

Chapter 6


Digital Transformation in Hiring and Selection Processes: A Ugandan Public Sector Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The study explores the digital transformation of public sector hiring in Uganda, highlighting the potential of digital technologies to revolutionise recruitment by enhancing efficiency, accessibility, and transparency. Automation, online platforms, and data-driven decision-making serve to streamline administrative tasks, expand candidate outreach, and promote merit-based hiring. Despite these benefits, significant challenges including data security risks, technological failures, digital divides, and algorithmic biases necessitate strategic intervention. Through document analysis and qualitative research, this study draws on policy documents and government reports to outline current practices and future prospects. It emphasises the need for robust infrastructure, improved digital literacy, and clear policy frameworks to support digital adoption while mitigating risks. Effective leadership and a supportive organisational culture are crucial to successfully navigating the digital shift, aiming to achieve an effective, inclusive, and transparent public sector hiring process in Uganda.

INTRODUCTION

African bureaucracies are destined to be the epitome of rendering public goods and services. To achieve this public sector human resource management is one of the key functions that enables employee development, and wellness and ensures that all the needs of public sector officials is catered to enhance quality service delivery. For many years government bureaucracies in Africa have been operating in a more rigid manner that resists change in the process instilling red tape as a measure to ensure that bu-

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reaucratic decisions are hierarchically carried out. Nevertheless, due to the trends emanating from the technological environment globally, public sector organisations are forced to transform and align with the use of modern technologies which the Fourth Industrial Revolution believe is a drastic game changer in rendering quality goods and services. The digital transformation orchestrated by the fusion of various modern technologies has also awakened African bureaucracies of which Uganda's public sector is not spared from this transformative wave. Research done in the past decade has shown that digital transformation has altered the landscape of public sector operations worldwide. The paradigm shift, driven by technological advancements, has been pivotal in reshaping government functions, including hiring and selection processes. Globally, the public sector is increasingly adopting digital technologies to enhance operational efficiency, improve service delivery, and foster transparency (Heeks & Bailur, 2007). Public sector transformation is not simply a technological upgrade but represents a fundamental change in how public institutions engage with technology to meet their objectives (Mergel, 2016).

In public sector human resource management, digitalisation has introduced innovative approaches to recruitment and selection of candidates. According to a study by Prabhu et al. (2020), digital tools and platforms are revolutionising public sector hiring by streamlining processes, enabling data-driven decision-making, and expanding the reach to a broader pool of candidates. Moreover, the integration of digital practices in the public sector is not a trend limited to developed nations. Emerging economies are also embracing these changes, albeit at varying paces and scales (UN, 2020). The case of Uganda presents a unique perspective in this global narrative as a developing country with an expanding digital infrastructure. Uganda is at a critical juncture where the adoption of digital practices in public sector hiring could significantly influence its administrative efficacy and governance outcomes (Osborne et al., 2022). The study focuses on the benefits and risks of implementing digital transformation in Uganda's public sector hiring processes. It examines the disparity between the potential benefits of digitalisation, such as efficiency and transparency, highlighted by Debrah et al. (2019) and the existing challenges related to infrastructure, digital literacy, and policy frameworks, as noted by (Falloon, 2020). The central issue is understanding the impact of these factors on the successful integration of digital practices in hiring, providing critical insights into the obstacles and opportunities in this significant administrative evolution. The chapter answers the following objectives. To examine the benefits of digital transformation in hiring and selection and to assess the challenges associated with digital transformation in hiring and selection in the Ugandan public sector.

The next section reviews the literature by synthesising global trends and local initiatives in Uganda's digital hiring practices. Following this, the section explores traditional hiring practices in Uganda, discussing their limitations and inefficiencies. It then examines global digital hiring trends and their relevance to Uganda, highlighting case studies of successful digital initiatives within the Ugandan public sector. The discussion extends to the challenges of digital transformation, focusing on infrastructural, literacy, and policy barriers alongside political and economic factors. The methodology section describes the research methods employed, while subsequent sections discuss the opportunities digital transformation can bring and strategic recommendations for overcoming existing challenges. The conclusion summarises key findings and reflects on the potential future of digital HR practices in Uganda.

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