



**Digital Transformation in the Nigerian Public Service: Leveraging Human Resource
Information System for Effective Governance and Service Delivery**

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Abstract

Application of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) in public administration is a fundamental step towards enhanced efficiency, transparency, and accountability in governance. This study investigates the uptake, effectiveness, and challenges of using HRIS in Nigeria's public sector, informed by review of existing literatures, policy reports, and empirical studies. It takes into consideration how HRIS enables data-informed decision-making, administrative logjam reduction, and aligning with broader digital transformation goals. However, the study also finds predominant challenges of inadequate ICT infrastructure, poor digital literacy of civil servants, and institutional resistance that persist to discourage optimal application. By identifying the dynamics between institutional readiness and technological capacity, the paper presents actionable recommendations to support HRIS uptake and improve human resource management practices in the public sector. The findings highlight the strategic value of HRIS to drive civil service reform and call for sustained investment in digital capacity development to achieve long-term impacts.

Keywords: Human Resource Information System, Digital Transformation, Public Sector, Governance, Service delivery.



1 Introduction

The work patterns, requirements, and working style within the corporate environment have been influenced by technological development. Advances have led to increased work effectiveness, productivity, and collaboration with time sensitive operational goals, as well as enhancement in the compliance with timeliness initiatives. Workers are appreciatively served more from this, completely use available resources, while organizations are well positioned to drive success (Matimbwa and Masue, 2019). In a swiftly transforming digital age, operations of the Internet of things (IoT) and other advanced technologies in organizational conditioning profoundly restructured the form and operations of Human Resource Management (HRM) (Satispi, Rajiani, Murod & Andriansyah, 2023). Not only did this digital revolution refresh traditional HRM conditioning, but it also significantly contributed to developing innovative ideas in knowledge-grounded workplaces (Batra & Patil, 2023).

Recently, businesses, governments, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) around the world rely on Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) to facilitate seamless information exchange and support activities related to downsizing and organizational re-engineering. (Quaosar & Rahman, 2021). HRIS is a mix of Human Resource Management and Information Systems (IS), which is intended to help Human Resource professionals carry out their functions more efficiently, methodically, and effectively using technology (Adekunle, 2018). HRIS are information technology operations designed to capture, store, manage, dissect, and disseminate workforce-related data across the organization (Kavanagh, Gueutal, & Tannenbaum, 1990). What began as a storehouse position for information workers, information has become a strategic tool used to develop advanced digital capabilities that help in evidence-based, reduce uncertainty, and enable



the connection between workforce planning and performance management (De, Adambarage, Berslav, & Marko, 2022; Rajawat & Naveen, 2022).

From a functional viewpoint, HRIS give robust capabilities to manage key human resource activities such as tracking applicants, employees' demographics, hiring records, training records, performance appraisals, payroll administration, and talent retention analysis (Indrit, Cate, & Sally, 2011). With robotization, HRIS ameliorate executive effectiveness, grease communication, reduce functional costs, and boost Human Resource (HR) department productivity. Strategically, HRIS allow organizations to design and apply integrated HR programs in alignment with organizational objectives. Its predictive capability enhance workforce planning effective by projecting future labor market conditions and allowing organizations to anticipate evolving regulatory and competitive environments (Abeer, Buthina, Amir, Manaf, & Al- Okaily, 2022). It also makes strategic compensation structure choices, talent investment, and succession planning possible. In business organizations, Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) are decreasingly being turned into Employee Self- Service (ESS) results. This gives the workers access to their individual data and the installation of modifying the same without the direct intervention of HR professionals. HRIS have shifted from traditional customer-server structure to more effective web-based environments. Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems have also been integrated by organizations into their HRIS, allowing workers to seamlessly modify their information. Information processed through web-based or IVR- enabled HRIS include address information, retirement information, health plan enrollments, life event notifications, and life insurance changes. In response to increasing regulatory demands and heightened competitive pressures, both public and private sector organizations relying on HRIS as the tools of necessity to enhance compliance, risk management, and performance optimization. For this purpose, HRIS has



reengineered traditional HR functions/activities into proactively driven data processes that beget organizational innovation and agility (Taamneh, Alsaad, Elrehail, & Al- Okaily, 2021). In developing countries, relinquishment of HRIS has gained instigation as a core point of ultramodern human resource operation (Ali & Balaji, 2022).

Governments worldwide have realized that HRIS is a vital instrument in effective data operation and quality service provision. HRIS facilitates methodical retention and timely access to workforce information, significantly adding the effectiveness of HR functions in the public sector (Ali & Balaji, 2022). The traditional system of public service delivery in Nigeria has, by custom, been marred by a series of structural excrescencies that correspond of homemade record keeping, congesting by bureaucracy, corruption, and poor access to timely information (Ilawagbon & Ajisebiyawo, 2024). Similar inefficiencies have led to poor operation of government finances, delayed delivery of services, and deep- seated loss of trust by the public in the administration (Moses, 2023). Certain government agencies and ministries have embraced and used HRIS, although the maturity of the conventional civil service has not completely transitioned from paper-grounded to HRIS still. The COVID- 19 epidemic outburst was an encouragement to the digitalization of the Nigerian public sector, which urged the transition to e-administration and the relinquishment of the use of HRIS tools (Chima & Folorunsho, 2020).

The Federal Civil Service Strategy and Implementation Plan 2021–2025 (FCSSIP25) serves as the cornerstone of current reform efforts within Nigeria’s public service. Among its core pillars capacity building, performance management, and digitalization the push for the adoption of technology-driven solutions such as Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) is central. FCSSIP25 explicitly outlines the need for “enterprise digital solutions” to enhance data integrity, automate processes, and foster accountability across Ministries, Departments, and Agencies



(MDAs) (OHCSEF, 2021). Some of the topmost reforms include the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS), an information- technology- backed system that aimed at creating an honest and integral public sector data set. IPPIS that implements one among a range of functions that HRIS performs was put in place so that it enables workforce planning, ensures payroll frauds are minimized, automates people validations, and maintains high accuracy for administration and pensions- acquainted processes (Enakirerhi & Temile, 2017). Since its deployment, the system has helped the Federal Government exclude thousands of ghost workers and saved billions of Naira through enhanced payroll verification and responsibility (Ali & Balaji, 2022). With the move towards governance in Nigeria, the employment of HRIS is a crucial support pillar in the effective operation of labor force, particularly in the civil service.

This study examines the relinquishment and success of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) in the public service in Nigeria. It aims to assess how HRIS supports executive effectiveness, administration of data, and service delivery, while admitting the crucial challenges hindering its full deployment. Drawing on empirical foundations, the paper highlights the HRIS contributions to driving digital transformation in public administration and makes strategic suggestions to enhance its application towards enhanced governance and public service delivery.

This study relies on the assumption that effective implementation of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) in the Nigerian public sector can significantly boost governance performance and public service delivery. It argues that digital transformation initiatives, where effectively directed through HRIS, can abolish administrative inefficiencies, promote openness, and enable data-driven human resource management. Besides, it assumes that institutional problems such as infrastructural shortage, low digital literacy, and bureaucratic resistance can be resolved through targeted reforms, investment, and capacity building, thus the objective of the study is to examine the



extent to which effective implementation of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) in the Nigerian public service can enhance governance outcomes and service delivery, by exploring its potential for reducing administrative inefficiencies, promoting transparency, and enabling evidence-based human resource management, and identifying the institutional challenges to implementation and proposing solutions to overcoming them through targeted reforms, infrastructure development, and capacity development.

2 Literature Review

Conceptual literature on governance, service delivery, human resource information system and empirical studies were reviewed in this study.

Governance

Governance has been widely conceptualized as the institutions and processes through which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources. Good governance, World Bank (1992) states, encompasses key dimensions such as accountability, transparency, rule of law, responsiveness, and efficiency. In public administration literature, governance is presently conceptualized not just as government control, but as an interactive process among institutions, civil society, and private actors (Rhodes, 1996). This shift from "government" to "governance" is one towards decentralized, participatory, and performance-based mechanisms for improved service delivery and citizens' trust.

In Nigeria, governance problems remain entrenched in systemic inefficiencies, bureaucratic corruption, and weak institutional capacity (Agbodike, 2013). Scholars such as Olowu and Sako (2002) argue that African governance is often poor due to the over-centralization of power and lack of public accountability, which renders service delivery ineffective. Strengthening good



governance must therefore entail reforms that promote transparency, consolidate institutional frameworks, and leverage the capabilities of technology. The use of digital solutions such as Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) has been promoted as a means of enhancing governance through increased administrative effectiveness, reduced corruption, and data-driven decision-making (Aliyu & Ibrahim, 2019; World Bank, 2022). As articulated in FCSSIP25, the Nigerian federal government recognizes the critical role of digital transformation in achieving an efficient, accountable, and citizen-centric public service. The plan advocates for integrated platforms that support personnel management, payroll transparency, and real-time analytics—objectives that align closely with the transformative potential of HRIS (OHCSF, 2021). Good governance in the 21st century is thus ever more dependent on digital innovation and institutional transformation.

Service Delivery

Service delivery is a key function of the public sector and a major indicator of good governance. Scholars such as Grindle and Hilderbrand (1995) argue that successful service delivery shows state capacity to translate public policy into tangible benefits for citizens. In developing countries like Nigeria, service delivery has, however, consistently been undermined by weak institutional frameworks, bureaucratic inefficiency, and poor human resource management (Adegoroye, 2006). In reaction to these frailties, most of the governments have turned to e-reforms, like the usage of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS), that have the potential to unite HR functions, remove redundancy, and promote more transparent, evidence-based decision-making (Kavanagh, Thite & Johnson, 2015).

In Nigeria, HRIS's role in enhancing service delivery is its ability to enhance administrative efficiency and foster accountability within the public service. For Ayo (2014), HRIS can serve as



an enabler of e-governance through the introduction of technology into critical personnel management systems and hence reduce corruption and enhance responsiveness. However, implementation continues to be hindered by infrastructural deficits, low digital literacy levels, and resistance to change (Olaopa, 2014). Bridging these gaps requires strategic reforms, ongoing investment in ICT infrastructure, and selective capacity building. For Dunleavy et al. (2006), successful digital-era governance is dependent on the ability of an institution to react to technological innovation and internalize it in its operating culture to achieve improved service delivery outcomes.

Human Resource Information System

Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) have been widely celebrated for their groundbreaking impact on modern human resource management. Scholarship has consistently linked the adoption of HRIS to improvements in operational effectiveness, strategic HR alignment, employees' satisfaction, as well as organizational transparency (Karikari, Boateng, & Ocansey, 2015; Yusoff, Ramayah, & Ibrahim, 2010). In Nigeria, however, HRIS adoption among Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) is sporadic. While systems like the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) have made notable strides in payroll transparency and ghost worker elimination (Enakirerhi & Temile, 2017), most MDAs remain anchored on manual processes (Onah & Anikwe, 2016). The low level of digital uptake is aggravated by resistance to change, bureaucratic inertia, and inadequate infrastructure (Chima & Folorunsho, 2020; Odiaka & Nwankwo, 2022). One of the key challenges is the low digital literacy of civil servants, especially older staff (Musa & Kayode, 2021), and the lack of understanding by HR and IT professionals of the holistic nature of HRIS (Agbodjah & Ohemeng, 2020), leading to piecemeal systems with no interoperability.



Scholars such as Okebukola (2017) advise full integration of HRIS to get rid of inefficiencies like duplication of files, pay errors, and loss of records. Centralized systems also promote regulatory harmony between MDAs. Along the same lines, Aliyu and Ibrahim (2019) highlight HRIS's role in combating corruption through audit trails and data integrity features. Comparative research shows that Kenya, Rwanda, and Ghana have been effective in their HRIS implementation with subsequent improved transparency, reduced administrative costs, and increased accountability (Mutula, 2020). The successes all highlight the importance of political will, legislative reform, and capacity building. International bodies like the World Bank (2022) recommend incorporating HRIS into broader public sector reforms that align with national digital and data protection policies. Agbodjah and Ohemeng (2020) also note the significance of real-time analytics and electronic records for planning and institutional responsiveness. However, as Akinyemi and Adebayo (2023) emphasize, technological enhancement is not sufficient, effective HRIS adoption also requires robust change management, stakeholder support, and continuous training to support long-term public service improvement.

Empirical Review

Empirical evidence has indicated that the application of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) in public institutions can enhance administrative effectiveness, transparency, and overall governance impacts. For instance, Olowu and Ayo (2016) confirmed that HRIS introduction in some Nigerian government ministries led to enhanced human resource management and a reduction in ghost worker occurrences, thus preventing payroll fraud. Similarly, Aina and Adeyemi (2019) observed that HRIS assisted in enhancing decision-making processes with the provision of real-time employee information and strategic workforce planning in Lagos State civil service.



However, a few studies identify that the benefits of HRIS are always marred by contextual implementation challenges. Adeyeye et al. (2013) assert that poor ICT infrastructure, lack of digital literacy skills among civil servants, and resistance to change remain significant barriers to the successful integration of HRIS in Nigeria. Okotoni and Adebayo (2020) in a comparative study explained that this public sector renewal is more successful where there are focused reforms and strong capacity development programs. What this implies, then, is that HRIS holds transformative potential, but its effectiveness is contingent on institutional preparedness, stakeholder acceptance, and continued investment in digital infrastructure and capacity building.

3 Methodology

Data for this study was generated through secondary sources. Documentary analysis of international bodies documents, government policy and peer review journals and documentary records were reviewed to understand the systemic use of HRIS in the Nigerian civil service.

4 Discussion and Findings

This section of the study is focused on the adoption and use of HRIS in the Nigerian public service, especially in terms of impact on governance, service delivery, and administrative efficiency. Using a digital HR transformation and governance frame of reference, the discussion unveils that, even though there have been some significant changes brought by HRIS, its potentials are not utilized at full capacity because of systemic and infrastructural constraints.

i. HRIS as Catalyst for Digital Transformation

Despite the ambitious digitalization goals outlined in FCSSIP25, including the full automation of human resource processes and performance tracking systems, this study finds that actual



implementation across MDAs remains fragmented. This gap underscores the challenges in translating strategic blueprints into operational realities.

ii. HRIS and Governance

The issue of governance in Nigeria has long suffered integrity and bureaucratic inefficiency. The Human Resource Information System plays a critical role in trying to restore the chaotic system by enhancing the deployment of transparency, diminishing human discretion or setting it straight and maintaining trail auditing. The proper implementation of HRIS will rather enhance an environment where accountability becomes a matter of fact and provides an opportunity for good governance. However, challenges such as poor digital infrastructure especially in rural areas continue to undermine the efficiency gains HRIS can offer.

iii. Effects on Service Delivery

In institutions where successful deployment of HRIS technologies has occurred, they have recorded measurable improvements in their service delivery. By streamlining HR processes and bringing in Employee Self-Service (ESS) functions that promote rapid administrative responses and require limited HR interference in managing personal data by employees, the system brings some advantages. However, uneven digital illiteracy among civil servants is a barrier with older personnel not being able to cope well with technology. Such imbalances affect the system's performance and inhibit broader acceptance of the system.

iv. Institutional and Infrastructural Barriers

Several systemic obstacles hinder full HRIS implementation; Infrastructure deficits, including limited access to hardware and internet connectivity. Low digital literacy, with wide disparities in technical skills among staff. Resistance to change, especially among traditional bureaucratic



structures. Fragmented implementation, leading to poor system interoperability. Weak policy and legal frameworks, which fail to support cohesive digital integration or safeguard data.

These issues resonate with broader concerns in the literature, emphasizing that uncoordinated or superficial adoption of HRIS can worsen rather than resolve inefficiencies.

v. Comparative Insight and Strategic Implication

The study highlights that effective HRIS deployment requires strong political will, coordinated reform strategies, and consistent investments, drawing on lessons learned from Kenya, Rwanda, and Ghana. Payroll systems, public trust, and the results of HR planning have all improved in these nations.

5 Conclusion and Recommendations

According to the study's overall findings, HRIS offers Nigeria's public service a substantial chance to enhance administrative effectiveness and governance. Although there are successful examples, intentional investments in infrastructure, capacity building, institutional alignment, and legal reform are necessary to fully realize the benefits of HRIS. In order to integrate accountability, responsiveness, and transparency into public sector governance, it will be essential to fully utilize HRIS. Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed for government action.

i. Invest in Digital Infrastructure and Capacity Building

In line with the FCSSIP25 reform agenda, it is recommended that the federal government accelerate the deployment of HRIS across all MDAs as a key driver of civil service modernization.



This should be supported by sustained investments in digital infrastructure, a standardized legal framework for data governance, and targeted digital literacy programs.

ii. Standardize and Coordinate the Use of HRIS

To prevent fragmented systems and guarantee uniformity among public institutions, create a national HRIS policy framework that requires interoperability, data integration, and alignment with larger e-governance initiatives.

iii. Boost Policy and Legal Assistance

To establish a safe and organized environment for HR digital transformation, enact and enforce laws that facilitate HRIS deployment, including those pertaining to data protection, system interoperability, and digital compliance.

iv. Encourage Change Management in Organizations

To overcome cultural resistance in the civil service, put structured change management techniques into practice. This covers staff sensitization, leadership involvement, and providing incentives for the use of digital systems.

v. Monitor, assess, and learn from best practices

Create a national Monitoring & Evaluation framework to evaluate HRIS's effects on governance and service delivery on a regular basis. To further direct improvements, learn from successful implementations in nations like Ghana, Kenya, and Rwanda. Increase digital infrastructure at all governmental levels, give civil servants specialized training in digital literacy, connect HRIS to more comprehensive e-governance initiatives, to guarantee compliance and data protection, fortify



legal and policy frameworks, to lessen internal resistance, implement structured change management.

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