

Chapter 2

Digital Workforce Planning and Management in the Public Sector

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ABSTRACT

This chapter offers a comprehensive guide for public sector professionals, scholars, and policymakers, delving into the challenges and opportunities brought about by digital transformation in Human Resource Management (HRM). The chapter provides a nuanced understanding of theoretical foundations, practical strategies, and real-world implications in digital workforce planning and management. By emphasizing talent management, technological integration, and strategic decision-making, it inspires proactive approaches to thrive in the digitally-driven landscape. Through integration of insights from the African public sector, it highlights the importance of aligning digital strategies with ethical considerations and leveraging technological capabilities. In conclusion, the chapter aims to empower public sector entities to adapt and succeed in the digital era, fostering organizational resilience and long-term success while addressing societal needs.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines Digital Workforce Planning and Management in the Public sector, with more focus on their impact on digital transformation on Human Resource Management (HRM) Digital transformation in HRM brings significant changes in the way public organisations manage their workforce, necessitating an in-depth understanding of the drivers, tactics applied, obstacles faced, and prospects (Nicolás-Agustín et al., 2021). On a global level, digital transformation has drastically changed the public sector HRM landscape. Digital technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), big data, and the Internet of Things (IoT) are becoming key pillars in improving operational efficiency and data-driven decision-making in HRM. Research shows that organisations that adopt digital technologies in their HRM processes experience increased productivity and better employee engagement (Deloitte, 2020). However, challenges such as skills gaps and resistance to change are still major obstacles. At an inter-

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-2889-7.ch002

national level, differences in the adoption of digital technologies across countries reflect variations in policies, infrastructure, and organisational readiness. Developed countries tend to have higher adoption rates compared to developing countries, which often face barriers such as limited digital infrastructure and lack of investment in technology (World Bank, 2021). In addition, different data privacy regulations in each country also affect how digital technologies can be applied in HRM. Regionally, especially on the African continent, the adoption of digital technology in HRM is still in its infancy. Some African countries have shown significant progress in digitalization, but challenges such as limited internet access and limited funding are still major barriers. Case studies from various countries in Africa show how governments and public sector organisations are working to overcome these challenges through collaboration with the private sector and digital skills training initiatives (African Union, 2021). In South Africa, digital transformation in public sector HRM faces unique challenges. While the government has launched various initiatives to drive digitalization, such as the e-government strategy, there is still a significant skills gap among the workforce. Succession planning and personnel management are key in ensuring the continuity and effectiveness of digital technology implementation (South African Government, 2022).

This chapter answered the following questions: What are the key factors driving digital transformation in public sector HRM? How can CSR and HRIS contribute to the success of this transformation? What are the key challenges faced by public sector organisations in Africa, particularly South Africa, in adopting digital technologies? These research gaps will be filled with empirical analysis and relevant case studies. To understand digital transformation in HRM, this chapter will use the theoretical framework of the technology adoption model and organisational change theory. This framework will help link the role of CSR in shaping organisational culture and increasing employee engagement and the role of HRIS in streamlining HRM processes and data-driven decision-making. This chapter includes statistics and empirical evidence that support the claims made, such as data on the adoption of digital technologies in public sector HRM, the impact of CSR on employee engagement, and the effectiveness of HRIS. For example, a report from McKinsey (2021) showed that organisations that adopted HRIS experienced a 40% reduction in administrative processing time. The findings from this research have significant practical implications for public sector organisations. By understanding the factors that drive and hinder digital transformation, organisations can develop more effective strategies to improve operational efficiency and employee engagement. In addition, effective CSR implementation can improve organisational culture and overall workforce well-being. This introduction provides a comprehensive foundation for further exploration of digital workforce planning and management in the public sector. By emphasising the relevance of CSR, HRIS, and African case studies, this chapter aims to provide valuable insights and practical strategies for public sector entities in navigating the complexities of the digital age and driving organisational resilience and long-term success.

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

In exploring the theoretical foundations of digital workforce planning and management, it is imperative to delve into fundamental concepts of Human Resource Management (HRM), trace its evolution in the digital context, and examine contemporary models shaping workforce planning and management strategies.

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