



**Assessing the Integration of IT in the HRM of Ethiopian Electric Utility
(EEU)**

By Mekdes Mesfin

**A research project submitted to Addis Ababa University School of Commerce,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts in
Business Leadership (MBL)**

Advisor: Solomon Markos (PHD)

June, 2023

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Addis Ababa University
College of Business and Economics
School of Commerce

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Statement of Declaration

I, Mekdes Mesfin, declare that this study with the title: Assessing the Integration of IT in the HRM of Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU) is my genuine work under the supervision and direction of Solomon Markos (PHD). I would also like to assert that all reference materials I used for this study have been properly recognized.

Name: Mekdes Mesfin

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Certification

This is to certify that Mekdes Mesfin has carried out this research project work on the topic titled —Assessing the Integration of IT in the HRM of Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU) under my supervision. This work is original in nature and it is sufficient for submission for the partial fulfillment for the requirements of the award of Masters of Art in Business Leadership.

Name: Solomon Markos (PHD)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF BUSSINESS AND ECONOMICS

SCHOOL OF COMMERCE

Assessing the Integration of IT in the HRM of Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU)

By Mekdes Mesfin

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Abstract

Employing IT for the accomplishment of activities in business organizations has been an area of discussion in HR leadership. Thus, this study sought to assess the implementation of IT integration in the HRM of Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU). Specifically, attempts were made to address how the IT integration practices looked like, what perceived effects the IT integration practices brought about and what possible challenges experienced during IT implementation. Descriptive survey design was employed and both quantitative and qualitative instruments such as questionnaire and semi-structure interview were employed. A questionnaire involves response rate rank from 1 to 5 in the form of google survey. By using descriptive statistics by mean and standard deviation, the data collected through questionnaire were analyzed in the form of descriptive statistics. The qualitative data of the interview were analyzed in thematically. The practice of IT integration in various activities of EEU seemed to be prominent ,The findings of all instruments showed similar results that the participants appeared to employ IT integration in various HRM activities such as performance appraisal, employee's tardiness and absenteeism, salary and bonus payments and general evaluation of the HRM performance. Moreover, some challenges like cost of time finance for training, and readiness employees for IT based service rendering were pointed as challenges that IT experts would like to know. The employees' training and awarness creation on the usage of IT need to give due attention for minimizing cost of time and resouce in the process the IT integration. Generally, the integration of IT in the HRM system for the effective management of business organizations should be given due to attention and it should not be considerred as too demanding or unattainable other than for the developed world.

Keywords: *Human Resource Management, Information Technology, IT integration, integration challenge*

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

EEU- Ethiopian Electric Utility

ERP- Enterprise Resource Planning

GRM – General Resource Management

HR- Human Resource

HRIS- Human Resource Information System

HRM- Human Resources Management

ICT- Information Communication Technology

IT- Information Technology

SAP- System Analysis Program

Std.Deviation – Standard Deviation

UPS- Uninterruptible Power Supply

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CHAPTER ONE: - INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to show the general framework of the study which guided the researcher to keep in track. In this chapter, the problems which triggered the researcher to study on are discussed; and the basic research questions that this study was expected to answer are revealed so as to meet the general and specific objectives driven from those research questions. The practical and theoretical significance of the study are elaborated by showing the boundary of this research.

1.1 Background of the Study

The concept of Human Resource Management (HRM) has been an area of focus in theories of management for ensuring achievement of business goals effectively and efficiently. Employees' reward of material and psychological resulted from a good leadership entails significant success on companies' productivity and profitability (Osibanjo et al., 2012) and the issue of HRM has been taken as the most valuable asset having the greatest potential in determining the fate of an organization in today's competitive business world (Belete et al., 2014). Performing HRM activities by using Information communication technology (ICT) or commonly called Information Technology (IT) has been an addition to the success of leadership in the present-day business undertakings.

Integration of ICT led for HRM has become common and found effective for business organizations to increase efficiency and effectiveness in the process of achieving their business goals the business to a higher level of production and communication. According to Mete and Una,Khadim et.al (2012), IT not only increases the efficiency and effectiveness of human resource practices but also decreases the cost and time of operation, and the issue of human resource information system (HRIS) has become one component of HRM practices (Saleem, 2012).

According to Bawany (2018), the integration of ICT into HRM involves a series development: industrial revolutions as the transport and mechanical production revolution of the late 18th century, the mass production revolution of the late 19th century, and the computer revolution of the 1960s and these explain why technology has become the engine of growth for so many years. Since 1969, IT has been developed into digital technology and went beyond the 1980s to become the 4th digital revolution in which Internet connectivity began to dominate whole world.

For example, Information Technology was introduced to trade and industry in the 1970s in order to perform procurement of raw materials for the industry and this system was called as an electronic system of Material Requirement Planning (MRP) (Andy and Sinan, 2017). Moreover, the Information Technology became popular in business organizations in 1981 particularly referring to the machine and systems used to create, store and distribute information (Evans, 1990). Management acceptance to use IT greatly depends on employees' ability to learn new skills for self-development and organizational performance (Booth, Goodman, and Kirkup, 2010).

Generally, Human Resource Management (HRM) is a multi-disciplinary organizational role which derives its theories and ideas from various fields of study (Zorlu, 2009) and the application of IT in Human Resource Management leads to effective cost control management and timely response to the needs of employees and customers' demand (Long, 2009). The human resource management is an important aspect needed in administration for effective and efficient utilization of resources in which IT integration has been as a facilitative role to achieve the desired origination goals (Talabi, 2003). In other words, HRM requires the involvement of Information Technology as a strategy and coherent approach to the management of organization's most valued assets, the people (Armstrong, 1996; Turner and Turner, 1994).

In this study, "Information Technology (IT)" and "Information and Communication Technology (ICT)" are used as synonyms both are commonly referred to computers, the Internet, digital network/devices and various digital applications that are used with these tools (Ilom€aki, 2008).

Despite the IT integration of HRM found be effective in bringing about change on the organization's achievement and sustainability (Turner and Turner, 1994), little has been known

about Ethiopian business organizations on their utilization in the HRM system. Therefore, this study, attempts assess the extent of the IT integration, its effects and challenges in Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU).

1.2 Background of the Organization

Electric power was introduced to Ethiopia in the late 19th century, during the regime of Minilik. The first generator was given to Atse Minilik around the 1898 to give light to the palace.

Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation (EEPCO) a sole state owned electric power service provider for domestic and industrial sector hence, contributing a great deal for the development of the nation economy and infrastructure. The organization is reestablished as Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU) by 2014, has transformed to its current position from the former Ethiopian Electric power and authority (EELPA), Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation (EEPCO)., in order to improve the operations and services of the electric utility company, the Company was divided into two independent entities, the Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP) and Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU).

Currently, the Enterprise delivers electric utility decentralized based on the eleven Regional States and two Cities of the Country each led by Deputy Chief Officers. The total eleven Regional strategic business units have their own human resource administration offices where their policy and manuals are developed and distributed centrally from the Corporate HR Management and Development Directorate (EEU Delegation of Power).

The Corporate HR Management and Development Directorate Office have eleven subunits or functionally organized offices (EEU Organizational Structure). By the time this study conducted, the total number of the employees was more than 22,000 which have been deployed at different districts and offices of the company.

1.3 Statements of the Problem

Human resources management is a process that controls the human resources functions of an institution and an organization such as planning, organizing, leadership, recruiting, and control (Bingöl, 2017). These basic functions need to be considered to achieve a functional standard of the event. Human resources management cooperates with the strategy of achieving the mission and goals of an organization through which a contemporary Human Resource Information System (HRIS) serves as a dynamic data base about employees' performance and demographic information, provides information about employees' data, employment, application requirement, job characteristics, and selection and staffing, procedures of employment, corporate structure, professional and individual improvement, education costs, performance appraisal, personnel planning, organizing etc. And these HR related data and processing system are used for many purposes simple or complex (Lippert and Swiercz, 2005; Bernik et al. 2007).

Specifically, HRIS has been employed to carry out the main functions of human resources management as to determine the qualifications of the personnel needed, select and recruit the appropriate personnel, create the desired business culture, train the personnel for managerial positions and to provide and develop communication. Human resources management using HRIS attempts to bring effective balance between the employees and the strategic goals of an institution or organization (Bingöl, 2017).

Despite positive experiences of IT integration or utilization into HRM showed, less attention has been given to the discussion about how IT could be integrated into HRM and what effects and challenges are facing in the process. Concerning this, research works have been conducted on how the introduction of IT in HRM impacted the practice of human resource management in many organizations. Several studies indicated positive effects about the role of IT. For example, Karanja et al (2017) studied the influence of ICT integration in the Kenyan Universities' HRM practices. Lecturers and senior administration officers selected from the oldest universities were participated in the study. The result showed that participants perceived IT to have a positive influence on HRM; the influence was markedly on HR administrative functions such as employee's record management and payroll administration. It was however minimal on the more

strategic applications such as staff recruitment and selection, training and development as well as performance management.

Another study by Methuku and Ramadan (2013) examined the integration of IT into HRM and they showed that many of employees had access to IT services though they failed to use IT in the intended activities. Research still interested in examining ICT integration (Paolo et al, 2010) and the study analyzed the main reasons for using IT in HRM. They indicated IT was used for increasing HRM efficiency, reducing cost of personnel handling, and facilitated communication as well as quality internal climate. The study further identified the key factors that limit the effectiveness of ICT investments and revealed the insufficient financial resources, difficulties in organizational change, and difficulties in the ICT use by employees. The study further noted that HR Departments themselves did not involve actively in the development and governance of ICT.

The previous studies on IT integration of HRM focus on either utilization and its impact or barriers experienced in the use of IT for HRM. They do not seem to investigate the whole picture of IT integration that consists of IT usage or practice, impacts and challenges behind the implementation. Therefore, assessing the process of IT integration, will give a clear picture of decision makers who would like to introduce IT for the human resource management. As long as the researcher's reading, little studies has been conducted in Ethiopian context concerning the integration of IT in HRM though HRM requires IT for successful organizational achievement of goals.

1.4 Research Questions

The thesis, therefore, attempts to investigate integration of IT in HRM in Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU). Specifically, this study attempts to address the following research questions.

- ❖ To what extent the HRM in EEU employ IT in its activities?
- ❖ What perceived impacts IT integration exert on HRM of EEU?
- ❖ What challenges faced in the process of HRM integration in EEU.

1.5 Objectives of the study

1.5.1 General Objective

The general objective of this research is to assess the integration of IT in human resource management in Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU).

1.5.2 Specific Objectives

This study is planned to address the following objectives.

- ❖ To investigate the practices or integration of IT in HRM of EEU.
- ❖ To assess the possible impacts of IT integration in HRM in EEU.
- ❖ To examine the challenges of IT integration in HRM in EEU.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Human Resource (HR) –the people of an organization employs to carry out various jobs in exchange for salaries (Abraraw, 2022)

Human Resources Information System (HRIS) – the application of information technology for

managing human resource activities such as selecting, appraising and training.(Kananu and Nyakego,2015)

IT practices – it is like HRIS, using information technology for performing HR activities

IT integration to HRM – the attempts the organizations make to employ or practice IT for their HRM activities.(Daniel Karanja,2016)

IT challenges – the problems that employees or the organization face in implementing IT.

1.7 Significance of the Study

Examining the integration of IT in HRM could benefit several stakeholders. Firstly, the result of this study helps employees to have awareness about using IT for HRM. Secondly knowing the integration of IT in HRM by top managers in EEU will be increased and they will be willing to provide the necessary support and facilities for integrating IT in their organization. Thirdly this study helps the stakeholders of EEU to have more information about the extent of using IT in the organization. Last but not least examining the IT integration in to HRM at EEU gives other researchers opportunities to researching further the area.

1.8 Scope of the Study

As stated earlier, the study intends to assess the integration opportunities for human resource management in EEU. This study, therefore, focuses on Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU). Besides, this study will emphasize on a mere description of the practices HRM activities attempts to use IT tools. A deeper analysis of cause-effect relationship on the deployment of IT and corresponding results will not be done. Rather, the participants' perceived impacts of IT deployment in their HR roles will be assessed in addition to their reflections on the challenges facing in the process of utilizing IT.

1.9 Organization of the Study

This study has five chapters. Introduction, review of related literature, methodology, results, discussion, conclusion and recommendations. The introduction chapter presents background of the study, statement of the study, objectives of the study, its significance and others. Chapter two includes the review of related literature that gives some highlights about the HR and IT integration. It describes the roles of HRIS in enhancing achievement of goals for originations. Chapter three sets out the methodology section which consists of research design, data sources, instruments and the like. Chapter four presents the results that include the quantitative, qualitative data and discussion on the general findings. The last chapter, chapter five presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: LITRATURE RIEVIEW

2.1 Overview of IT in HRM

In the process of establishing organizations for certain purpose, human resource has become one of the major aspects for maintaining institutions active and running their intended business. Managing resources also determines the success of the organizations as it mainly involves recruiting and selecting the required manpower, supporting and following up activities and appraising employees' performance. All of these HR roles have been done in a traditional or manual means before the introduction of information communication technology.

These days, as Johnson and Gueutal (2011) state, HR has been supported with information technology that facilitates many of HRM practices. For example, with the help of IT HR design the system in a way data can be recorded and reviewed at multiple levels of details that employees can see relationships among measured behaviors, performance expectations and rewards. Besides, using IT system employees' job performance success and failure can be capture data to support continued them improve their performance. Moreover, virtually most organizations use technology to automate payroll processes.

E-compensation systems provide much more value than the simple automation of payroll processes. Even E-compensation uses web enabled technology to help managers design, implement and administer compensation policies.

Generally, researchers stated that HRIS allows organizations to manage the compensation planning process, to model proposed changes in compensation plans, to track employee compensation history, to allocate incentive pay and bonuses, and to provide higher quality information to decision makers.

2.2 The Role of IT in HRM

Currently, technology has changed many of the things in HR management. According to Rohilla (2015), there are several main functions IT could play for HR. First, using IT in HRM reduces cost. That is, storing various files of employees in hard sheets require space and packing mechanism while the software manage it in a simple mechanism. Even accessing the stored files becomes difficulty unless automated means developed for it. Secondly, HRIS provides easily and accessibly information about employee's data such as job characteristics, employment application requirement, selection and staffing, the procedure of employment, professional and individual improvement, corporate structure, educational costs, performance appraisal, organizing, personal planning etc (Lippert and Swiercz, 2005).

According to Dusmanescu and Aleksandra (2011) HRIS could perform the following roles.

- **Collection and monitoring:** applications for employment or online recruiting that allows candidates to apply for a certain/ position in the company, but also for HR department to collect and process the received applications. After collecting applications, generating reports with statistics about labor market in the country, monitoring of interviews and the score assigned by the staff responsible for their evaluation, monitoring of job descriptions, keeping internal statistics on employees, auto-tracking and analysis of profiles of candidates, creating a list of emails (for sending circulars), making online remarks etc.

- **Record keeping:** creating personal data bases of all employees for some purposes like regular and emergency contact with the employee, data on all previously received wages (wage history), data on absenteeism from work, trainings and certificates, estimates the characteristics of employees, information on possible disciplinary action, injuries at work, and data that companies can define by itself, unless they are part of a standard software package.

- **Payroll:** automates the pay process by collecting data on employee time and attendance, calculating various deductions and taxes, and generating periodic pay cheques and employee tax reports.

▪ **Benefits Administration:** administration of employee participation in various forms of benefits such as pension plans, buying life insurance policies, but also in the distribution of shares of the company or division of profits. The fastest and cheapest way to maintain the beneficiary database is ability of online access to the data by the employees.

▪ **Training:** providing a system for organizations to administer and track employee training and development efforts. tracking the education level of employees, their qualifications and / or skills. IT is used for storing and displaying various types of courses, books, lectures or materials that are suitable for web learning.

▪ **Performance management:** continuous monitoring and evaluation on effectiveness of HRM to realize whether the objectives are met and which segment should improve. This system contains features for monitoring system performances, which provides valuable information for the management of the company.

▪ **Employee Self-Service:** allowing employee, together with professionals in HR department to manage the employee's database. With the right permission they can access their data with read-only or change status. Depending on the exact solutions data access can be provided within Intranet (safety is increased) or through the Internet (in which case the company has greater availability of data).

Generally, companies which provide adequate IT for the human resource departments have the opportunity of attracting quality expertise to boost their business (Tubey, Rotich, and Kurgat, 2015).

Organizations install the information technology in various mechanisms, however there are three major approaches as discussed below.

1. On-premise, or purchase and install - the organization will purchase and install hardware and software on internal machines supported by internal IT staff. This can be relatively time-consuming, but traditionally was the only approach available.

2. Hosted, or application service provider - applications are purchased and installed for the organization, but they are located at the vendor's site and supported by external IT staff.

3. Software as a service (SaaS) - the firm does not purchase or install any software. Instead, the organization subscribes to software that is developed and deployed remotely and accessed via a web browser. Vendors offer many organizations access to the same package and will maintain the software for each organization. This mechanism is less attractive to organizations that already have invested heavily in HR technology as they already spent resources for IT.

2.3 Research on Integration of IT in HRM

The key areas in the study include IT availability, opportunities and practice. Availability seeks to find out the presence of IT resources in the selected organizations for the human resource management unit. The opportunities and practice explain the level at which human resource practitioners use IT to enhance their operations or daily activities. It is significant to emphasize that the study is not basically about evaluating the performance and the progress made by these selected organizations towards the realization of their set of targets, but on the examination of a possible link between the deployment and exploitation of IT within the human resource unit in relation to the organizational achievement. It is also to illustrate the possible impact that IT could have as an enabling tool for socio-economic development in an organization. Information, knowledge and technology are increasingly becoming the key drivers for socio-economic development world-wide and IT is dramatically changing our way of life.

Particular research works conducted worldwide concerning the use of IT in HR management. For example, Patil (2019) assessed E-HRM applications and effectiveness, and HRIS. The survey result indicated that biggest challenges confronting modern human resource (HR) capacities is being able to demonstrate how hierarchical value is created through its technological initiatives, leadership projects, and development arranging and reward strategy. Another study also conducted examined the magnitude of IT and its application in human resource management. The study considered four private organizations (Akpamah and Matko, 2022). The survey result

showed that that IT application in HR functions enhances organizational productivity. The selected organizations could boast of basic IT facilities, but their numerical strength still remains a challenge especially among organizations in the public sector. Organizations in both sectors must invest more in IT and its related accessories as a means of solving problem of inadequacy. Internet connectivity and company website were lacking in some organizations across both sectors and should be considered so as to improve upon the human resource functions and quality service delivery in the deprived regions of Ghana. Staff motivation, wage and salaries, strategic management and organizational leadership were mentioned as factors.

2.4 Theoretical Framework of the Study

A theoretical framework was developed to discuss Information Technology on human resource management. Information Technology is divided into two major types namely: IT for converting or processing data into information such as calculators, typewriters and computers, and IT for communicating data and information from one place to another which includes telegraph, telephone and computer networks (Aquilano and Chase, 1995) The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) defined IT as technologies people use to share, distribute, gather information, and to communicate through computer networks (Booth, Goodman, and Kirkup, 2010) In this study, IT is viewed as a set of tools that can be used to process, avail and access information and communication services or products. The services and products may include hardware and software, Internet, telephones/mobile phones, typewriter, photocopy machines, radios, televisions, hydraulic machines used in industries among others.

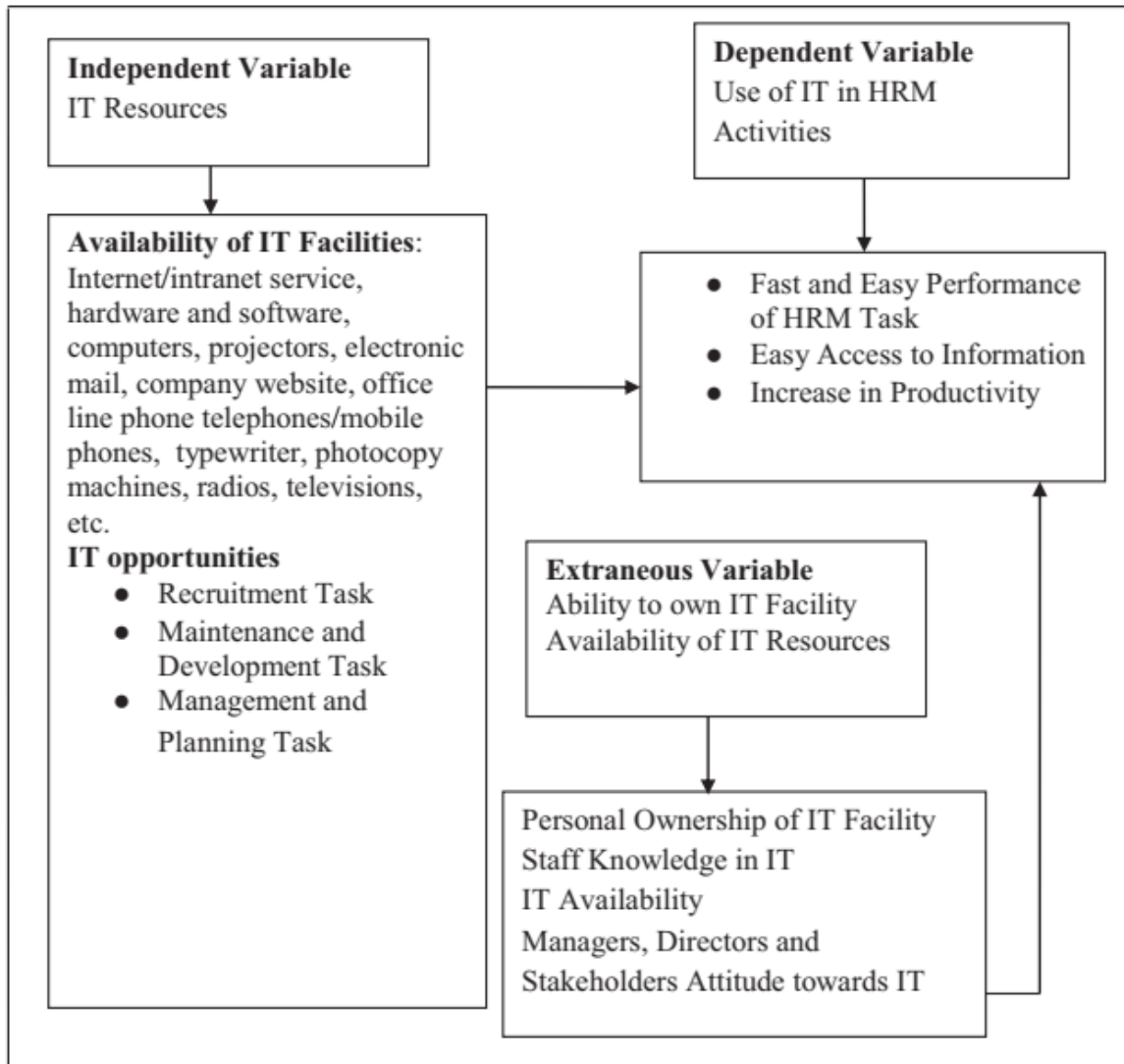


Fig. 1. The Information Technology availability model (Akpamah and Matko, 2022).

As the above fig. 1 shows, the integration of IT in the HRM system has interdependent variables such as IT resources and use of IT in HRM activities. The other extraneous variables such as ability to own IT facility and resources. Generally, this framework could depict the research purposes this study attempts to address.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHDOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the overall methodology the study employed for conducting the problem, IT integration. First the design and approach of study is stated. Next, data types and sources as methods are discussed. Then, procedures of data collection and analysis are presented. Finally, consideration of ethical issues is stated.

3.2 Research Design and Approach

This study attempts to examine the experience of IT integration in a corporate institute, EEU. To this end, a descriptive survey combining both quantitative and qualitative data was employed by taking one institute EEU. Considering one institute only will enable this study to investigate the extent and level of IT integration in a thorough manner with manageable financial and material provision. This study, then, used the quantitative and qualitative research approaches by employing both a survey and qualitative data collection instruments that enabled it mixed the findings.

3.3 Types of Data, Sources of Data and Data Collection Method

This study considered the EEU for conducting IT integration assessment. The organization is basically structured into three components such as head office, district office and customers service center. Of course, the head office is located in Addis Ababa while the districts found in the regions and each regional office has some branches of the customer service centers. Despite the geographical diversity among the branches, all districts of EEU and the head office are working in a similar environment with a single employees' HR administrative guideline. Thus, most of the HRM directives and privileges of employees are descended from the center, Addis

Ababa. Therefore, this study involved the head office one district office and a customer service center.

The EEU has more 22, 000 employees including the contract basis and formal employees. This study, then, involved 52 participants (29 females and 23 males, see Table 4.1). The selection process was convenience sampling. That is, 55 email addresses were collected with the help of a few officers working in the EEU. The 52 participants responded to the google survey or questionnaire after two days. The general background information was presented in Table 4.1.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

This study employed two instruments such as questionnaire and interview for data collection. Details for instrument is given.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

This study used questionnaire for collecting data on the practices or integration opportunities, the perceived impacts of using IT and the challenges of using IT in the HRM. Items of the questionnaire were prepared and adapted from related questionnaires of other researchers (Akpamah and Matko, 2022; Patil, 2019) and the draft questionnaire was pilot tested with a reliability coefficient of Cronbach alpha 0.76. The questionnaire had four sections. The first section or sets of questions (6 items) were on participants' background information. The second section (11 items) consisted of items on the IT integration practices. The third section (8 items) was perceived effects of IT implementation. The fourth or the last section (6 items) focused on challenges facing in the IT integration process. The main parts of the questionnaire were designed in the form of likert scale: strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1).

3.4.2 Interviews

This study employed semi structured interview with three participants for addressing the participants' reflections on the practices, impacts and challenges of IT implementation in HRM. Some of the areas for the interview were:

- ❖ The major HR activities employees use IT for performing effectively.
- ❖ The advantages employees experience as a result of using IT
- ❖ The difficulties employees facing in using IT for their activities

Therefore, some pertinent questions were prepared for conducting the interview before the interview session.

3.5 Procedure of Data Analysis and Presentation

A series of steps were followed in the process of data collection using questionnaire and interview. First, the questionnaire was displayed in google survey to 55 officers at EEU and 52 employees responded the filled in questionnaire after two days. Next, the interview was conducted with three officers at Addis Ababa EEU head Office and District Office. Finally, the collected data were made ready for the analysis (by cleaning and feeding into SPSS 23, and transcribing audio collected).

The quantitative data were analyzed in the form of descriptive statistics for knowing the status of IT integration practice, its perceived effect and challenges faced. The interview data were also analyzed thematically.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

This study was considerate in respecting the ethical issues related to research. This study informed the participants about the purpose of the study before involving in the study process. The profile of the participants was also kept confidential and usage of appropriate languages and materials in the process of data collection and analysis were taken into consideration.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The study has two main parts such as the survey data, the interview data. Each part is detailed one by one.

4.2 Data from the Questionnaire

The participants' responses to each of the 25 items- questionnaire are presented and in addition to the participants' background information, three thematic areas such as IT practices, perceived impacts of IT and challenges of IT integration are discussed.

Table 4.1 Participants' background information

Category	Details	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	23	44.2
	Female	29	55.8
	Total	52	100
Age	Below 25	5	9.6
	26-35	24	46.2
	36-55	21	40.4
	Above 55	2	3.8
	Total	52	100
Education level	Diploma and below	4	7.7
	First degree	36	69.2
	Masters and above	12	23.1
	Total	52	100
Work experience	Below 1 year	1	1.9
	1-10 years	34	65.4
	11-20 years	11	21.2
	Above 20 years	6	11.5
	Total	52	100
Current place of assignment	Head office	21	40.4
	Region office	9	17.3
	District office	18	34.6
	Customer service center	4	7.7
	Total	52	100
Current position	High level manager	9	17.3
	Middle level manager	24	46.2
	Low level manager	6	11.5
	Expert	13	25.0
	Total	52	100

As the Table 4.1 above shows, various elements of the participants' background are presented. Slightly a greater number of female participants are responded to the survey questions (29, 55.8%). Considerable numbers of participants are also in the middle age (26-35 years) (24, 46.2

%). Besides, a significant number of participants or employees have a first degree (36, 69.2%). Moreover, a greater number of participants have sufficient experience (1-10 years) (34, 65.4%). Even, slightly a greater number of participants are from head office (20, 40.4%). Considerable numbers of participants are middle level managers (24, 46.2%).

Generally, the participants of the study reflect a slight number of females, middle-aged, first-degree holders, have sufficient work experience, a slight number of participants are from head office and considerably more participants are middle level managers. Therefore, describing this background of the participants would help readers of the study to adequate awareness about the composition of the respondents in which the study results could be affected in one way or the other. This study, however, does not have the purpose to see these background differences' impact on the stated variable of the study.

Table 4.2 Employees' IT practices

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
using IT in Job Position Inventory	52	3.00	0.92
using IT in recruitment	52	3.48	1.18
using IT in employee selection	52	3.23	0.82
using IT in training human resource	52	3.62	0.80
practicing IT in job position selection	52	3.50	0.98
practicing IT in evaluation	52	3.42	1.22
using IT in performance appraisal	52	3.25	1.05
using IT in tardiness and absenteeism	52	3.63	0.95
using IT in personnel files/skills inventory	52	3.79	0.79
employing IT in general administration.	52	3.71	0.90
using IT in HR government reports	52	3.75	0.81
overall It practice	52	3.55	0.92

Table 4.2 above shows mean and standard deviation responses to individual items on IT practicing areas. the participants reported using IT in the majority of activities related to HR (e.g., Mean,3.62, std,0.08; 3.5,0.98; 3.63,0.95; 3.79; 3.71,0.90 & 3.75,0.81; training, job selection, tardiness and absentees, personnel follow up, general HRM and government report respectively). The overall experience of practicing IT also indicates mere functioning of IT in the various HR activities (Mean, 3.55 and Standard deviation, 0.92 for IT overall practicing). This implies that the participants tend to use IT to some extent in executing the HRM practices.

The interview also confirm this finding that, for instance, the employees started using IT for performing HR file management, employees’ salaries and benefits settlement and personnel’s’ performance appraisals and evaluations.

Table 4.3 Perceived effects of IT integration

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
IT reduces cost of HRM	52	4.46	0.56
IT facilitates HR government reports	52	3.94	0.67
IT enhances HRM efficiency.	52	4.40	0.64
IT improves HRM ability	52	4.34	0.70
IT improves HRM service quality	52	4.31	0.74
IT creates reliable & responsive HR functions	52	4.22	0.78
IT facilitates interaction & communication	52	4.54	0.53
IT increases productivity	52	4.54	0.67
IT increases efficiency of the company	52	4.08	0.64
overall perceived impact	52	4.29	0.70

As Table 4.3 above indicates the mean and standard deviation responses of participants to the possible effects of integrating IT in the HRM. The responses to all of the eight items on the positive impacts of using IT are significant (e.g., Mean, 3.94 Std, 0.67; 4.40, 0.64 and 4.34, 0.70; facilitating HRM, enhancing efficiency, improving HRM ability respectively). The mean and standard deviation of responses to the overall effects of IT integration also shows significant perceived importance (Mean, 4.29, and Standard deviation, 0.70). That is, the participants believed that IT integration practices in the organization produced important changes on the status of the organization. Similarly, the interview data strongly supports this survey result that all of the interviewees acknowledged the relevance of IT utilization for the organization's improvement.

Table 4.4 IT integration challenges

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Lack of awareness of IT	52	4.46	0.73
Lack of commitment from top level management	52	4.27	1.02
Lack of appreciation of IT as a tool for HRM	52	4.08	0.65
Poor strategy for linking IT to the organizational vision and mission	52	4.19	0.80
Lack of IT integration system in the HRM	52	4.1	0.63
Lack of funding for IT integration & continuity	52	4.38	0.73
overall challenges	52	4.24	1.02

The above Table 4.4 shows the mean and standard deviation responses of the participants to the possible challenges during IT integration. The mean and standard deviation responses to all of

the challenges in the integration of IT for HRM show significant degree of support (Mean, 4.46, Std, 0.73; 4.27, 1.02; 4.08, 0.65 & 4.19, 0.08; lack of awareness, lack commitment, lack of appreciation, and poor strategy respectively). The mean and standard deviation responses to the overall challenges also indicate a prominent figure on the challenges facing during IT integration (Mean, 4.24 and Standard deviation, 1.02).

The interview data also supports this finding that all of the interviewees stated some prominent challenges such as financial constraint, awareness problem and sense of resistance against the IT integration. the IT challenges seemed to reveal for Integration of HRM.

4.3 Data from Interview

This study conducted interview with three respondents (one female two male employees) working in the EUU,. They had six to nineteen years of experience. All of the interviewees stated that they began their career in the organization as ordinary employees with no position, but now all have managerial positions from simple department head to general HR manager.

The important inquiries were forwarded to each interviewee: IT practice, perceived IT effect and challenges in IT utilization. Concerning the practice of using IT for GRM, all the interviewees noted that they have already started utilizing IT. For example, an interviewee said “yeaw it is the day of technology. Everything is related to IT; IT concerns employees’ profile management.” Besides, our office has already been automated”. From this response, we could learn that the organization started using IT in managing the human resource and related activities. Even, one of the interviewees remarked the date of using IT by saying “ “ “ starting from 2019, we have been using IT”.

Another respondent detailed how IT is being used in HRM system:

Performance of employees usually feed in the system, individual employee’s performance. Our organization has used competency performance

management. Based on that, after feeding the system, every reward, salary increment, bonus and other benefits are paid based on such performance management. . (Interviewee 3: May 29,2023)

The respondents were also required to react to the effects they observed as a result of using IT in the HRM activities. The two respondents acknowledged the contribution IT has brought as they noted below.

Definitely, IT has immense benefits. It increases the quality of work, it reduces time taken for performing HR activity, IT minimizes problems related to manual HR activities. It has, indeed several significances. Some forgotten and missing files due to manual procedures could be solved as the system itself kept recorded they become easily accessible and no frequency of letter writing among departments on cases; the system handles everything now. (Interviewee 2: May 29,2023)

Using It. Many activities have been managed easily. Paper based works have already been lessened, the man power requirement for messengers and series of exchange of letters have reduced. To facilitate the activities and avoid manual touches It helped a lot. Even, the cost of time and money, we believed have been reduced. (Interviewee 3: May 29,2023)

The respondents seem to agree unanimously that IT has changed the way HRM is done in a positive way. They believed that much the activities of HR have been performed with the help IT brought significant change on reducing cost and increasing quality of service delivery.

The last point the respondents were asked about was the possible challenges they faced in integrating IT in their HRM practices. All of them acknowledged some challenges as they noted below:

Challenge was there, the challenge was one our employees' education background are office works whereas our organization performance technical activities. Therefore, to train our employees on IT we took much time- to train the employees and to disseminate the training package to individual employees, we took too much time. Even, after the training, the IT implementation was minimal and we had to further give the training again. (Interviewee 3: May 29,2023)

The challenge, to use IT you need to have manpower, second as employees were manual, they fear change, the third, infrastructure cost, it needs finance very much. Fourth, the big change when you start using IT, you are connected; you will be exposed to the siber attack and huge amount of money is incurred because of this security prevention. (Interviewee 2: May 29,2023)

The main challenge was the quality of manpower problem. Most of the employees were new to computer technology. Second, transfer of data into automated form was a challenge as there are some profiles organized poorly. Besides, the training and the preparation stage took much more time. (Interviewee 1: May 29,2023)

In other words, the interviewees noted various problems they faced in the implementation of IT in their HRM. They stated problems related to employees' lack of awareness or capacity that needed a series of training, the requirements huge costs of infrastructure and the possible cyber attack because of the online platform.

Generally, data from the interview showed that the interviewees had almost similar responses to the three inquiries such the practice of IT, its impacts and challenges. all of the interviewee confirmed using IT for their HRM activities like tracking employees' profile, performance appraisals, and determination of bonus, rewards and other benefits. Besides, all the interviewees noted positive effects IT had on the organization's HRM system that service quality, efficiency and work facilitation have revealed because of the IT integration. Moreover, they unianimously noted the some challenges faced in the IT implementation process that cost of time and money for training, and infrastruaction provisions.

4.4 Discussion

This study attempted to assess the IT integration of EEU. How the office implemented IT, what perceived effects hold about and what challenges faced in the IT practices of HRM were the focus areas. Findings from the three instruments such as questionnaire and interview showed considerable similarity that the participants found to be using IT in their HRM activities. The perceived effects IT could brought about were also revealed that IT had positive effect on the overall success of the organization. Besides, the challenges the IT integration affected were identified as problems of awareness, cost of training and cyber security.

This result on the practice or integration of IT in HRM seemed unexpected or unusual. That is, one may not expect such IT integration development in an organization like EEU due to our existing socioeconomic condition where many people still need manual based services because of lack of skills and exposure to the technology. On the other hand, the results on perceived effects could be expected as employees may trust the technology to benefit the organization in terms of, for example, cost minimization and reduction of workload. Several people perceive IT

in a positive manner that like perform their duties using softwares as people think they reduce power and cost of time finance. So, perceiving the IT integration in the target organization, EEU positively could be common. The findings on the challenges could also be the expected ones that, in a normal condition, new things require some sort of awareness that needs training and incur costs. Most of the responses on the challenges such as time and finance could be the commonly expected problems that a new form of technology installation requires. So, there is nothing new concerning the challenges of the IT integration. However, one particular concern stated in the challenges, reflected on the qualitative data, was the issues of cyber security and this could be an issue of discussion in the world of only economics and business but also politics. That is, IT integration in the system of an organization requires a strong precautions on how to overcome or control cyber security issues.

The findings such as the IT integration, positive perceived effects, prominent challenges of the IT integration that all revealed in the study, become in consistence with Akpamah and Matko's (2022) study which showed IT application in HR functions enhancing organizational productivity, boast basic IT usage and facilities and inadequate accessories noted as a challenge. This study's result also supported Patil's (2019) study on E-HRM applications and effectiveness where the application of IT in HRM and resulted effects revealed dominantly significant.

Generally, the findings of the study appear to be in congruence with the theories that IT support system is advocated for further organizational achievement of goals. The empirical evidences shown in the above research findings also confirmed that IT integrated HRM maximizes the productivity and efficiency of organizations.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

This study attempted to address the IT integration practices in EEU, the perceived effects the IT integration practices brought about and the possible challenges experienced during IT implementation. Descriptive survey design was employed and both quantitative and qualitative instruments such as questionnaire and semi-structure interview were employed. The data collected through questionnaire were analyzed in the form of descriptive statistics. The qualitative data of the interview were analyzed thematically. Generally, the findings are presented as follows.

- ❖ The first objective was on the practice of IT integration. Concerning this, the findings of all instruments showed similar results that the participants appeared to employ IT integration in various HRM activities such as performance appraisal, employee's tardiness and absenteeism, salary and bonus payments and general evaluation of the HRM performance.
- ❖ The second objective was about the perceived effects of the IT integration. The participants' perceived effects on integrating the IT in the EEU became positive that both the quantitative and qualitative data indicated their conception that IT could contribute a lot to the improvement of their service delivery. For example, all the items about cost effectiveness in time, efficiency, competitiveness, etc. were rated higher mean score. The interview data also confirm it.
- ❖ The third objective was about the challenges of the IT integration. The data on quantitative and qualitative showed considerable degree of difficulties or challenges they could face in using IT. For example, the items about the challenges showing time, material costs were rated higher. The interview data also noted that participants reported

cost of time and finance for training, and lack readiness employees for IT based service rendering were pointed as major difficulties.

5.2 Conclusions

In light of the findings stated above, the following conclusions were made.

The practice of IT integration in various activities of EEU seemed to be prominent. That is, The quantitative and qualitative data revealed that EEU has been using IT for managing several activities related to HRM. The employees' performance appraisal, rewards, bonus, and HR report and general management evaluation activities were performed with IT support system (Table 4.2).

The perceived effect of IT practices in the EEU appeared to be positive. All data sources such as the questionnaire, interview and field observation revealed that the IT integration could enhance and facilitate the efficiency and quality of HRM system. That is, the positive roles that IT assumed to play for the EEU's success of goals were rated positively (Table 4.3). The interview data also indicated strong support for the contributions of IT integration in the organization's success.

The IT integration process in the EEU could face some challenges. The quantitative and qualitative data revealed the IT implementation challenges that the respondents noted. (Table 4.4). That is, lack of awareness about IT, time taking training and infrastructure costs considered as deterring difficulties facing during the IT integration process. As the interview data revealed, considerable length of time were taken to training the employees on IT usage and the employees were not easily adapted with the technology. They required a series of training and retraining as well as closer follow up to make a real integration of IT in the stated organization, EEU.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions above, the following recommendations could be made:

- ❖ The top Managers of an organization must be curious about Using IT for HRM and other departments could be commendable for achievement of organizational goals effectively and efficiently. That is, the integration of IT in the HRM system for the effective management of business organizations should be given due to attention and it should not be considered as too demanding or unattainable other than for the developed world. We can make it real here in Ethiopia like EEU trying to show.
- ❖ Employees Have a positive perception to the effect of IT integration into their activities to perform their best without human error. EEU entails that organizations like EEU or others should meet the interest of employees for integrating IT package in the working system. Otherwise, the employees may think that their organization does not go with the technology and needs much more advancement to compete with the global world. Not meeting the demands of employees may result in dissatisfaction on the part of employees and productivity will be questioned.
- ❖ The organizations must have a strong preparation and readiness for IT implementation would facilitate the effective utilization of IT in the HRM system. The employees' training and awareness creation on the usage of IT need to give due attention for minimizing cost of time and resource in the process of IT integration. Therefore, companies must be aware of the conditions needed to install IT in their HRM activities.
- ❖ Many organizations face IT integration challenges could be common to every organization like EEU and having more awareness about them would help managers solve the difficulties ahead of time. That is, having the challenges does not mean not trying to implement IT integration in the HRM system. The benefits of the IT integration would outweigh the difficulties facing for IT implementation.

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Appendix A: questionnaire

Employees Questionnaire (To be filled by employees)

Addis Ababa University

School of Commerce

Dear Respondent,

The main purpose of this questionnaire is to gather data for a research purpose entitled “Assessing the integration of IT in the HRM of Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU)”: The information obtained from you will be valuable for the study and your open and honest response is much appreciated. Your response to the questionnaire would be kept confidential and it has no intention except for academic purpose.

Thank you for your cooperation in advance.

Mekdes Mesfin

Part I: Respondents demographic information

Please circle your choice of the alternatives given.

1. Gender: A. Female B. Male
2. Age group
A. Below 25 B. 26 to 35 C. 36 to 45 D. 46 to 55 E. Above 55
3. Education level
A. Diploma and Below B. First Degree C. Masters and PhD
4. Work experience in EEU
A. Below 1year B. 1-10 years C. 11 -20 years D. above 20 years
5. Current Place of Assignment
A. Head Office B. Region Office C. District Office D. Customer Service
6. Current Position
A. High level Manager B. Middle level Manager C. Low level Manager D. Expert

Part Two: IT integration/practice in human resource management

Please indicate with "√" How Human Resource Management Practice using IT which is practicable in EEU,

No	Areas of IT practice	Strongly agree.	Agree.	Strongly disagree.	Disagree.	No idea
1.	I use IT for job position inventory.					
2.	I employ IT for recruitment Using Internet.					
3.	I use IT for employment selection.					
4.	I use IT for employees' management.					
5.	I employ IT for training human resource.					
6.	I use IT for performance evaluation.					
7.	I use IT for performance appraisal of employees.					
8.	I use IT for tardiness and absenteeism analysis.					
9.	I use IT for personnel files/skills inventory.					
10.	I employ IT for general administration.					
11.	I use IT for HR government reports.					
	Perceived effect of IT integration in HRM					
12.	Using IT in human resource management reduces costs.					
13.	Using IT in human resource management enhances efficiency					
14.	Using IT in human resource management gain company's competitive position over their competitors					
15.	IT improves the human resource management ability for a sustainable management of knowledge.					
16.	IT determines the consistency of quality delivering of service to retain customers					
17.	IT is reliable and easily responsive to human resource functions.					
18.	IT facilitates easy interaction within and beyond the organizational setting which could lead to prudent management and high productivity.					
19.	IT based human resource management increases productivity					
20.	IT based human resource management increases efficiency of the company.					
	Challenges in integrating IT in the HRM					
21.	Lack of awareness and mindset among staff affects the practice of IT.					
22.	lack of commitment from top level management impacts our practice of IT.					
23.	Lack of appreciation of IT as a tool for organizational transformation influences our IT practice.					
24.	Poor strategy in making IT responsive to the					

	organizational vision and mission affect our practice.					
25.	Lack of a systematic method of system implementation- integration of IT in HEIs influence our IT practice.					
26.	Lack of funding for sustainability and continuity in maintenance, replacement of equipment and emolument of IT staff who maintain the systems.					

Appendix B: Interview

Some General Questions for the Interview

1. How long have you been here in this organization? In which position you are working on?
2. Do you employ IT in your HRM duties and responsibilities? Which aspects of the HRM You use IT?
3. What effect you think has IT in your HRM?
4. Do you face challenges in using IT for HRM? State some of them.



Figure 1 Attendance management

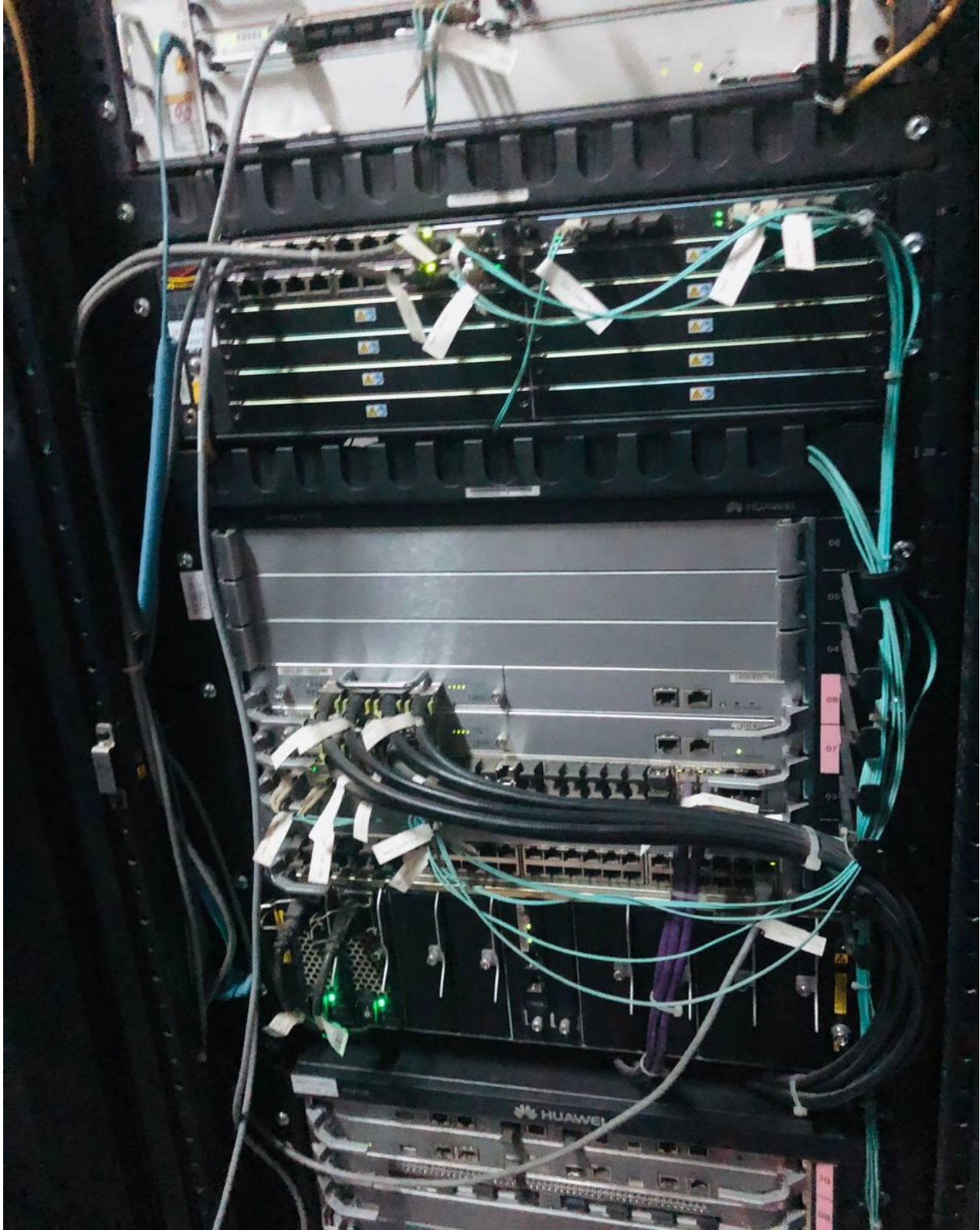


Figure 2 Switch and Router