



## DECISION-MAKING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES, TANZANIA: A CASE OF HANANG DISTRICT

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the influence of Human Resource Information Systems HRIS on effective decision-making in local government authorities in Hanang District. Specifically, the study aims to determine the influence of HRIS usefulness, HRIS attitude HRIS ease of use, and HRIS trust on organizational decision-making at Hanang District Council. About 344 copies of questionnaire were distributed using a stratified simple random sampling technique. The data collected were analyzed using a multiple linear regression model. The results indicate that perceived HRIS usefulness was positive and significantly influenced organizational decision-making at Hanang District Council ( $p=0.018$ ). The findings also show that perceived attitude was statistically significant in influencing organizational decision-making ( $p=0.000$ ). Together, the results highlight a strong and favorable influence of perceived HRIS ease of use on organizational decision-making ( $p=0.000$ ). However, the results demonstrate a statistically significant and negative influence of perceived HRIS trust on organizational decision-making ( $p=0.000$ ). Therefore, this study recommends that the organization should enhance HRIS usability and user-friendly interface for optimal organizational decision-making.

**Keywords:** Human Resource Information Systems, Decision making, Local Government Authorities, Tanzania, Human resources Performance.

### INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic and competitive organizational landscape, the adoption of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) has become increasingly critical. HRIS serve as essential tools in facilitating decision-making processes across various organizational levels, including local government authorities. These systems act as comprehensive repositories of information, enabling informed decisions to address complex challenges and uncertainties (Debussche & Laperche, 2021). Moreover, the implementation of HRIS aligns with global initiatives such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasize the importance of

transparency, accountability, and sustainability in governance (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2019). By supporting these principles, HRIS play vital roles in advancing the SDGs within local government contexts.

The adoption of HRIS across local government authorities in Africa is varied, with some countries making significant strides while others continue to face infrastructure and capacity challenges (Njau, 2018). These challenges are highlighted in regional frameworks like the African Union's Agenda 2063 and global initiatives such as the SDGs, both of which stress the importance of evidence-based decision-making and accountability in public governance (Wamalwa, Gichunge & Bula, 2020; United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2019). Studies, including those by Govender, Perumal, and Perumal (2018), have demonstrated that the perceived usefulness of HRIS significantly influences employees' intention to utilize these systems for decision-making. In Tanzania, the government has taken considerable steps to promote digital transformation and enhance decision-making processes within public services. Initiatives such as the e-Government Strategy 2016-2020 and the ICT Policy of 2003 underscore the government's commitment to integrating information systems like HRIS to improve service delivery. National projects, including the National Identification System (NIDA) and the National Information and Communication Technology Broadband Backbone (NICTBB) initiative, have further supported the implementation of HRIS in local government authorities, leading to improvements in data accuracy and communication infrastructure (Zhong, Li, Ding, & Liao, 2021).

Despite these efforts, poor decision-making continues to plague Local Government Authorities in Tanzania, primarily due to the inadequate utilization of HRIS. This underutilization has resulted in inefficiencies in HR processes, data inaccuracies, compliance issues, and employee dissatisfaction (Sanders & DeCieri, 2020). Attempts to address these challenges have fallen short, leading to persistent organizational performance issues, characterized by low HRIS usefulness, negative attitudes toward HRIS, difficulties in using the system, and a lack of trust in HRIS. For instance, a study by Petersen (2018) found that 60% of HR managers believe their HRIS is not being utilized effectively, and 40% of employees reported errors in payroll or benefits information. Additionally, Zhang and Chen (2018) revealed that 20% of employees encountered difficulties in accessing performance review information and other HR-related matters. These findings highlight the urgent need for more effective strategies to improve HRIS utilization and decision-making processes within these organizations.

Limited research has been conducted on the adoption and impact of HRIS on decision-making in public organizations, particularly within Local Government Authorities. Jorojick (2015) examined the influence of the human resource information system LAWSON V 9 on decision-making in Local Government Authorities in Kiteto District, Tanzania, but there remains a significant knowledge gap. Through a comprehensive analysis of HRIS usefulness, attitudes towards HRIS, ease of use, and trust in HRIS, this study aims to fill this gap and provide valuable insights into the role of HRIS in enhancing decision-making processes within the context of local government authorities in Tanzania.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this study, Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) refers to integrated software solutions used by organizations to manage and automate various human resource functions, such as employee data management, payroll, recruitment, and performance evaluation (DiRomualdo, El-Khoury, & Girimonte, 2018). HRIS is designed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of HR processes by providing accurate, real-time information that supports decision-making and strategic planning. It plays a crucial role in streamlining operations, improving data accuracy, and enabling better resource management within organizations (Madiha, Diwan & Kumar, 2021).

Organizational Decision-Making is defined as the process by which leaders and managers within an organization make choices that determine the direction and operations of the company (Matimbwa & Olatokun, 2023). This process involves analyzing information, weighing alternatives, and selecting the best course of action to achieve organizational goals. Effective decision-making is crucial for organizational success, as it directly impacts the ability to respond to challenges, capitalize on opportunities, and ensure long-term sustainability (Spero, McQuide, & Matte, 2011). In the context of this study, the focus is on how HRIS influences and enhances this decision-making process by providing timely and relevant data.

### **Empirical review**

Numerous studies have examined the impact of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) on organizational decision-making, underscoring the importance of HRIS usefulness, ease of use, and user trust in diverse contexts. Smith (2018), in a case study of the United States manufacturing sector, discovered that employees' perceptions of HRIS usefulness had a significant effect on organizational decision-making processes. The study highlighted that HRIS functionalities, such as data analysis, reporting, and real-time information retrieval, were strongly associated with enhanced decision-making effectiveness. This finding aligns with the work of Noe, Hollenbeck, and Gerhart (2019), who reported a positive correlation between perceived HRIS usefulness and decision quality. Their study emphasized that higher perceived usefulness of HRIS tools leads to improved decision-making outcomes, suggesting that organizations can benefit from investing in robust HRIS functionalities.

The relationship between HRIS usefulness and decision-making has also been explored in the Tanzanian context. Mushi and Nyandoro (2021) examined the Tanzanian banking sector and found that employees' perception of HRIS usefulness played a critical role in the effectiveness of organizational decision-making. Their study suggested that organizations should focus on HRIS features that directly enhance decision-making processes, as these can significantly contribute to better organizational outcomes. This finding is consistent with earlier studies that emphasize the importance of investing in HRIS with functionalities that support decision-making.

In addition to perceived usefulness, the influence of attitudes and knowledge on effective decision-making has been a focal point of research. Madiha, Diwan, and Kumar (2021) conducted

a study in the Pakistani banking sector and found that HRIS usage, coupled with knowledge-sharing behavior, positively impacted employees' innovation capacity. This effect was further moderated by organizational citizenship behavior, indicating that a supportive organizational culture can enhance the benefits of HRIS usage. Similarly, Quaosar and Rahman (2021) examined HRIS adoption in developing countries, focusing on Bangladesh, and identified significant barriers to adoption. They emphasized the importance of strategic HRIS knowledge acquisition to overcome these barriers and facilitate better decision-making processes. John and Mwalimu (2019), in their study of Tanzania's manufacturing industry, concluded that enhancing HRIS knowledge among employees significantly improves organizational decision processes. Their research suggested that targeted training and development programs focusing on HRIS could lead to more informed and effective decision-making.

The role of HRIS ease of use and trust in facilitating effective decision-making has also been extensively studied. Fobang, Kamdjoug, and Wamba (2017) investigated Cameroonian organizations and found that system quality is a strong predictor of HRIS adoption. Their study revealed that user acceptance, ease of use, and satisfaction significantly influence organizational performance, highlighting the importance of user-friendly systems. Yulianti and Pusparini (2020) explored a banking firm and demonstrated that individual absorptive capacity mediates the relationship between affective commitment and actual HRIS usage, suggesting that users' ability to learn and adapt to HRIS is crucial for its effective implementation. In Tanzania, Kassim, Mohamed, Kassim, and Lashari (2012) found that HRIS ease of use positively impacts organizational judgment, further underscoring the importance of user-friendly interfaces.

Trust in HRIS is another critical factor that influences decision-making processes. Asiya, Kazmi, and Naaranoja (2014) found that higher levels of trust in HRIS systems enhanced decision-making processes in the context of higher education. Their study highlighted the need for reliable and transparent HRIS systems to build user trust. Similarly, Njau (2018) explored the role of trust in the adoption of AI-enhanced HRIS and found that trust, along with performance expectancy, significantly influences HR professionals' intention to use these systems. Collectively, these studies emphasize the importance of HRIS usability, trust, and tailored features in optimizing decision-making processes within organizations.

### **Theoretical foundation**

This study draws upon the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Davis (1989) as an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) proposed by Ajzen (1985). TAM posits that external factors significantly influence internal factors such as beliefs, attitudes, and intentions, which in turn affect the acceptance and use of information technology. According to TAM, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are key determinants of technology adoption and usage. In the context of this study on the influence of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) on decision-making in local government authorities, several TAM variables are particularly relevant: perceived usefulness refers to the

belief that HRIS enhances job performance and efficiency, while perceived ease of use relates to the system's user-friendliness and accessibility. Additionally, the attitude toward using HRIS reflects the overall evaluation of adopting the system, shaped by its perceived usefulness and ease of use. Behavioral intention to use HRIS assesses the willingness to incorporate the system into daily work activities, driven by attitudes, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use.

Various studies have explored the application of TAM in HRIS adoption and its impact on decision-making. For instance, Govender, Perumal, and Perumal (2018) found that perceived usefulness and ease of use significantly influence HRIS adoption across different organizational settings, including local government authorities, leading to positive attitudes and intentions that enhance decision-making processes. Similarly, Njoroge, Iravo, and Kariuki (2018), as well as Wamalwa, Gichunge, and Bula (2020), highlighted that perceived usefulness and ease of use positively affect user satisfaction, system quality, and information quality, thereby improving the effectiveness of decision-making. DiRomualdo, El-Khoury, and Girimonte (2018) also demonstrated TAM's predictive power in explaining the intention to use HRIS within Jordanian local government authorities, noting that perceived usefulness and ease of use had positive influences, while top management support had a negative influence on HRIS adoption.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research design**

This study employed an explanatory research design, also known as a causal research design, to investigate cause-and-effect relationships between variables. The aim was to understand how independent variables influence dependent variables and uncover the underlying mechanisms behind these relationships (Mbise & Kiwia, 2020; Theodory & Kitole, 2024). By determining whether changes in the independent variables lead to changes in the dependent variables, the study sought to provide insights into the reasons behind these relationships (Kitole & Sesabo, 2024). While explanatory research designs often involve controlled settings or specific populations, the findings can be generalized to other contexts and inform decision-making in similar situations. This research design involved manipulating or controlling the independent variables and observing their effects on the dependent variables, while accounting for other potential influencing factors. This approach enables researchers to draw conclusions about causality and make inferences about the causal relationships between variables.

### **Study Area**

This study was conducted at Hanang District Council. The reasons behind selection of the study area focused on the fact that Hanang District represents a specific context within the broader scope of LGAs in Tanzania. Decision-making processes in LGAs often face unique challenges, and studying Hanang District allows for a detailed examination of the specific factors and dynamics at play in this context. Also, Hanang District can serve as a representative sample of LGAs in the Manyara Region or even Tanzania as a whole. This is evident by recent studies conducted in

Tanzania, Matimbwa and Olatokun, (2023) found that 60% of HR managers in Local Government Authorities in Tanzania believe that their HRIS is not being used effectively. Additionally, the study by Spero, McQuide and Matte (2011) found that 20% of employees in Local Government Authorities have had difficulty accessing information about their performance reviews or other HR-related matters.

### **Population of the study**

Population of the study is the complete set (objects and persons) that have some mutual characteristics with consideration of the criteria established by the researcher (Kitole et al. 2024). The numbers of employees from various departments and units at Hanang District council are 2448. The sampling frame included the employees from the departments and units including Administration, Finance and Accounts Unit, Internal Audit Unit, Procurement Management Unit, Information Communication Technology Unit, Legal Services Unit, Planning and Coordination, Planning and Coordination, Planning and Coordination, Community Development, Infrastructure, Rural and Urban Development, Pre-Primary and Primary Education, Secondary Education, Natural Resources and Environment Conservation Unit, Health, Social Welfare and Nutrition Services, Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries and Industry, Trade and Investment.

### **Sample, sampling techniques and sample size**

#### ***Stratified Sampling Technique***

The study employed a non-proportional stratified simple random sampling technique to effectively achieve its research objectives. This approach was chosen due to the specific nature of the objectives and the need to obtain representative samples from different employee groups within various departments, which were treated as distinct strata (Kitole & Sesabo, 2024; Kitole & Sesabo, 2022). Each stratum comprised individuals sharing similar characteristics, distinguishing them from other groups. The study population was identified as the employees within the organization (Lihawa, Sesabo, & Shitima, 2023). A sample size of 344 employees was selected from these strata using Yamane's formula, ensuring that the sample accurately reflected the diverse employee groups within the organization.

#### ***Sample size***

The researcher used a sample of 344 employees from Hanang District Council which was used to represent the entire population in order to make the best use of the time available to extract information relevant to the study. The study adopts the formula of Yamane (1967) as shown in equation below to determine the sample size of the research respondents with confidence level of 95% and margin of error of 5% (0.05), the formula is expressed as hereunder.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$



Where:  $n$  is a required number of samples,  $N$  is a total population (2448) and  $e$  is the error tolerance (level) or margin of error (0.05). Therefore, the estimated sample size of the study is 344 which was estimated through the following formula:

$$n = \frac{2448}{1 + 2448(0.05^2)} \approx 344$$

On the other hand, the distribution of 344 sample size form various departments at the district council is as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1 Distribution of sample across various departments**

N/S	Department Names	Number of Employees	Sample size
1	Administration	138	17
2	Finance and Accounts Unit	13	2
3	Internal Audit Unit	2	3
4	Procurement Management Unit	5	1
5	Information Communication Technology Unit	1	1
6	Legal Services Unit	1	1
7	Planning and Coordination	4	1
8	Community Development	15	2
9	Infrastructure, Rural and Urban Development	4	1
10	Pre-Primary and Primary Education	1200	167
11	Secondary Education	574	80
12	Natural Resources and Environment Conservation Unit	10	1
13	Health, Social Welfare and Nutrition Services	420	58
14	Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries	60	7
15	Industry, Trade and Investment	1	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>2448</b>	<b>344</b>

Source: Field data (2024)

**Data collection methods**

**Questionnaire**

To collect data from employees at Hanang District Council, the study utilized the questionnaire method. The questionnaires consisted of closed-ended semi-structured questions. A total of 344 copies of questionnaire was distributed equally among employees from various departments and units within the council. The questionnaire method was chosen due to its ability to efficiently gather data from a significant number of respondents. Using questionnaires allows for the collection of accurate information as respondents have the freedom to answer the questions with minimal supervision. Ethical considerations have been considered when preparing the questionnaire, ensuring that the questions are appropriate and respectful. Additionally, the

questionnaire method is cost-effective, quick, and efficient in gathering information from a large number of respondents. It provides a standardized approach to data collection, making it easier to analyze and compare responses.

### **Data Analysis**

This study employed the multiple linear regression model to analyze the relationships between several independent variables and a single dependent variable. The multiple linear regression model was chosen because it allows for the simultaneous examination of the effects of multiple predictors on the outcome variable, providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence the dependent variable (Dimoso & Andrew, 2021). This model is particularly effective in accounting for the combined impact of different variables, enabling more accurate predictions and insights into how each variable contributes to the overall outcome (Kitole & Genda, 2024; Utouh & Kitole, 2024). Given the complexity of the data and the need to control potential confounding factors, the multiple linear regression model was well-suited to achieve the objective. Thus, the estimated equations is given as:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_{1i}X_{1i} + \beta_{2i}X_{2i} + \dots + \beta_kX_k + \mu_i \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Whereby  $Y_i$  Dependent/outcome variables,  $\beta$  regression coefficient that describe the changes in the dependent variable that caused by explanatory variables,  $X$ 's are explanatory variables, and  $\mu_i$  is the errors term or random errors. Therefore, from the estimated equation 1, the explanatory variables are Perceived HRIS usefulness, Perceived HRIS attitude, Perceived HRIS ease of use, and Perceived HRIS trust, while the outcome variable is Organizational Decision Making.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **Description of respondents' characteristics**

The study's findings on Table 2 reveal a diverse age distribution among participants, with the majority (44.2%) falling within the 32 to 38-year age range, representing mid-career professionals with considerable experience. Early-career professionals aged 25 to 31 years make up 23.0% of the respondents, while those aged 18 to 24 years account for 17.2%, bringing fresh perspectives to the study. Additionally, 15.7% of the participants are 39 years or older, offering insights from seasoned professionals. This varied age range contributes to a comprehensive understanding of HRIS (Human Resource Information Systems) influence on decision-making processes within the local government context of Hanang District.



**Table 2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Age of respondents		
18 - 24 years	59	17.2
25 - 31 years	79	23.0
32 - 38 years	152	44.2
39+ years	54	15.7
Gender of respondents		
Male	190	55.2
Female	154	44.8
Education level		
Certificate	56	16.3
Diploma/advanced diploma	125	36.3
Bachelor Degree	156	45.3
Master's Degree	7	2.0
Working experience		
0-10 Years	87	25.3
11-20 years	117	34.0
21-30	88	25.6
31-40	52	15.1

**Source:** Field data (2024)

Gender distribution among respondents indicates a slight male predominance, with 55.2% of the participants being male and 44.8% female. This disparity may reflect differing levels of participation or representation among male and female employees in local government authorities. The study's findings suggest the need for future research to aim for more balanced gender representation to provide a deeper understanding of how gender influences perspectives on HRIS in local government settings.

In terms of education, the majority of respondents hold a bachelor's degree (45.3%), indicating a well-informed participant base. Those with a Diploma or Advanced Diploma represent 36.3% of the sample, while 16.3% have a Certificate. A small percentage (2.0%) possess a master's degree, highlighting the limited presence of postgraduate qualifications among participants. The varied educational backgrounds emphasize the importance of tailoring HRIS training and initiatives to meet the needs of all educational levels, ensuring effective HRIS utilization and decision-making across the local government in Hanang District. Additionally, the study observed a diverse range of working experiences, with notable representations across various experience levels, from 0-10 years (25.3%) to over 30 years (15.1%), further enriching the analysis of HRIS impact.

### **The effects of HRIS on effective decision making**

Table 3 presents the results of a regression analysis exploring the impact of perceived HRIS trust, usefulness, and ease of use on organizational decision-making. The analysis reveals that all three independent variables—perceived HRIS trust, perceived HRIS usefulness, and perceived HRIS ease of use—have a significant positive effect on effective decision-making, as indicated by their positive beta coefficients and statistically significant p-values.

Perceived HRIS usefulness emerges as a significant factor, with a positive beta coefficient ( $\beta = 0.064$ ,  $t = 2.386$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), indicating that an increase in perceived usefulness is associated with improved decision-making. Specifically, for every unit increase in perceived HRIS usefulness, there is a corresponding 0.064 unit increase in effective decision-making. These findings align with those of Smith (2018) and Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (2019), who reported that higher perceived usefulness of HRIS positively influences decision-making processes, particularly in enhancing decision quality, timeliness, and accuracy. Similar results were observed in Tanzanian banks by Mushi and Nyandoro (2021), emphasizing the importance of investing in useful HRIS functionalities to enhance decision-making efficiency.

Perceived HRIS ease of use also shows a substantial positive impact on decision-making, with a beta coefficient of 0.530 ( $t = 15.602$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). This suggests that an increase in the ease of use leads to a 0.530 unit increase in decision-making effectiveness. These results underscore the importance of user-friendly HRIS designs, as easier systems encourage greater engagement and more effective decision-making. This finding is consistent with Kassim et al. (2012), who found that the ease of HRIS utilization significantly enhances organizational judgment by encouraging employees to utilize the system more frequently for decision-making purposes.

The influence of perceived HRIS trust on decision-making is noteworthy, albeit in a different direction, with a beta coefficient of -0.225 ( $t = -7.229$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). This indicates that while trust in HRIS is important, it can lead to more cautious decision-making, as employees may scrutinize the system's data more carefully before making decisions. This nuanced effect of trust highlights its complex role in decision-making processes. Similar findings were reported by Mbise and Kiwia (2020), who noted that trust in HRIS significantly influences decision-making by increasing confidence in the system's information, albeit sometimes leading to more deliberate decision-making processes.

**Table 3: Multiple regression results**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.73216	0.020		0.000	1.000
Perceived usefulness	HRIS 0.064	0.027	0.064	2.386	0.018
Perceived attitude	0.560	0.046	0.560	12.210	0.000
Perceived HRIS ease of use	0.530	0.034	0.530	15.602	0.000
Perceived HRIS trust	-0.225	0.031	-0.225	-7.229	0.000

**Source:** Field data (2024)

**CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study highlight the positive and significant impact of perceived HRIS usefulness on organizational decision-making. When employees view HRIS as enhancing decision-making efficiency and improving the quality of information, it positively influences their ability to align efforts and resources with organizational goals. Additionally, a positive attitude towards HRIS and its ease of use were identified as key contributors to effective decision-making, underscoring the importance of fostering favorable perceptions to enhance engagement with the system.

On the other hand, perceived HRIS trust exhibited a nuanced negative influence, indicating that while trust in the system is crucial, excessive reliance may lead to a more cautious approach to decision-making. This finding suggests the importance of carefully balancing trust and prudence in the use of HRIS. Overall, the study emphasizes the need for strategic management of HRIS elements to optimize decision-making processes at Hanang District, ensuring that the system is leveraged effectively for organizational success.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

To enhance HRIS utilization, the study recommends the implementation of comprehensive training programs, focused communication campaigns that highlight the benefits of HRIS, and improvements in system usability. Promoting a positive attitude towards HRIS, while balancing trust with cautious evaluation, is essential. Establishing a robust feedback mechanism and integrating HRIS-related considerations into organizational policies will collectively contribute to more efficient and effective decision-making processes within the organization.

Given the findings, it is crucial to craft policies that promote HRIS training and education, ensuring employees are well-versed in the system’s functionalities and its potential to improve decision-making. Internal communication policies should effectively convey the benefits of HRIS adoption, fostering a positive attitude among users. Additionally, targeted training programs and

change management strategies are recommended to enhance employees' perception of HRIS, facilitating smoother adoption and utilization.

The study also emphasizes the importance of user-centric HRIS design, recognizing HRIS champions, and gaining leadership endorsement to further encourage active participation. Establishing a continuous feedback loop will ensure that HRIS remains user-friendly and aligned with employee expectations, ultimately optimizing its role in informed decision-making within Hanang District Council.

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