

Transforming Public Service Delivery Through Digital HRM And E-Governance: A Contextualized Framework For Local Government Units In Northern Cebu

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Abstract- The rapid evolution of digital technologies has transformed governance systems worldwide, prompting Local Government Units (LGUs) to adopt innovative approaches to public service delivery. This study examines the role of Digital Human Resource Management (DHRM) and e-governance in enhancing efficiency, transparency, and citizen satisfaction in selected LGUs in Northern Cebu, Philippines. Anchored on New Public Management (NPM), the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), and the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, the research employed a descriptive-survey design involving 144 respondents comprising internal stakeholders (LGU officials and employees) and external stakeholders (citizens and community representatives). Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, and weighted mean, while qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis. Findings reveal that LGUs demonstrate an “evident” level of digital maturity in HRM functions ($M = 4.08$) and e-governance services ($M = 4.01$). The integration of digital systems significantly improves public service delivery, with a “highly evident” impact on efficiency and transparency ($M = 4.24$). However, persistent challenges include budget constraints, infrastructure limitations, and insufficient training programs. The study concludes that digital transformation enhances governance outcomes when supported by institutional readiness, leadership commitment, and continuous capacity building. A contextualized framework is proposed to guide LGUs in optimizing digital transformation initiatives and sustaining citizen-centered governance.

Keywords— Digital HRM, E-Governance, Public Service Delivery, Digital Transformation, Local Government Units.

I. INTRODUCTION

The increasing demand for efficient, transparent, and citizen-centric governance has compelled governments worldwide to adopt digital transformation strategies. Local Government Units (LGUs), as primary service providers, face mounting pressure to modernize administrative processes and enhance service delivery mechanisms. However, traditional governance systems—often characterized by manual workflows, bureaucratic

inefficiencies, and limited transparency—continue to hinder optimal performance.

In the Philippine context, many LGUs remain reliant on paper-based Human Resource Management (HRM) systems and fragmented administrative processes. These limitations result in delays, operational inefficiencies, and diminished citizen trust. Consequently, digital transformation through Digital Human Resource Management (DHRM) and e-governance has emerged as a critical strategy for improving governance outcomes.

DHRM integrates digital technologies into HR functions such as recruitment, payroll, performance management, and employee development, enabling data-driven decision-making and operational efficiency (Bondarouk & Ruel, 2009). Meanwhile, e-governance facilitates the delivery of public services through digital platforms, enhancing accessibility, transparency, and citizen engagement (Janowski, 2015).

Despite global advancements, empirical studies examining the integration of DHRM and e-governance in Philippine LGUs—particularly in geographically diverse and resource-constrained areas such as Northern Cebu—remain limited. This study addresses this gap by evaluating digital maturity, identifying implementation challenges, and assessing the impact of digital transformation on public service delivery.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 E-Governance and Public Sector Transformation

E-governance represents the application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in public administration to improve service delivery, enhance transparency, and foster citizen participation (Bertot et al., 2010). It is closely aligned with New Public Management (NPM), which emphasizes efficiency, accountability, and customer-oriented public services (Hood, 1991).

Empirical evidence suggests that e-governance reduces transaction costs, improves service accessibility, and enhances institutional trust (Janowski, 2015; Tejedo-Romero et al., 2022). However, its effectiveness depends on infrastructure readiness, digital literacy, and organizational capacity (Heeks, 2001).

2.2 Digital Human Resource Management (DHRM)

DHRM, also referred to as electronic Human Resource Management (e-HRM), involves the integration of digital systems into HR processes, enabling automation, efficiency, and strategic workforce management (Bondarouk & Brewster,

2016). Studies indicate that DHRM enhances organizational performance by reducing administrative burden and enabling data-driven decision-making (Ruel et al., 2019).

In public sector contexts, DHRM supports workforce optimization and facilitates digital transformation initiatives (Parry, 2012). However, successful implementation requires employee readiness, training, and organizational support.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in three complementary theories:

- New Public Management (NPM): Advocates efficiency, accountability, and performance-based governance (Hood, 1991);
- Technology Acceptance Model (TAM): Explains technology adoption based on perceived usefulness and ease of use (Davis, 1989);
- Diffusion of Innovations Theory: Describes how innovations are adopted within organizations (Rogers, 2003).

These frameworks collectively explain the interaction between technology adoption, human behavior, and organizational transformation.

2.4 Research Gap

While existing studies highlight the independent benefits of e-governance and DHRM, limited research explores their combined impact within LGUs in developing regions. This study contributes empirical evidence from Northern Cebu, addressing this gap.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-survey research design to assess digital maturity, impacts, and implementation challenges.

3.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in three municipalities in Northern Cebu:

- San Remigio
- Medellin
- Daanbantayan
- Enhancing access to information
- Improving overall service quality

These LGUs represent varying levels of digital readiness and governance capacity.

3.3 Respondents

A total of 144 respondents participated:

- Internal stakeholders: 30
- External stakeholders: 114

Stratified sampling ensured representation across organizational roles and citizen groups.

3.4 Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used, consisting of:

- Likert-scale items (5-point scale)
- Open-ended questions

3.5 Data Analysis

- Descriptive statistics: frequency, percentage, weighted mean
- Thematic analysis for qualitative responses

IV. RESULTS

4.1 Digital Maturity of LGUs

The findings indicate that LGUs demonstrate an "evident" level of digital maturity:

- HRM functions: $M = 4.08$
- E-governance services: $M = 4.01$

Digital systems are widely used for payroll, employee records, and information dissemination. However, areas such as performance evaluation and citizen feedback mechanisms require further enhancement.

4.2 Impact on Public Service Delivery

Digital transformation has a "highly evident" impact ($M = 4.24$), particularly in:

- Reducing processing time
- Increasing transparency

4.3 Challenges in Implementation

Key challenges include:

- Budget constraints ($M = 4.35$)
- Infrastructure limitations ($M = 4.21$)
- Limited training opportunities

4.4 Best Practices

Effective strategies include:

- Continuous training ($M = 4.42$)
- Investment in digital infrastructure ($M = 4.38$)
- Strong leadership support

V. Discussion

The findings confirm that digital transformation significantly enhances public service delivery in LGUs. The integration of DHRM and e-governance improves both internal administrative efficiency and external service quality.

Consistent with TAM, the adoption of digital systems is influenced by perceived usefulness and ease of use (Davis, 1989). Similarly, Diffusion of Innovations Theory explains the varying levels of adoption across LGUs (Rogers, 2003).

The study also reinforces NPM principles by demonstrating how digital systems improve efficiency, accountability, and citizen satisfaction (Hood, 1991).

However, challenges related to infrastructure, funding, and capacity building highlight the need for sustained institutional support.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Digital HRM and e-governance significantly enhance public service delivery in LGUs. While digital maturity is evident, maximizing its benefits requires sustained investment, leadership commitment, and continuous training.

Recommendations

1. Invest in digital infrastructure
2. Strengthen capacity-building programs
3. Develop standardized digital governance policies
4. Enhance citizen engagement platforms
5. Foster multi-sector collaboration

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