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Articulating a model to enhance the effect of e-HRM on sustainable competitive advantage

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CITATION

Nyathi M. (2024). Articulating a model to enhance the effect of e-HRM on sustainable competitive advantage. *Human Resources Management and Services*, 6(1): 3421.
<https://doi.org/10.18282/hrms.v6i1.3421>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 15 December 2023
Accepted: 7 February 2024
Available online: 15 February 2024

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Abstract: Purpose: This paper articulates a model that maximizes the use of e-HRM to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. It examines the indirect effects of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage, through job satisfaction, employee performance, and perceived organizational politics. **Design/methodology/approach:** A survey approach was used to collect data from 30 organizations. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the study sample. The SPSS PROCESS Macro for running mediation analysis was used to analyze data. **Findings:** The findings show the indirect effect of e-HRM on sustainable competitive advantage through job satisfaction, employee performance, and perceived organizational politics. Job satisfaction has the biggest effect on achieving strategic outcomes. For organizational excellence, e-HRM use should complement other HRM practices. **Practical implications:** Management should pay attention to employee outcomes during the implementation of e-HRM. This study broadens the scope of the interaction between e-HRM use and sustainable competitive advantage. This study was conducted in a developing economy and demonstrated that the effects of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage are not limited to developed economies. **Originality/value:** This study is one of the pioneering efforts to develop a model that maximizes organizational outcomes in developing countries. In addition, this study contributes to the understanding of intervening variables necessary to enhance information technology's potential within the HR function.

Keywords: e-HRM use; sustainable competitive advantage; job satisfaction; employee performance; perception of organizational politics

1. Introduction

The adoption of electronic-human resource management (e-HRM) in organizations is premised on delivering value-adding organizational performance (Bondarouk et al., 2009; Obeidat, 2016; Parry, 2011; Strohmeier and Kabst, 2014). The effects of implementing e-HRM have yielded more favorable results at the organizational micro-level than at the macro-level. Both favorable and unfavorable effects have been consistently documented. Considering the cost of operationalizing e-HRM, these discrepancies are harmful to its adoption and implementation.

The need for variables that mediate the effect of e-HRM on organizational competitiveness has been suggested but not explored (Obeidat, 2016; Strohmeier and Kabst, 2014). To date, studies on the effect of e-HRM on sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) have focused on the explanatory role of technology (Strohmeier, 2007). Such an approach does not explain the contradictions of this phenomenon in organizations. This study seeks to model the effect of utilizing e-HRM on SCA by focusing on the mediating effect of job satisfaction, employee performance, and perceived organizational politics. This paper recommends a model that delivers the full potential of this phenomenon.

2. Literature review

Over the last three decades, “tried and tested” business strategies have offered limited success in helping organizations achieve sustainable competitive advantage. The resource-based view considers the distinctive capabilities of organizations as the basis for achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Armstrong, 2008). Several studies have confirmed the positive impact of strategic human resource management (SHRM) on sustainable competitive advantage (Bondarouk and Ruel, 2013; Obeidat, 2016; Parry, 2011). Human resource (HR) practices and systems influence organizational effectiveness through individual behaviors (performance outcomes) (Marler and Fisher, 2013; Manzoor et al., 2019).

“Organizations do not start from nowhere when they embark on the e-HRM path” (Nyathi, 2021). Human resource management (HRM) practices are a starting point. The implementation of HRM practices that pave the way to the effective use of information technology is a prerequisite to the adoption of e-HRM. These practices equip employees with the capabilities needed to use e-HRM systems (Bondarouk and Ruel, 2009). An effective talent management system creates value for organizations (Wahyudi and Park, 2014). When treated as an independent variable, e-HRM is a causal agent for business process improvements.

e-HRM use: E-HRM is defined as “the implementation and delivery of HR functionality enabled by a human resource information system (HRIS) that connects employees, applicants, managers and the decisions they make” (Johnson et al., 2016). Bondarouk (2014) defines e-HRM as “a field of scholarly inquiry that focuses on all integration mechanisms and all HRM content shared via IT that aim to make HRM processes distinctive and consistent, more efficient, high in quality and which create long-term opportunities within and across organizations for targeted users.”

Employee performance: Employee performance is the total expected value that an individual adds to an organization over a defined period of time (Diamantidis and Chatzoglou, 2019). There are two aspects to this definition. First, employee performance is indexed by behavior. The second implication is that employee performance contributes to organizational value addition (Robbins and Judge, 2017).

Job satisfaction: Job satisfaction refers to the extent to which a worker is satisfied with the rewards s/he receives from his job, particularly in terms of intrinsic motivation (Judge et al., 2020). It contributes to the achievement of recognition, better rewards, and promotion. Job satisfaction also refers to how employees feel about their work. It is therefore a representation of employees’ beliefs, feelings, and perceptions about their work.

Perception of organizational politics: Organizational politics refers to the premeditated use of power by individuals to satisfy their personal interests and goals within the workplace. However, this phenomenon is not a concrete and objective concept. Employee behavior is therefore a response to perceptions of organizational politics (Bouckenooghe et al., 2015). Perception of organizational politics (POPs) is a process by which employees assign meaning to workplace practices after undergoing organization and interpretation of their sensory process (Landells and Albrecht, 2017).

Sustainable competitive advantage: Sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) is a condition in which an organization implements a value-creating corporate strategy

unrivaled by current or potential competitors. In addition, competitors cannot duplicate the benefits of such a strategy due to the rarity, inimitability, and valuableness of its dynamic capabilities (Abideen, 2018; Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000). The internal and external strategic resources of an organization are the basis of SCA (Armstrong, 2007; Barney et al., 1991; Haseeb et al., 2019).

e-HRM and sustainable competitive advantage link: The transaction cost theory (1991) provided the framework for understanding this link. According to this theory, organizations are motivated by a desire to reduce costs. This desire explains organizational arrangements. Poisat and Mey (2017) argue that “cost saving is the driving force behind organizations’ complex, partially outsourced, partially decentralized, and partially delegated e-HRM systems.” The use of information technology (IT) is a process enabler, allowing efficiency gains to be realized (Cordella, 2006).

e-HRM complements SHRM initiatives (Marler and Fisher, 2013; Obeidat, 2016). The adoption and implementation of e-HRM is aimed at maximizing the strategic capabilities of the HR function, by allowing HR professionals to focus on strategic initiatives such as talent management.

Empirical research shows the existence of a positive relationship between e-HRM use and value creation in organizations (Bondarouk et al., 2017; Panos and Bellou, 2015; Ruel and der Kaap, 2012). There is however a lack of consistency in the manner in which e-HRM creates value for organizations. e-HRM use “is only one aspect generating HR value; contextual facilitating factors are of great importance as well” (Ruel and der Kaap, 2012). This study is based on the presupposition that organizations need to invest in e-HRM systems in order to create operational, relational, and transformational value (Ruel and der Kaap, 2012). Therefore, the first hypothesis is as follows:

H₁: The use of e-HRM has a direct and positive effect on sustainable competitive advantage (path c in **Figure 1**).

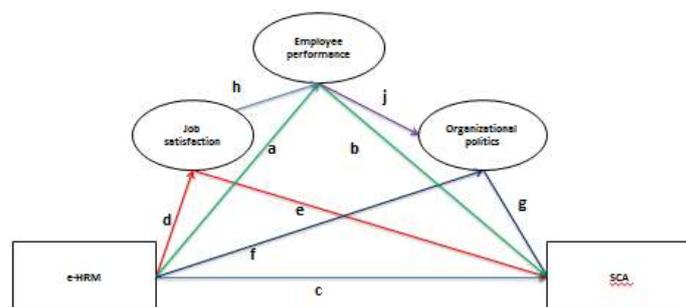


Figure 1. Study model.

e-HRM and employee performance: Some studies posit that e-HRM has an indirect effect on employee performance. The utilization approach (1975), task-technology fit (1995), and technology-performance chain (1995) models represent early attempts to link information technology to employee performance. The utilization approach is based on the assumption that the performance of employees should improve if information technology is used extensively. There is therefore a positive correlation between increased use of IT and employee performance. However,

this approach has been criticized because it assumes that all IT systems are voluntary and accepted by users. Involuntary systems demotivate employees, thereby lowering their performance.

The task-technology fit model (1995) states that performance impacts will result if information technology provides “features and support that fit the requirements of a task, performance impacts will result” (Goodhue and Thompson, 1995). However, because it is based mainly on the use of the system itself, the fit alone does not lead to an increase in performance. The technology-to-performance chain model, which integrates the other models, better explains the relationship between the use of IT and employee performance (Goodhue and Thompson, 1995).

The Autor-Levy-Murnane (ALM) model/task model (2003) identifies routine and non-routine tasks. “Routine jobs have a higher probability of being automated whereas non-routine jobs are more difficult for technology to absorb” (Melian-Gonzalez and Bulchand-Gidumal, 2016). Programmable tasks are easier to perform, resulting in improved employee performance. Therefore, the second hypothesis is as follows:

H₂: The use of e-HRM has an indirect and positive effect on sustainable competitive advantage through employee performance (path ab in **Figure 1**).

e-HRM and job satisfaction: Many studies have confirmed the positive effect of SHRM on job satisfaction (Armstrong, 2008; Kulkarni, 2014; Poisat and Mey, 2017). Vertical and horizontal integration of HR practices allows HR professionals’ jobs to have skill variety, task identity, task significance, feedback, and autonomy. Tasks with these characteristics exhibit high levels of intrinsic motivation. The adoption and implementation of e-HRM positively affect job satisfaction.

The JCM theoretical proposition was used to explain the association of e-HRM with job satisfaction. Bravo et al. (2016) presented two views on the effect of IT on employee behavior. First, automating technology deskills jobs, leading to employee dissatisfaction. Demotivation sets in and job dissatisfaction levels increase when employees lack the skills and abilities to manage requisite e-HRM technology (Sykes et al., 2014). Acquiring new routines and competencies creates more challenges and stress, leading to job dissatisfaction (Sykes et al., 2014; Tafti et al., 2007). Second, information technology liberates employees, removes monotony, and enriches jobs, leading to increased job satisfaction (Bravo et al., 2016). If employees evaluate the use of e-HRM positively, positive employee behavior such as commitment and job satisfaction should result. Therefore, the third hypothesis is as follows:

H₃: The use of e-HRM has an indirect and positive effect on sustainable competitive advantage through job satisfaction (path de in **Figure 1**).

e-HRM and perception of organizational politics: The use of e-HRM on perceived organizational politics can be viewed from the ‘institutional theory with sensemaking theory’ lens. The adoption of any new practices in an organization presents anxiety among employees. In an effort to reduce this anxiety, employees begin a process in which they make sense of proposed changes. In this sense-making process, they develop specific assumptions, attitudes, and expectations of the new practices. This sensemaking shapes subsequent attitudes and actions towards it. On the basis of perception, they can either resist or support the implementation of information systems. Resistance partly explains the unintended consequences of the use of e-HRM.

Most organizational studies show organizational politics as an organizational

stressor that negatively affects employee and organizational performance (Bodla et al., 2014; Perrewe et al., 2012). Few studies have focused on the positive effect of organizational politics on the performance of project team members (Saeed et al., 2013). According to Khalid and Ishaq (2015), perceived organizational politics constitutes an important aspect of organizational life that affects employee and organizational performance in one way or the other.

All information systems redistribute power: They empower one group of employees whilst disempowering another. Those who are disempowered are more likely to resist its adoption, while those who are empowered are more likely to support such organizational change (Gonzalez and Geovany, 2021). This power distribution affects employee and organizational performance. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is as follows:

H₄: The use of e-HRM has an indirect and positive effect on sustainable competitive advantage through perceived organizational politics (path fg in **Figure 1**).

Assuming causality amongst the three mediators, serial mediation analyses were carried out. The fifth hypothesis is as follows:

H₅: The use of e-HRM has an indirect and positive effect on sustainable competitive advantage through job satisfaction, employee performance, and perception of organizational politics in serial (path ahjg in **Figure 1**).

3. Study model

The use of e-HRM is depicted as directly affecting sustainable competitive advantage. It also indirectly affects sustainable competitive advantage through job satisfaction, employee performance, and organizational politics. Job satisfaction, employee performance, and perceived organizational politics are hypothesized to play mediating roles, as presented in **Figure 1**.

4. Methodology

Sampling procedures: The data used in this study are from 30 organizations in Zimbabwe using e-HRM systems. The survey targeted companies from 12 sectors of the economy. Two inclusion criteria were used to select the participating companies:

- 1) The participating companies should have had a minimum staff establishment of 100;
- 2) At the time of sample determination, they should have implemented e-HRM systems for a minimum period of three years.

The key informants were HR managers, line managers, other HR professionals, and IT employees.

The inclusion criteria were based on the significant resource requirements of e-HRM systems. The use and maintenance of e-HRM systems are partly determined by the size of an organization (Haines and Lafleur, 2008; Strohmeier and Kabst, 2009). Three years have been considered long enough for e-HRM systems to be entrenched in organizations (Bondarouk and Ruel, 2013; Parry and Tyson, 2011). Using a stratified convenience sampling method, 510 respondents were drawn from the population.

A “drop and pick” method was chosen to administer the instrument. This method

was preferred for its relatively higher response rate (Baruch and Holton, 2008). In total, 325 responses were received, constituting a 64% response rate.

Measures: Measures of e-HRM use, sustainable competitive advantage, job satisfaction, employee performance and perception of organizational politics were necessary to assess the direct and indirect effects of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage. All variables were measured on a 5-point Likert scale.

e-HRM use scale: A two dimensions instrument, with “strongly agree” and “strongly disagree” anchors measured e-HRM use. The scale has been used in studies carried out by Wahyudi and Park (2014) and Obédait (2016). The two dimensions are system usefulness and perceived ease of use.

Employee performance: Employee performance was measured using a three-dimensional instrument (Goodman and Svyantek, 1999). The three dimensions are contextual performance, conscientiousness, and task performance. Some studies have established the instrument to be reliable and valid Yusoff et al. (2014).

Job satisfaction scale: A Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, with “strongly satisfied” and “strongly dissatisfied” anchors was used. The dimensions were intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction.

Perception of organizational politics scale: A Kacmar and Carlson (1997) scale was used. It has two dimensions “supervisor behavior” and “pay and promotion policies.” The instrument is reliable as well as high on concurrent validity across cultures (Brubaker, 2012).

Sustainable competitive advantage: A 9-item scale, based on the resource-based value theory was used. These items were originally developed by Ruel et al. (2007) and Panos and Bellou (2016). They focus on the transformational outcomes of using e-HRM. This study treats the construct as a dependent variable.

5. Results

Demographic profile of respondents: 50.5% of the respondents were female, and 49.5% were male. The respondents were drawn from the following sectors: Beverages (16%), mining (15.1%), banking (8.3%), insurance (3.4%), tertiary education (9.5%), retail (2.2%), agriculture (7.1%) agro-industrial (6.8%), food (7.1%), building (5.5%), industrial (5.5%) and technology (8%).

Descriptive statistics: **Table 1** presents the mean scores, standard deviations, and Pearson correlations for the five variables. The table shows that e-HRM use is positively related to job satisfaction, employee performance, perceived organizational politics, and sustainable competitive advantage ($r = 0.227, P \leq 0.01$; $r = 0.179, P \leq 0.01$; $r = 0.244, P \leq 0.01$, and $r = 0.549, P \leq 0.01$ respectively). Job satisfaction, employee performance, and perceived organizational politics were positively related to SCA ($r = 0.588, P \leq 0.01$; $r = 0.304, P \leq 0.01$; $r = 0.315, P \leq 0.01$ respectively). Employee performance positively correlates with perceived organizational politics and job satisfaction ($r = 0.271, P \leq 0.01$; $r = 0.275, P \leq 0.01$, respectively). Job satisfaction was positively related to perceived organizational politics ($r = 0.181, P \leq 0.01$). These findings support the direct and indirect effects of e-HRM use on SCA.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations for variables under study.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Age	46 yrs.	0.911	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2 Experience (Tenure)	12 yrs.	1.16	0.820**	-	-	-	-	-	-
3 Position	-	-	-0.238**	-0.186**	-	-	-	-	-
4 Perceived politics	4.08	0.511	0.093	0.067	-0.010	-	-	-	-
5 SCA	4.26	0.482	0.109	0.028	-0.097	0.315**	-	-	-
6 Job satisfaction	3.80	0.560	0.054	0.018	-0.055	0.181**	0.588**	-	-
7 e-HRM use	4.45	0.525	0.110*	0.041	-0.151**	0.244**	0.549**	0.227**	-
8 Employee performance	4.10	0.450	0.189**	0.170**	-0.120*	0.271**	0.304**	0.275**	0.179**

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). $N = 325$.

Assessing the structural model: To test the five hypotheses, regression analyses were performed using PROCESS macro in SPSS. The lower and upper levels of the regression coefficients were calculated based on a 95% level of confidence. A mediation hypothesis is insignificant if the confidence interval (95%) spans “0”. The mediation hypothesis is significant if it fails to span “0”.

Regression analyses:

Hypothesis 1: There exists a direct effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage.

e-HRM use has a positive and statistically significant effect on sustainable competitive advantage ($\beta = 0.5254$, $se = 0.0448$, $P < 0.05$). This model is significant, explaining 29.9% of the variance in sustainable competitive advantage as a result of e-HRM use. Hypothesis 1 is accepted. An increase in the use of e-HRM should see improved sustainable competitive advantage (see **Table 2**).

Table 2. Serial mediation.

Path	coeff	P	LLCI	ULCI	Decision
e-HRM \rightarrow SCA $R - sq = 0.2987$	0.5254	0.0000	0.4373	0.6136	Supported
	Indirect Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	Decision
TOTAL	0.1387	0.0276	0.0879	0.1955	-
e-HRM $\rightarrow js \rightarrow$ SCA	0.0799	0.0238	0.0362	0.1295	Supported
e-HRM $\rightarrow ep \rightarrow$ SCA	0.0131	0.0099	-0.0041	0.0353	Unsupported
e-HRM $\rightarrow op \rightarrow$ SCA	0.0206	0.0105	0.0032	0.0438	Supported
e-HRM $\rightarrow js \rightarrow ep \rightarrow op \rightarrow$ SCA	0.0004	0.0004	-0.0003	0.0014	Unsupported
e-HRM $\rightarrow js \rightarrow ep \rightarrow$ SCA	0.0189	0.0076	0.0062	0.0357	Supported
e-HRM $\rightarrow ep \rightarrow op \rightarrow$ SCA	0.0042	0.0030	0.0003	0.0119	Supported
e-HRM $\rightarrow js \rightarrow op \rightarrow$ SCA	0.0016	0.0016	-0.0011	0.0054	Unsupported

Key: *ep*, employee performance; *js*, job satisfaction; *op*, perception of organizational politics; e-HRM, e-HRM use; SCA, sustainable competitive advantage.

Hypothesis 2: There exists an indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage through employee performance.

The indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage in serial is positive but statistically insignificant. ($\beta = 0.0131$, $BootSE = 0.0099$). Zero is

sandwiched by the confidence interval (−0.0041 to 0.0353). The mediation model fails to identify partial mediation linked to employee performance. Hypothesis 2 is therefore rejected (see **Table 2**)

Hypothesis 3: There exists an indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage through job satisfaction.

The indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage (**Table 2**) is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.0799$, $BootSE = 0.0238$). Zero is outside the confidence interval (0.0362 to 0.1295). The mediation effects model identifies partial mediation linked to job satisfaction. Hypothesis 3 is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis 4: There exists an indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage through organizational politics.

The indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.0206$, $BootSE = 0.0105$). Zero lies outside the confidence interval (0.0032 to 0.0238). Partial mediation linked to organizational politics is identified in the mediation effect model. Hypothesis 4 is therefore accepted (see **Table 2**).

Hypothesis 5: There exists an indirect effect of e-HRM use on organizational performance through job satisfaction, employee performance, and organizational politics in serial.

The indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage through job satisfaction, employee performance, and perceived organizational politics is positive but insignificant ($\beta = 0.0004$, $BootSE = 0.0004$). Zero is within the confidence interval (−0.0003 to 0.0014) (**Table 2**). The fifth hypothesis is rejected. The finding does not support serial mediation involving the three mediators.

However, there are three paths resulting from the mediation of any of the following two intervening variables. First, there is serial mediation involving job satisfaction and employee performance. The indirect effect of job satisfaction and employee performance is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.0189$, $BootSE = 0.0076$). Zero lies outside the confidence interval (0.0062 to 0.0357). There is support for partial mediation linked to job satisfaction and employee performance. Second, the indirect effect of employee performance and organizational politics is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.0042$, $BootSE = 0.0030$). Zero lies outside the confidence interval (0.0003 to 0.0119). There is support for partial mediation linked to these two mediators (employee performance and organizational politics). Third, the indirect effect of job satisfaction and organizational politics is positive but statistically insignificant ($\beta = 0.0016$, $BootSE = 0.0016$). Zero is within the confidence interval (−0.0011 to 0.0054) (**Table 2**). There is no support for partial mediation linked to job satisfaction and organizational politics.

6. Discussion

The key question directing this study was whether the variables of job satisfaction, employee performance, and perceived organizational politics enhance the effect of e-HRM on sustainable competitive advantage.

H₁: There is a positive direct effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive

advantage.

This finding has been corroborated by previous studies (Bondarouk and Ruel, 2013; Obeidat, 2016; Ruel and Kaap, 2012; Wahyudi and Park, 2014). Using e-HRM enhances corporate sustainable competitive advantage. Investing in an e-HRM system is justified based on organizational gains, such as strategic planning, increased organizational effectiveness, and enhanced innovativeness. However, Parry and Tyson (2011) argue that the introduction of e-HRM systems alone is not a sufficient condition for the attainment of desired organizational outcomes. In order to enhance this effect, intervening variables are needed.

H₂: There is a positive indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage through employee performance.

These results indicate that employee performance is not a statistically significant mediating variable between e-HRM use and sustainable competitive advantage. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is rejected. This finding implies that management should examine other employee outcomes to achieve a position of sustainable competitive advantage. No known study has looked at the mediating role of employee outcomes (Obeidat, 2016).

H₃: There is a positive indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage through job satisfaction.

The indirect effect of the use of e-HRM on sustainable competitive advantage is positive and statistically significant. The model shows partial medial mediation through job satisfaction. The importance of job satisfaction as a mediator is a new addition to the current knowledge. This study is the first attempt to explore the effects of mediation in this link. Bondarouk et al. (2017) suggested the need to explore such a role by stating that “future research should pay attention to potential mediators or moderators affecting adoption and consequences.” Successful communication during the use of e-HRM results in increased job satisfaction (Beulen, 2009). In order to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage, management should invest in HRM practices that maintain high job satisfaction.

H₄: There is a positive indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage through organizational politics.

The indirect effect of e-HRM on sustainable competitive advantage through perceived organizational politics is positive and significant. There is successful partial mediation. A few sources allude to the mediation role of perceived organizational politics (Chang et al., 2009; Miner, 2015). HRM practices, such as emotional intelligence training, can reduce the negative effect of perceived organizational politics, enhance work attitudes, and create sustainable competitive advantage (Meisler and Vigoda-Gadot, 2013).

H₅: There is a positive indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage through job satisfaction, employee performance, and organizational politics in serial.

This result does not support serial mediation involving the three variables. There is no known literature that has explored such joint mediation in serial. This finding is not supported nor refuted in the literature.

Theoretical implications: The findings of this study have several theoretical implications. First, the use of e-HRM positively contributes to sustainable competitive

advantage through job satisfaction. This finding is in line with previous studies that found that e-HRM use positively impacts job satisfaction (Morris and Venkatesh, 2010; Sykes et al., 2014; Tafti et al., 2007). The use of e-HRM positively affects autonomy, feedback, and skill variety. These job characteristics have a positive impact on job satisfaction. The implementation of e-HRM should be complemented by HR practices aimed at motivating employees.

Second, the use of e-HRM has a positive effect on sustainable competitive advantage through perceived organizational politics. These findings are in line with previous studies that found that e-HRM use positively impacts perceived organizational politics (Chang et al., 2009; Meisler and Vigoda-Gadot, 2013; Miner, 2015). The use of the phenomenon should be complemented by emotional intelligence training in order to change employees' perceptions of politics and increase job satisfaction.

Thirdly, the mediating effects of job satisfaction and employee performance are superior to the other effects. This study is the first to explore the mediation effects of employee outcomes. Job satisfaction and employee performance contribute to enhancing sustainable competitive advantage efforts in the context of complementary HR interventions.

Managerial implications: The findings of this study have implications for management practice. These results indicate that the use of e-HRM results in positive strategic organizational outcomes. The human resource function deserves a seat in the boardroom. In order to pursue and achieve organizational excellence, e-HRM should complement other HRM practices. In order to achieve sustainable competitive advantage, it is recommended that practitioners adopt e-HRM as one of the many available interventions.

Organizations enhance the effect of e-HRM use on job satisfaction by enhancing relevant cognitive skills required by employees to use e-HRM systems as intended. Management should monitor employee commitment and motivation during the implementation of e-HRM systems. An empowered and satisfied workforce enhances the achievement of sustainable competitive advantage.

7. Limitations and future research direction

Although this study has managed to achieve its objectives, the findings should be treated with caution. First, this study suffers from a 'single source bias'. Second, the study was cross-sectional. It is disadvantaged by the 'Neyman bias'. Cross-sectional studies fail to capture processes that evolve with time. Therefore, an in-depth understanding of the relationship between the use of e-HRM and sustainable competitive advantage is limited. Future research exploring the effect of organizational culture as a mediating variable should help advance theory development.

8. Conclusion

This study investigated the mediating role of job satisfaction, employee performance, and perceived organizational politics in enhancing the effect of e-HRM usage on sustainable competitive advantage. This study proposes an integrated model

in which job satisfaction and employee performance mediate the association. This model enhances e-HRM's impact on sustainable competitive advantage better than any other mediation effort of these three mediators.

Conflict of interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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