Usability Context and Adoption of Human Capital Management Systems in Uganda's Public Universities: Application of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology

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Abstract

As of 2025, none of Uganda's public universities has fully adopted the Human Capital Management System (HCMS) introduced by Uganda's Ministry of Public Service in 2021. Applied in this study was the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) to investigate the factors that influence HCMS adoption in Uganda's public universities. Employing a mixed-methods convergent parallel design, quantitative data from 362 public university staff obtained through cluster sampling across 3 universities was collected and analysed using multiple linear regression and PROCESS Macro. Qualitative data from 16 purposively sampled staff was concurrently collected and analysed using ATLAS.ti to further explain the quantitative findings, identify enablers of HCMS adoption, explore ways to enhance these enablers and to investigate constraints along with their potential solutions. The results showed that effort expectancy ($\beta = .26$, $p < .001$) and social influence ($\beta = .31$, $p < .001$) significantly influence behavioural intention to adopt HCMS, while performance expectancy does not ($\beta = -.00$, $p = .97$). Facilitating conditions ($\beta = .17$, $p = .003$) and behavioural intention ($\beta = .20$, $p < .001$) significantly influenced actual system use. Age emerged as a significant moderator, whereas gender, experience, and voluntariness of use did not. Qualitative findings identified factors like system effectiveness, infrastructure adequacy, and institutional support as critical enablers, while age-related barriers, limited system functionality, infrastructure gaps, and insufficient training constrained HCMS adoption. This study uniquely extends the UTAUT framework by identifying additional contextual predictors—policy enforcement, user attitudes, engagement, resistance to change, experience, and data perceptions. Also proposed are context-sensitive enhancements in system usability, infrastructure, training, leadership involvement, trust, and digital accessibility to drive HCMS adoption.