying on the total number of IT professional workers operating in that head office. The sampling unit of the study was employees from Awash Bank. The total number of employees in the Awash Bank IT project was 120. The sample size of this study is determined by using the formula developed by Yamane (1967).

The formula is as follows:

$$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2) \dots\dots\dots \text{Eqn 3.1}$$

Where:

- ✓ n is the sample size
- ✓ N is the population size
- ✓ e is the margin of error.

The formula assumes a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%.

The population size for employees is 129 and the margin of error is 5%, the sample size would be calculated as follows:

$$n = 120 (1 + 120(0.05)^2)$$

$$n = 92$$

Therefore, a total of 92 questionnaires were distributed to the employees in AB IT projects. The sampling method used to gather this firsthand information was random sampling.

**3.3 Data sources**

This study employed both primary and secondary data sources in order to have more reliable findings. Both were employed for the reason that they give the findings broader base and depth.

**3.4.1. Primary Data**

The primary data for this study were collected through semi-structured interview questions and a carefully designed closed-ended questionnaire.

**3.3.2. Secondary Data**

Secondary data were gathered from relevant books, online sources, unpublished materials, journals, and articles. These datasets covered various themes related to the research.

### **3.2. Instruments and Procedures of Data Collection**

This study was based on both primary and secondary data sources. Mainly, self-administered questionnaires were prepared to gather the relevant information. self-administered questionnaires were employed to collect information with regard to the background profile of the study participants, recruitment and selection processes, candidate literacy and technical skills, selection in interviews and pre-employment checks, challenges faced retaining in IT Professionals. The items for measuring the variables are adapted from different sources of various previously used tools. The respondents were required to show the frequency of use of listed HRM practices on a five point Likert scale (i.e. 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral 2=Disagree, and 1=Strongly Disagree).

### **3.5 Method of Analysis**

The research employed quantitative data analysis techniques. The collected data were cleaned, coded and analyzed using standard SPSS software. Accordingly, both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were involved appropriately for analyzing the quantitative data obtained. As far as the quantitative analysis is considered, descriptive statistics such as mean and frequency, and inferential statistics such as correlation analysis, and multiple regressions were employed appropriately to analyze findings.

### **3.7. Validity and Reliability**

#### **3.6.1. Validity**

Kothari (2004) says validity is the most critical criterion and indicates the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. It also determines whether the researcher truly measures what is intended to measure or how truthful the research results. The validity of the data collection instrument was determined by discussing it with the advisor. The valuable comments and recommendations given by the advisor helped to design a data collection instrument that adequately covered the topic under study.

#### **3.6.1. Reliability**

Reliability refers to the degree to which the data collection tools or analysis procedures will yield consistent findings. (Saunders *et.al*, 2003). Reliability analysis measures the internal consistency of a group of items which is used in questionnaire construction. Reliability analysis examines the

homogeneity or cohesion of the items that comprise each scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is the most common way to assess reliability. A value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient above 0.70 is regarded as acceptable. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2003). To measure the reliability of the questionnaire Cronbach's alpha were used. For the purpose of this study, pilot survey was conducted by distributing 32 questionnaires to sample respondents (taking 10% of the total sample). The result is presented in the following table.

**Table 1: Reliability Statistics**

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>
Recruitment and selection processes	0.918	10
Candidate literacy and technical skills	0.883	9
Selection in interviews and Pre-employment checks	0.771	10
Challenges faced retaining in IT Professionals	0.872	10
Performance of HRMP	0.845	10

**Survey Data (2024)**

As demonstrated in the above table the result of the test indicates that, the scale is significant having a reliability greater than of 0.70. The questionnaire was thus considered reliable to be used for data collection

**3.8. Ethical Consideration**

The researcher will adhere to all relevant ethical guidelines throughout the study. Participants will have the freedom to choose whether or not to participate, and their decision will be respected without any negative consequences. Before starting the study, the researcher will clearly explain the purpose of the questionnaire and ensure that the respondents understand their rights. Confidentiality will be maintained by not requesting participants' names, and all responses will remain anonymous. If any ethical issues arise during the study, they will be addressed promptly. Participants will also be informed that they can withdraw from the study at any time without facing any unfavorable consequences, and that their participation or non-participation will not cause harm. The researcher is committed to ensuring that the confidentiality of respondents is protected and that their identities remain undisclosed. Finally, the study will be conducted with an open-minded approach, ensuring that responses are presented exactly as received, without modification. All sources used for the study will be properly acknowledged and referenced in the bibliography.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results of the researcher's investigation, which was carried out with the techniques described in chapter three. The general histories of the respondents, a full explanation of the four specific objectives, a study of descriptive statistics, and correlation and regression calculations using IBM SPSS version 23 are all covered in this chapter. Tests were conducted before any analysis to determine whether the results were reliable. Using content validity analysis, the internal consistency of the overall human resource management practices and challenges dimensions, HRM practices performance, and validity were all investigated. The study's findings were also examined in reference to earlier research on the topic.

#### 4.2. Demographic Data

Participants were asked to provide basic demographic information, including their gender, age, marital status, educational level, employment status, and monthly income level.

The questionnaire was distributed to a total of 84 employees.

**Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

<b>Category</b>	<b>(N=84)</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	68	81.0
Female	16	19.0
<b>Age</b>		
18 =24	3	3.6
25 - 34	64	76.2
35 - 44	17	20.2
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	51	60.7
Married	33	39.3
<b>Level of Education</b>		
Tertiary Education	22	26.2
Postgraduate	62	73.8
<b>Employment status</b>		

Employed full-time	84	100.0
<b>Monthly income Level (in ETB)</b>		
10,000 - 20,000	10	11.9
20,001 - 30,000	38	45.2
30,001 - 40,000	11	13.1
More than 40,000	25	29.8

**Source: Survey Data (2024)**

The demographic data of the 84 respondents reveals several significant trends. A majority of the participants are male (81.0%), while females represent a smaller proportion of the sample (19.0%). This suggests a gender imbalance within the group. In terms of age, most respondents are between the ages of 25 and 34 years (76.2%), with a smaller group in the 35–44 age range (20.2%). Only a few individuals are in the 18–24 age category (3.6%), indicating that the sample is primarily composed of individuals in their early to mid-career stages. Regarding marital status, most respondents are single (60.7%), while a smaller portion is married (39.3%). This reflects a predominantly unmarried sample. The level of education shows a highly educated group, with the majority holding postgraduate degrees (73.8%), followed by tertiary education (26.2%). This suggests that the respondents are highly qualified, with a strong emphasis on higher education.

All respondents are employed full-time (100%). In terms of income, the majority of respondents earn between 20,001 and 30,000 ETB per month (45.2%), followed by those earning more than 40,000 ETB (29.8%). Smaller groups fall into the 10,000–20,000 ETB (11.9%) and 30,001–40,000 ETB (13.1%) categories. This indicates a relatively high-income level among the participants, with most earning above the lower-income thresholds. Overall, the demographic profile indicates a male-dominated, well-educated, mid-career, full-time employed group with relatively high income levels

### 4.3. Effectiveness of Recruitment and Selection Processes

**Table 3: Effectiveness of Recruitment and Selection Processes**

<i>NO</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>NU</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	How satisfied are you with the current recruitment channels used by Awash Bank to attract IT professionals?	0 (0%)	7 (8.3%)	18 (21.%)	39 (46.4%)	20 (23.8%)	3.86	.88
2	How would you rate the clarity of job descriptions for IT positions at Awash Bank?	2 (2.4%)	7 (8.%)	27 (32.%)	24 (28.6%)	24 (28.6%)	3.73	1.04
3	How do you rate time taken to fill an IT position at Awash Bank?	3 (3.6%)	4 (4.8%)	24 (28.%)	28 (33.3 %)	25 (29.8%)	3.81	1.04
4	How effective do you find the screening process in identifying qualified IT candidates?	0 (0%)	5 (6%)	29 (34.%)	30 (35.7%)	20 (23.8%)	3.77	.88
5	To what extent does Awash Bank use technical assessments in the hiring process for IT professionals?	0 (0%)	5 (6%)	24 (28,%)	32 (38.1%)	23 (27.4%)	3.87	.89
6	How would you rate the competitiveness of Awash Bank's compensation packages for IT professionals?	2 (2.2%)	7(8.3 %)	20 (23 %)	28 (33.3%)	27 (32.1%)	3.85	1.05
7	How effective is Awash Bank in attracting diverse IT talent?	0 (0%)	5 (6%)	17 (20.%)	40 (47.6%)	22 (26.2%)	3.94	.84
8	How often does Awash Bank use employee referrals for recruiting IT professionals?	0 (0%)	13 (15.5 %)	23 (27.4)	29 (34.5%)	19 (22.6%)	3.64	1.00
9	How would you rate the overall quality of IT professionals hired by Awash Bank in the past year?	0 (0%)	6 (7.1%)	23 (27.%)	38 (45.2%)	17 (20.2%)	3.79	.85
10	To what extent do you believe the current recruitment and selection processes at Awash Bank are capable of meeting the bank's IT staffing needs?	0 (0%)	8 (9.5%)	28 (33.%)	32 (38.1%)	16 (19%)	3.67	.89
<b>Grand Mean</b>							<b>3.79</b>	<b>0.938</b>

#### Survey Data (2024)

**Notes: SD= strongly disagreed; DA = Disagreed. N= Neutral; AG = Agreed; SA Strongly Agreed**

As clearly depicted in table 4 above, the entire disclosure's mean M=3.79. The results reflect generally positive perceptions of the recruitment and selection processes at Awash Bank, regarding , satisfaction with the current recruitment channels (mean = 3.86) is notably high, suggesting that

respondents are relatively pleased with the methods used to attract IT professionals. However, there is room for improvement in some areas, such as the clarity of job descriptions (mean = 3.73), which suggests that more precise and detailed descriptions could enhance the recruitment process.

In relation to the time taken to fill IT positions (mean = 3.81) is also perceived positively, indicating that recruitment is relatively efficient. The effectiveness of the screening process (mean = 3.77) and the use of technical assessments (mean = 3.87) further demonstrate that the bank's recruitment methods are seen as capable of identifying qualified candidates. The competitiveness of the bank's compensation packages (mean = 3.85) and the ability to attract diverse IT talent (mean = 3.94) are also seen as strengths.

Despite these positive results, areas like employee referrals (mean = 3.64) and the overall effectiveness of the recruitment and selection processes in meeting the bank's IT staffing needs (mean = 3.67) may require further attention to ensure that the bank is fully maximizing the utilization of all recruitment channels to effectively meet staffing needs.

#### 4.4.Candidate literacy and technical skills

**Table 4: Candidate literacy and technical skills**

<i>NO</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>DA</i>	<i>NU</i>	<i>AG</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	How satisfied are you with the current recruitment channels used by Awash Bank to attract IT professionals?	4 (4.8%)	6 (7.1%)	11 (13.1%)	31 (36.9%)	32 (38.1%)	3.96	1.113
2	To what extent do you believe the current IT staff at Awash Bank possesses the necessary technical skills for project success?	0 (9%)	5 (6%)	15 (17.9%)	41 (48.8%)	23 (27.4%)	3.98	0.84
3	How often do you encounter technical skill gaps that hinder IT project progress?	2 (2.4%)	11 (13.1%)	23 (27.4%)	33 (39.3%)	15 (17.9%)	3.57	1.01
4	How important do you consider literacy skills (reading, writing, communication) in determining the success of IT projects at Awash Bank?	3 (3.6%)	3 (3.6%)	13 (15.5%)	27 (32.1%)	38 (42.2%)	4.12	1.03
5	To what extent do literacy skills impact collaboration within IT project teams?	0 (0%)	9 (10.7%)	21 (25%)	30 (35.7%)	24 (28.6%)	3.82	0.97
6	How often do literacy skill gaps lead to misunderstandings or errors in IT projects?	2 (2.4%)	3 (3.6%)	25 (29.8%)	30 (35.7%)	24 (28.6%)	3.85	0.96

7	How would you rate the overall impact of literacy skills on the quality of IT project documentation?	2 (2.4%)	5(6%)	11 (13.1%)	34 (40.5%)	32 (38.1%)	4.06	0.99
8	To what extent do you believe improving technical skills would enhance IT project outcomes at Awash Bank?	0 (0%)	4 (4.8%)	19 (22.6%)	24 (28.6%)	37 (44%)	4.12	0.92
9	To what extent do you believe improving literacy skills would enhance IT project outcomes at Awash Bank?	0 (0%)	2 (2.4%)	18 (21.4%)	24 (28.6%)	40 (47.6%)	4.21	0.86
<b>Grand Mean</b>							<b>3.97</b>	<b>0.97</b>

### Survey Data (2024)

Notes: SD= strongly disagreed; DA = Disagreed. N= Neutral; AG = Agreed; SA Strongly Agreed

As clearly shown in table 5 above, the overall grand mean score  $M=3.97$ . The findings emphasize how critical both technical expertise and literacy skills are to the success of IT project sat Awash Bank. In relation to the current IT staff is generally perceived as possessing the necessary technical skills (mean = 3.98), the occasional presence of technical skill gaps (mean = 3.57) suggests there is room for improvement in this area. Additionally, literacy skills, including reading, writing, and communication, are deemed crucial for project success, with a high mean score (4.12) reflecting their importance. Literacy skills also significantly impact collaboration within teams and the quality of project documentation, as shown by means of 3.82 and 4.06, respectively. The highest-rated item (mean = 4.21) underscores a strong belief that enhancing literacy skills could lead to better project outcomes.

The survey also reveals moderate satisfaction with the current recruitment channels for attracting IT professionals (mean = 3.96), indicating potential for improvement in this area. Finally, the overall grand mean of 3.97 reflects a positive outlook on the role of literacy and technical skills in IT project success. However, variations in standard deviations suggest differing levels of agreement among respondents, pointing to specific areas that may require focused attention.

#### 4.5. Role of selection interviews and pre-employment checks

**Table 5: Role of Selection Interviews and Pre-Employment Checks**

<i>NO</i>		<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>NU</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	How effective do you find the current interview process in assessing a candidate's fit with Awash Bank's organizational culture?	5 (6%)	5 (6%)	23 (27.4%)	26 (31%)	25 (29.8%)	3.73	1.13
2	To what extent do selection interviews at Awash Bank focus on assessing a candidate's alignment with IT project goals?	3 (3.6%)	6 (7.1%)	31 (36.9%)	24 (28.6%)	20 (23.8%)	3.62	1.04
3	How often are structured interview techniques used in the IT hiring process at Awash Bank?	2 (2.4%)	5 (8%)	28 (33.3%)	27 (32.1%)	22 (26.2%)	3.74	0.99
4	How important do you consider pre-employment checks in ensuring the suitability of IT hires?	0 (0%)	8 (9.5%)	19 (22.6%)	26(31%)	31 (36.9%)	3.95	0.99
5	To what extent do pre-employment checks at Awash Bank verify a candidate's claimed technical skills?	2 (2.4%)	6 (7.1%)	19 (22.6%)	33 (39.3%)	24 (28.6%)	3.85	1.00
6	How satisfied are you with the current pre-employment check process at Awash Bank	0 (0%)	11(13.1%)	26 (31.0%)	30 (35.7%)	17 (20.2%)	3.63	0.95
7	How often do you believe misalignments between new hires and project goals are identified during the probationary period?	4 (4.8%)	8 (9.5%)	32 (38.1%)	19 (22.6%)	21 (25%)	3.54	1.11
8	To what extent do you believe the current interview process accurately predicts a candidate's future job performance?	2 (2.4%)	5 (6%)	18 (21.4%)	36 (42.9%)	21 (25%)	4.54	4.57
9	How important do you consider assessing a candidate's problem-solving skills during the interview process?	1 (1.2%)	0 (0%)	30 (35.7%)	22 (26.2%)	31 (36.9%)	3.98	0.92
10	To what extent do you believe improving the selection interview and pre-employment check processes would enhance the success of IT projects at Awash Bank?	0 (%)	4 (4.8%)	10 (11.9%)	33 (39.3%)	37 (44%)	4.23	0.84
Grand mean							<b>3.88</b>	<b>1.36</b>

Source: **Survey Data (2024)**

Notes: **SD= strongly disagreed; DA = Disagreed. N= Neutral; AG = Agreed; SA Strongly Agreed**

As clearly shown in table 6 above, the overall grand mean score  $M=3.88$ . The results suggest that AB selection interviews and pre-employment checks play a significant role in ensuring new hires are aligned with both organizational culture and project goals. With relation to the effectiveness of the interview process in assessing a candidate's fit with the bank's organizational culture (mean = 3.73) and aligning candidates with IT project goals (mean = 3.62) are rated moderately agreed, indicating room for improvement but overall positive perception.

With regard to structured interview techniques are used fairly frequently (mean = 3.74), and respondents generally believe these methods contribute positively to the hiring process.

Pre-employment checks are considered highly important, particularly in verifying technical skills (mean = 3.85) and ensuring the suitability of IT hires (mean = 3.95). However, satisfaction with the current pre-employment check process (mean = 3.63) suggests that there may be areas in need of refinement to make the process more effective.

The results also show a strong belief in the predictive value of the interview process regarding future job performance (mean = 4.54), with respondents viewing the assessment of problem-solving skills as crucial (mean = 3.98). Furthermore, the majority of respondents believe that enhancing the selection interview and pre-employment check processes would significantly improve IT project success (mean = 4.23).

#### 4.6.Challenges faced in retaining skilled IT professionals

**Table 6: Challenges faced in retaining skilled IT professionals**

<i>NO</i>		<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>NU</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	How would you rate the current employee retention rate within IT project teams at Awash Bank?	0 (0%)	4 (4.8%)	28 (33.3%)	35 (41.7%)	17 (20.2%)	3.77	.827
2	How satisfied are you with the career development opportunities provided to IT professionals at Awash Bank?	1 (1.2%)	2 (2.4%)	25 (29.8%)	32 (38.1%)	24 (28.6%)	3.90	.887
3	To what extent do you believe work-life balance issues contribute to IT employee turnover at Awash Bank?	2 (2.4%)	2 (2.4%)	30 (35.7%)	30 (35.7%)	20 (23.8%)	3.76	.926

4	How competitive do you find the compensation packages for IT professionals at Awash Bank compared to other banks or IT companies?	1 (1.2%)	2 (2.4%)	22 (26.2%)	38 (45.2%)	21 (25%)	3.90	.845
5	How important do you consider mentorship programs in retaining IT talent at Awash Bank?	0 (0%)	3 (3.6%)	25 (29.8%)	27 (32.1%)	29 (34.5%)	3.98	.891
6	To what extent does Awash Bank provide opportunities for IT professionals to work on challenging and innovative projects?	2 (2.4%)	5 (6%)	16 (19%)	29 (34.5%)	32 (38.1%)	4.00	1.01 8
7	How satisfied are you with the recognition and rewards system for IT professionals at Awash Bank?	2 (2.4%)	4 (4.8%)	24 (28.6%)	30 (35.7%)	24 (28.5%)	3.83	.980
8	How often do IT professionals at Awash Bank receive feedback on their performance and career progression?	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.2%)	21 (25%)	39 (46.4%)	22 (26.2%)	3.95	.820
9	To what extent do you believe improving the work environment would enhance IT employee retention at Awash Bank?	0 (0%)	5 (6%)	19 (22.6%)	38 (45.2%)	22 (26.2%)	3.92	.853
10	How important do you consider team-building activities in improving IT employee retention at Awash Bank?	0 (0%)	5 (6%)	9 (10.7%)	41 (48.8%)	29 (34.5%)	4.12	.827
<b>Grand Mean</b>							<b>3.91</b>	<b>0.89</b>

Source: Survey Data (2024)

Notes: SD= strongly disagreed; DA = Disagreed. N= Neutral; AG = Agreed; SA Strongly Agreed

As clearly shown in table 7 above, the overall grand mean score  $M=3.91$ . The results suggest that there were several challenges faced by Awash Bank in retaining skilled IT professionals, with a grand mean score of 3.91 indicating moderate effectiveness of current retention strategies.

Respondents expressed a relatively high level of satisfaction with career development opportunities (mean = 3.90), suggesting that these initiatives are valuable but require further enhancement to better align with employees' professional goals. Work-life balance emerged as a notable factor influencing employee turnover (mean = 3.76), highlighting the need for policies that support employees in managing personal and professional responsibilities effectively.

Compensation packages for IT professionals were perceived as competitive (mean = 3.90), though there remains room for improvement to ensure alignment with industry standards. Mentorship programs (mean = 3.98) and opportunities to work on innovative and challenging projects (mean = 4.00) were identified as critical for retaining IT talent, emphasizing the importance of these developmental initiatives. Recognition and rewards systems (mean = 3.83) and regular feedback mechanisms (mean = 3.95) are moderately effective but present opportunities for refinement to enhance employee engagement and satisfaction.

Lastly, team-building activities were highly regarded (mean = 4.12) as an effective strategy for improving IT employee retention, demonstrating the value of fostering collaboration and camaraderie within teams. Addressing these challenges, particularly in areas like work-life balance, compensation, mentorship, and recognition, will strengthen retention efforts and support the success of IT project teams at Awash Bank.

#### 4.7. Performance of Human resource management Practices

**Table 7: Performance of human resource management practices**

<i>NO</i>		<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>NU</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	The IT projects at Awash Bank are completed on time.	5 (6%)	4 (4.8%)	29 (34.5%)	32 (38.1%)	14 (16.7%)	3.55	1.02
2	The IT projects meet the initial objectives and goals.	0 (0%)	5 (6%)	23 (27.4%)	29 (34.5%)	27 (32.1%)	3.93	0.92
3	I consistently perform well in the IT project team.	5 (6%)	4 (4.8%)	31 (36.9%)	28 (33.3%)	16 (19%)	3.55	1.05
4	I am satisfied with the overall work environment in the IT projects.	0 (0%)	10 (11.9%)	19 (22.6%)	37 (44%)	18 (21.4%)	3.75	0.93
5	Team members collaborate effectively in IT projects.	0 (0%)	4 (4.8%)	24 (28.6%)	27 (32.1%)	29 (34.5%)	3.96	0.91
6	I often experience changes in project scope or requirements.	2 (2.4%)	3 (3.6%)	27 (32.1%)	29 (34.5%)	23 (27.4%)	3.81	0.96
7	Communication barriers frequently affect the success of IT projects.	1 (1.2%)	2 (2.4%)	14 (16.7%)	22 (26.2%)	45 (53.6%)	4.29	0.91
	<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>3.83</b>	<b>0.96</b>

Source: **Survey Data (2024)**

Notes: **SD= strongly disagreed; DA = Disagreed. N= Neutral; AG = Agreed; SA Strongly Agreed**

As shown in the table 8 above, the results from the table provide valuable insights into the performance of IT projects at Awash Bank. Respondents expressed a moderate level of satisfaction

with various aspects of IT project management. For example, while IT projects are generally perceived as being completed on time (mean = 3.55), there is notable variability in responses, suggesting that delays are occasional. This is further reflected in the moderate score for consistent individual performance within IT project teams (mean = 3.55), with some variation in how respondents perceive their effectiveness within the teams.

In contrast, respondents are more positive about the alignment of IT projects with their initial objectives and goals, as evidenced by the higher mean score of 3.93, which indicates that projects typically meet their goals. Similarly, satisfaction with the overall work environment in IT projects received a mean score of 3.75, suggesting that while the work environment is generally seen as positive, there is still room for improvement.

Collaboration among team members is viewed more favorably, with a mean score of 3.96, reflecting effective teamwork in IT projects. However, there is a strong indication that changes in project scope or requirements are frequent, as indicated by the mean score of 3.81. This suggests that managing scope changes remains a challenge in maintaining project stability. The most notable concern, however, is communication barriers, which are seen as significantly affecting project success (mean = 4.29). The low standard deviation for this statement suggests a high level of consensus among respondents, highlighting communication as a critical area for improvement. Overall, the grand mean of 3.83 indicates a generally positive outlook on the performance of IT projects at Awash Bank. However, there are areas that require focused attention, particularly around improving communication, managing project scope changes, and ensuring that projects are consistently completed on time. Addressing these challenges will help enhance project success and team performance in the future.

Communication barriers frequently affect the success of IT projects (Mean = 4.29): Employees perceive communication barriers as a significant challenge to the success of IT projects. This high score indicates the need for management to prioritize improving communication processes to mitigate its negative impact.

Team members collaborate effectively in IT projects (Mean = 3.96): The relatively high mean score reflects positive perceptions of teamwork and collaboration among IT project team members. This is a strength that can be leveraged further to enhance project outcomes.

The IT projects meet the initial objectives and goals (Mean = 3.93): Employees believe that most IT projects align with their objectives and goals. However, there is still room to improve planning and execution to ensure projects consistently meet expectations. I often experience changes in project scope requirements (Mean = 3.81): This score suggests that changes in project scope or requirements are a recurring experience. While some flexibility is necessary in IT projects, management should ensure robust planning to minimize frequent changes that may disrupt workflows. I am satisfied with the overall work environment in the IT projects (Mean = 3.75): Employees generally express satisfaction with the work environment, though there is potential to enhance aspects such as support systems and resources to further improve satisfaction. The IT projects are completed on time (Mean = 3.55): This relatively lower score indicates concerns about timely project completion. Efforts should be made to improve time management, resource allocation, and adherence to project timelines. I consistently perform well in the IT project team (Mean = 3.55): Employees feel moderately confident in their individual performance within the team. This suggests a need for professional development initiatives to boost individual confidence and productivity. Grand Mean (3.83): The overall grand mean reflects moderately positive perceptions of HRM practices in IT projects. While employees recognize strengths in collaboration and meeting project goals, challenges such as communication barriers and project delays must be addressed for further improvements. The findings suggest that while employees have a generally favorable view of HRM practices, targeted interventions are needed to address communication issues, improve project completion times, and minimize frequent scope changes. By focusing on these areas, the organization can enhance employee satisfaction and project outcomes.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains of the deductions drawn from the analysis part and the suggestions forwarded by the investigator so as to identify Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and challenges in IT projects at Awash Bank.

#### 5.1. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The major purpose of this study was to assess the practices and challenges of project human resource management in IT projects at Awash Bank of Ethiopia. Specifically, it focuses on evaluate how effective, the recruitment and selection processes are in attracting and hiring qualified IT professionals, To evaluate the impact of candidate literacy and technical skills on the success of IT projects and How do selection interviews and pre-employment checks contribute to aligning new hires with the project goals and organizational culture at AB. Furthermore, the study also aimed at what challenges does AB face in retaining skilled IT professionals and what strategies can be implemented to improve employee retention within IT project teams in the bank. Likewise, the finding revealed that Awash Bank's recruitment and selection processes are generally well-regarded, particularly in terms of satisfaction with recruitment channels, the effectiveness of technical assessments, and the competitiveness of compensation packages. However, there are areas that could be improved, such as the clarity of job descriptions, employee referrals, and the overall effectiveness in meeting IT staffing needs. Similarly, Gatewood *et al.* (2015) emphasize that clear and detailed job descriptions are crucial for attracting the right candidates. Improving the clarity of job descriptions could help potential applicants better understand the role and increase the likelihood of finding the best fit. Besides., the findings suggest that Awash Bank's selection interviews and pre-employment checks are largely effective, with the majority of respondents viewing them positively in terms of aligning candidates with the organizational culture and IT project goals. However, there is still room for improvement, particularly in assessing cultural fit, aligning candidates with project goals, and refining the pre-employment check process to ensure it is as effective as possible. Thus Lievens & Chapman (2010)

point out that improving the recruitment and selection processes can positively impact organizational outcomes, such as project success, by ensuring that the right candidates are selected. The belief in the process's contribution to project success is supported by the evidence from the data. Moreover, The findings indicated that recognition and rewards (M = 3.83) and feedback mechanisms (M = 3.95) are moderately effective, but improvements in these areas could enhance employee satisfaction and retention. According to Cohen & Glickman (2015) emphasize that recognition and feedback play a crucial role in employee satisfaction and retention. Organizations that provide timely and meaningful recognition tend to retain employees longer. Besides, the findings indicated that the mean score of 4.29 for the impact of communication barriers on project success highlights communication as a critical area for improvement. The low standard deviation suggests a strong consensus among employees regarding the negative impact of communication barriers on project outcomes. Pinto & Slevin (1987) stress that communication is one of the most important factors in project success. The high score indicates that addressing communication barriers should be a top priority for improving the success of IT projects at Awash Bank

## **5.2. CONCLUSIONS**

The primary aim of this study was to evaluate the human resource management (HRM) practices and challenges associated with IT projects at Awash Bank. The findings provide valuable insights into the current state of HRM in this context and suggest actionable areas for improvement. The recruitment and selection processes at Awash Bank are positively regarded, with notable strengths in attracting diverse IT talent, efficient hiring practices, and effective technical assessments. However, enhancements are needed in areas such as clarifying job descriptions, leveraging employee referrals, and aligning hiring strategies with IT staffing needs to maximize effectiveness. Candidate literacy and technical skills are recognized as critical for the success of IT projects. While IT staff are generally perceived as competent, occasional skill gaps particularly in communication and documentation highlight opportunities for development. Addressing these gaps, alongside refining recruitment processes, can improve team collaboration and project outcomes. Selection interviews and pre-employment checks play an essential role in ensuring alignment between new hires, the organization's culture, and IT project goals. While these processes are generally effective, there is room for improvement in assessing cultural fit and project alignment. Refining these methods, especially in evaluating technical skills, could further

enhance the success of IT projects. Retention strategies at Awash Bank, though moderately effective, require attention in areas such as work-life balance, compensation, and career development. Initiatives such as mentorship programs, challenging projects, and team-building activities are vital for retaining skilled IT professionals. Additionally, strengthening recognition systems and feedback mechanisms will contribute to higher employee satisfaction and retention.

Overall, IT projects at Awash Bank are regarded as successful, particularly in goal alignment and team collaboration. However, issues such as occasional project delays, frequent scope changes, and communication barriers need to be addressed. Enhancing communication strategies and managing scope changes effectively will improve project success and team performance.

Finally, the study emphasizes that Awash Bank's HRM practices in recruitment, selection, retention, and project management show positive perceptions but reveal several areas for improvement. Addressing these challenges, particularly in communication, scope management, and retention strategies, will enhance overall IT project success and employee satisfaction.

### **5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are provided to the relevant stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness of HRM processes and boost the success rate of IT projects at AB S.C. of Ethiopia.

The organization should regularly assess skill gaps within the team and provide targeted learning opportunities to address deficiencies. This can be achieved through periodic performance reviews, skill assessments, and feedback mechanisms. Based on the analysis, targeted training and professional development programs should be introduced to bridge the gaps.

To attract a wider and more diverse pool of qualified IT candidates, Awash Bank should explore new and varied recruitment channels. This could involve utilizing online job platforms, engaging in industry conferences, and building partnerships with universities and technical institutions to expand recruitment efforts. These approaches would help tap into emerging talent and ensure a steady flow of skilled professionals into the organization.

To ensure that new hires are better aligned with the specific needs of IT projects, Awash Bank should involve IT project managers in the interview process. By including project managers, the recruitment team can assess candidates' skills, experiences, and qualifications in the context of the

bank's current and future IT project requirements. This alignment will help ensure that new hires have the necessary expertise to contribute effectively to the success of IT projects, reducing the potential for skill mismatches and enhancing project outcomes.

To enhance work-life balance and reduce turnover, Awash Bank should consider implementing flexible working hours and offering remote work options. These measures would allow employees to better manage their personal and professional responsibilities, leading to increased job satisfaction. Additionally, the bank should introduce wellness programs focused on both mental and physical health, providing resources such as stress management workshops, fitness initiatives, and counseling services. These efforts would promote employee well-being, reduce burnout, and contribute to higher retention rates. Based on the significant impact of communication barriers on project success, it is recommended that Awash Bank prioritize the improvement of communication processes within its IT project teams. This can be achieved by implementing regular updates, establishing clearer communication channels, and utilizing collaborative tools to enhance information sharing and coordination among team members. To enhance employee motivation and engagement, Awash Bank should develop a transparent and consistent recognition system that acknowledges both individual and team achievements. This system should be clearly communicated to all employees and implemented regularly to ensure fairness and visibility. Additionally, the bank should celebrate key milestones and successes through company events, awards, and performance-based incentives. By recognizing contributions and celebrating achievements, the bank can foster a positive work culture, boost morale, and encourage ongoing high performance among its employees. Finally, the researcher encourages future scholars to conduct more in-depth and wide-ranging studies on this topic. This study can serve as a solid foundation and inspire further investigation into the role of HRM practices in the success of IT projects. By exploring this area in greater detail, future research can offer valuable insights, leading to a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities within HRM processes, especially in Ethiopia's banking and IT sectors. This, in turn, could contribute to enhancing HR practices and improving the successful execution of IT projects in organizations.

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**APPENDICES**  
**Appendix 1: Research Questionnaires**  
**ADDIS ABEBA UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF COMMERCE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT**  
**Questionnaire to be filled by Awash Bank's IT projects Employees**

**Research topic:** The practices and challenges of project human resource management in it projects at awash bank

**Dear Respondent,**

You are invited to participate in a research study on the Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and challenges in IT projects at Awash Bank. The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect valuable insights and data that will help us assess the effectiveness of HRM practices, recognize challenges, and suggest strategies for improvement, specifically within the context of IT projects. Your responses will be crucial in shaping a deeper understanding of the current practices and identifying areas for growth. Your responses are crucial in helping us achieve the objectives of this study. Your responses will be kept completely confidential and used exclusively for research purposes. We value your privacy and ensure that all information provided will not be shared with any external parties.

Please answer the following questions based on your experience and knowledge.

Thank you for your time and valuable contribution to this research.

Sincerely,

Yadessa Miressa

**Section I: Demographic Information**

**1. Gender:**

Male

Female

**2. Age:**

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

>65

**3. Marital Status:**

Single  Married  Divorced  Widowed  Separated  In a domestic partnership

**4. Education Level:**

No formal education  Primary  Secondary  Tertiary  Postgraduate

**5. Employment Status:**

Employed full-time   
 Employed part-time   
 Self-employed   
 Unemployed   
 Retired

**6. Monthly Income Level (in ETB):**

Less than 10,000   
 10,000 - 20,000   
 20,001 - 30,000   
 30,001 - 40,000   
 More than 40,000   
 Prefer not to say

**Section 2: Main body**

**Objective 1: To assess the effectiveness of recruitment and selection processes in attracting and hiring qualified IT professionals for Awash Bank's IT projects.**

Please rate the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5, where: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral and, 4 = Agree

S.N	Question	1	2	3	4	5
1	How satisfied are you with the current recruitment channels used by Awash Bank to attract IT professionals?					
2	How would you rate the clarity of job descriptions for IT positions at Awash Bank?					
3	How do you rate time taken to fill an IT position at Awash Bank?					
4	How effective do you find the screening process in identifying qualified IT candidates?					
5	To what extent does Awash Bank use technical assessments in the hiring process for IT professionals?					
6	How would you rate the competitiveness of Awash Bank's compensation packages for IT professionals?					
7	How effective is Awash Bank in attracting diverse IT talent?					

8	How often does Awash Bank use employee referrals for recruiting IT professionals?					
9	How would you rate the overall quality of IT professionals hired by Awash Bank in the past year?					
10	To what extent do you believe the current recruitment and selection processes at Awash Bank are capable of meeting the bank's IT staffing needs?					

**Objective 2: To evaluate the impact of candidate literacy and technical skills on the success of IT projects at Awash Bank.**

Please rate the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5, where: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral and, 4 = Agree

S.N	Question	1	2	3	4	5
1	How important do you consider technical skills in determining the success of IT projects at Awash Bank?					
2	To what extent do you believe the current IT staff at Awash Bank possesses the necessary technical skills for project success?					
3	How often do you encounter technical skill gaps that hinder IT project progress?					
4	How important do you consider literacy skills (reading, writing, communication) in determining the success of IT projects at Awash Bank?					
5	To what extent do literacy skills impact collaboration within IT project teams?					
6	How often do literacy skill gaps lead to misunderstandings or errors in IT projects?					
7	How would you rate the overall impact of literacy skills on the quality of IT project documentation?					
8	To what extent do you believe improving technical skills would enhance IT project outcomes at Awash Bank?					
9	To what extent do you believe improving literacy skills would enhance IT project outcomes at Awash Bank?					

**Objective 3: To analyze the role of selection interviews and pre-employment checks in ensuring the alignment of new hires with the project goals and organizational culture at Awash Bank.**

Please rate the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5, where: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral and, 4 = Agree

S.N	Question	1	2	3	4	5
1	How effective do you find the current interview process in assessing a candidate's fit with Awash Bank's organizational culture?					
2	To what extent do selection interviews at Awash Bank focus on assessing a candidate's alignment with IT project goals?					
3	How often are structured interview techniques used in the IT hiring process at Awash Bank?					
4	How important do you consider pre-employment checks in ensuring the suitability of IT hires?					
5	To what extent do pre-employment checks at Awash Bank verify a candidate's claimed technical skills?					
6	How satisfied are you with the current pre-employment check process at Awash Bank					
7	How often do you believe misalignments between new hires and project goals are identified during the probationary period?					
8	To what extent do you believe the current interview process accurately predicts a candidate's future job performance?					
9	How important do you consider assessing a candidate's problem-solving skills during the interview process?					
10	To what extent do you believe improving the selection interview and pre-employment check processes would enhance the success of IT projects at Awash Bank?					

**Objective 4: To investigate the challenges faced by Awash Bank in retaining skilled IT professionals and recommend strategies to improve employee retention within IT project teams.**

Please rate the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5, where: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree

S.N	Question	1	2	3	4	5
1	How would you rate the current employee retention rate within IT project teams at Awash Bank?					
2	How satisfied are you with the career development opportunities provided to IT professionals at Awash Bank?					
3	To what extent do you believe work-life balance issues contribute to IT employee turnover at Awash Bank?					
4	How competitive do you find the compensation packages for IT professionals at Awash Bank compared to other banks or IT companies?					
5	How important do you consider mentorship programs in retaining IT talent at Awash Bank?					
6	To what extent does Awash Bank provide opportunities for IT professionals to work on challenging and innovative projects?					
7	How satisfied are you with the recognition and rewards system for IT professionals at Awash Bank?					
8	How often do IT professionals at Awash Bank receive feedback on their performance and career progression?					
9	To what extent do you believe improving the work environment would enhance IT employee retention at Awash Bank?					
10	How important do you consider team-building activities in improving IT employee retention at Awash Bank?					