

Strategic Human Resource Management and Digital Transformation in Indonesian Local Governments

Ali Hanafiah Muhi*

Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri (IPDN), Jawa Barat, Indonesia

Dedeh Maryani

Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri (IPDN), Jawa Barat, Indonesia

Devi Irena

Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri (IPDN), Jawa Barat, Indonesia

Rikha Murliasari

Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri (IPDN), Jawa Barat, Indonesia

Loso Judijanto

IPOSS Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia

Arif Saefudin

UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Banten, Indonesia

*Correspondence: ahm.trt068@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Digital transformation has become a strategic priority for local governments, yet its implementation varies despite a common national policy framework. This study aims to examine the role of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) in supporting the implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE) by comparing Mesuji Regency and West Tulang Bawang Regency. A qualitative comparative case study was employed using in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis involving key stakeholders responsible for human resource management and digital governance. The results indicate that the success of digital transformation in Mesuji Regency is supported by strong leadership commitment, sustainable human resource development, better system integration, and an organizational culture that is adaptive to change. In contrast, Tulang Bawang Barat Regency still faces various challenges related to weak leadership support, limited capacity building for civil servants, low system integration, and a work culture that does not yet fully support digital transformation. These differing conditions contribute to variations in the quality of digital governance and the implementation outcomes of the Electronic-Based Government System in the two regions. The study concludes that SHRM enhances digital transformation through leadership, human resource development, and system integration.

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has become a strategic priority in public sector reform across many countries (Katou, 2017). Advances in information and communication technology are driving governments to shift from conventional governance models toward a digital governance framework that is more effective, transparent, accountable, and focused on the needs of the public (Klinck & Swanepoel, 2019). Digital transformation is no longer viewed merely as the adoption of technology, but rather as a process of organizational change that involves institutional aspects, human resources, work culture, and governance as a whole (Makapela & Mtshelwane, 2021; Sulistianingsih et al., 2022). Therefore, the success of digital transformation is largely determined by the ability of public organizations to manage change and optimize their available resources.

In Indonesia, the digital transformation of government is realized through the implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE) (Wahyuni & Qodir, 2021). This policy aims to create an integrated government, improve the quality of public services, strengthen government governance, and promote efficiency and effectiveness in government administration (Potgieter & Mokomane, 2020; Saefudin et al., 2024). Although local governments operate within the same national regulatory framework, the level of SPBE implementation varies significantly (Salazar, 2019). This situation indicates that the success of digital transformation is not solely determined by the availability of technology and regulations but is also influenced by organizational factors and human resource management.

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) has emerged as a critical factor in enabling digital transformation within public organizations. Unlike traditional human resource management, SHRM emphasizes aligning human resource policies and practices with organizational strategy to improve organizational performance and long-term adaptability (Guest, 2017; Collins, 2021). In the context of digital government, SHRM extends beyond administrative personnel management by emphasizing digital competency development, competency-based workforce planning, continuous learning, leadership development, and performance management systems that foster organizational innovation. These strategic practices enhance employees' readiness to adopt digital technologies while strengthening collaboration, institutional capacity, and organizational resilience in responding to technological change. Therefore, successful digital transformation depends not only on technological infrastructure and regulatory support but also on the strategic management of human resources capable of sustaining organizational change and digital innovation.

This phenomenon is evident in the governments of Mesuji Regency and West Tulang Bawang Regency, Lampung Province. Both regencies share relatively similar administrative characteristics, as they are newly established districts within the same province and implement identical national policies. However, the results of the SPBE evaluation reveal significant differences in achievements between the two regions. The contrasting levels of SPBE performance provide an appropriate context for comparative analysis because both local governments operate under similar institutional and regulatory environments while demonstrating different levels of digital governance achievement. This context enables the

identification of organizational and human resource factors that may explain variations in digital transformation performance.

Various previous studies have shown that the success of digital transformation in the public sector is influenced by a range of organizational, technological, and institutional factors. Mahmoud & Othman (2024) found that human resource capacity and leadership support have a greater impact on the successful implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System than technological infrastructure aspects. These findings indicate that technology cannot function optimally without the support of civil servants who possess adequate competencies and adaptability. In line with this, government digital transformation is an organizational change process that requires leadership vision, cross-agency collaboration, and strong institutional readiness (Ndevu & Muller, 2018).

In the context of digital governance, a number of studies have focused more on technological and policy aspects. Cafferkey et al. (2019) show that the progress of SPBE implementation in Indonesia has improved in terms of policy and governance, but still faces challenges regarding service integration, system interoperability, and data management. Research by Napathorn (2017) also confirms that the implementation of SPBE can improve the quality of public services by enhancing accessibility, transparency, and service efficiency. Meanwhile, Cui et al. (2022) reveal that various SPBE regulations are already sufficiently in place, but their implementation remains hindered by inter-organizational coordination issues, system fragmentation, and bureaucratic resistance.

Previous studies on Strategic Human Resource Management in the public sector have primarily examined competency development, employee performance, organizational capacity, and bureaucratic reform rather than digital transformation (Collins, 2021). Existing evidence suggests that SHRM contributes to organizational effectiveness through competency-based staffing, leadership development, performance management, and organizational learning (Asmarany et al., 2024; Guest, 2017). However, limited attention has been given to how these strategic human resource practices support the implementation of digital government initiatives and explain differences in digital transformation outcomes among local governments.

Despite these advances, digital transformation and Strategic Human Resource Management are still commonly treated as separate areas of research. Most digital government studies focus on technology, governance, and public policy, whereas SHRM research mainly examines organizational performance and human resource effectiveness. Consequently, empirical evidence explaining how Strategic Human Resource Management influences variations in digital transformation performance among local governments operating under the same national policy framework remains limited. This gap is particularly relevant in Indonesia, where regional governments implement identical SPBE policies but achieve different levels of digital governance performance.

Based on these research gaps, this study aims to examine how Strategic Human Resource Management contributes to the success of digital transformation through the implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE) in Indonesian local governments. Specifically, this study compares the implementation of SPBE in Mesuji Regency

and West Tulang Bawang Regency to identify the strategic human resource factors that explain variations in digital transformation performance. Furthermore, this study contributes to the literature by providing comparative empirical evidence on the role of Strategic Human Resource Management in local government digital transformation and by proposing an integrated framework linking leadership commitment, human resource development, system integration, and organizational culture.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative approach using a Qualitative Comparative Case Study design (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of how Strategic Human Resource Management practices contribute to the success of digital transformation in local governments with varying levels of digital governance achievement. The comparative case study design was used to identify similarities, differences, and factors influencing the implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE) in the two local governments that were the subjects of this study.

Research Locations and Participants

The research was conducted in Mesuji Regency and West Tulang Bawang Regency, Lampung Province. These two research locations were selected through purposive sampling because both regencies operate within the same regulatory framework but have different levels of SPBE achievement.

Research participants were selected using purposive sampling, which involves choosing informants based on their level of involvement, knowledge, and experience in human resource management and the implementation of SPBE. Research informants included officials from the Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency (BKPSDM), the Communication and Information Technology Agency (Diskominfo), the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), and other regional government agencies involved in the implementation of SPBE. Inclusion criteria included civil servants with managerial responsibilities, involvement in policy formulation, or operational experience in implementing digital transformation within the local government context.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection for this study was conducted through in-depth interviews, document analysis, and observation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach to obtain comprehensive information regarding Strategic Human Resource Management practices in support of digital transformation within local governments. The interviews focused on aspects such as the development of civil servants' digital competencies, human resource capacity-building programs, competency-based employee placement, leadership support, and an organizational culture that supports the implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE). Furthermore, the documentary review involved analyzing various official documents related to digital

transformation and human resource management, such as SPBE evaluation documents, regional strategic plans, civil service development programs, government agency performance reports, regulations related to SPBE, and other supporting documents. In addition, observations were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the actual state of digital governance implementation, patterns of interaction between organizational units, and work practices that support digital transformation within the local government environment. A combination of these three techniques was used to obtain comprehensive data while enhancing the validity of the research findings through a process of triangulation of sources and methods.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive analysis model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which comprises three main stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The analysis process was conducted iteratively throughout the study to identify themes, patterns, similarities, and differences in Strategic Human Resource Management practices at both research sites. To enhance data validity, this study employed source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and member checking. Qualitative data management and coding were conducted using NVivo software to facilitate the systematic organization, categorization, and interpretation of the data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Leadership Commitment as a Driver of Digital Transformation

The research results show that leadership commitment is a distinguishing factor in the success of digital transformation between the Mesuji Regency Government and the West Tulang Bawang Regency Government. In Mesuji Regency, digital transformation received strong support from local leaders, both in the form of policies, the provision of resources, and the strengthening of coordination among local government agencies.

One informant from Mesuji Regency explained that support from local leaders was a key factor in accelerating the implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE).

“Local leaders pay direct attention to the implementation of SPBE. Almost every program related to digitization consistently receives support, both in terms of policy and budgeting.” (M-01)

Another informant also emphasized that digital transformation has become part of the local government’s strategic agenda.

“Whenever there is a need for system development or human resource capacity building, leaders always provide support and encourage coordination among local government agencies.” (M-03)

This support drives the implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE) in a more focused and sustainable manner. Informants revealed that local leaders actively pay attention to the development of digital services, meeting infrastructure needs, and strengthening the capacity of officials involved in managing SPBE.

In contrast, in West Tulang Bawang Regency, leadership support for digital transformation is considered suboptimal. Several informants noted that SPBE implementation has not been a top priority on the regional development agenda, resulting in various digital development programs proceeding in a piecemeal and poorly coordinated manner. This situation has led to limited resource support, weak coordination among local government agencies, and slow progress in developing integrated digital systems.

Conversely, several informants in Tulang Bawang Barat Regency revealed that leadership support for the implementation of SPBE has not been optimal.

"SPBE has not become a top priority, so its development often proceeds independently within each local government agency." (T-01)

Another informant noted that cross-organizational coordination among local government agencies is still inconsistent.

"Digitalization programs do exist, but they have not received the same level of attention as other development programs." (T-03)

These findings indicate that the success of digital transformation is determined not only by the availability of technology but also by leadership's commitment to driving organizational change. Leadership that supports digital transformation acts as a catalyst capable of mobilizing human resources, fostering cross-organizational collaboration, and creating a work environment that supports innovation. Conversely, a lack of leadership commitment has the potential to hinder the implementation of digital policies even when supported by adequate regulations and infrastructure.

These findings align with the Strategic Human Resource Management perspective, which positions leadership as a strategic element in guiding human resource management and organizational change. In the context of digital transformation in local government, leadership commitment serves as the primary foundation that determines policy direction, resource allocation, and the sustainability of SPBE implementation.

Human Resource Development and Civil Service Capacity Building

Research findings indicate differences in human resource development practices between the Mesuji Regency Government and the West Tulang Bawang Regency Government. In Mesuji Regency, civil service capacity building is carried out through various training activities, technical guidance, and mentoring related to the implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE). Informants stated that civil servants involved in managing the SPBE are given opportunities to enhance their digital competencies in line with organizational needs.

One informant explained:

"Employees who handle the SPBE are routinely included in training and technical guidance so they can keep up with technological developments and the needs of the systems being used." (M-04)

Another informant stated:

"When there is a new application or system development, mentoring is usually provided first so that employees can understand how to use it." (M-05)

In addition to competency development, organizational support for human resource management is also evident in the assignment of civil servants who possess the skills and experience relevant to the needs of digital transformation.

In contrast to Mesuji Regency, interview results from West Tulang Bawang Regency indicate that the development of civil servants' digital competencies still faces various limitations. Several informants noted that opportunities to participate in training and capacity-building programs remain uneven, particularly for civil servants directly involved in managing digital systems.

One informant stated:

"Training related to SPBE is still limited, so employees' ability to manage digital applications and systems has not developed optimally." (T-02)

Another informant explained:

"Most employees learn on their own when a new application is introduced because not everyone has received adequate training." (T-04)

Other findings indicate that the readiness of human resources to support the implementation of SPBE in West Tulang Bawang Regency still varies across local government agencies. This is evident from the differences in the level of application utilization and the ability to manage digital services within each local government agency.

Digital Governance and System Integration

The research results show differences in digital governance and system integration between the Mesuji Regency Government and the Tulang Bawang Barat Regency Government. In Mesuji Regency, the management of the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE) is carried out through coordination involving various local government agencies, with support from a unit responsible for coordinating the development and management of government applications.

One informant explained:

"We strive to ensure that the development of digital applications and services is coordinated so that they can be interconnected and support the needs of other local government agencies." (M-06)

Another informant stated:

"When developing a new system, we coordinate first to avoid duplication of applications and data." (M-07)

Observations and a review of documentation indicate that several digital services are already connected to other government systems, thereby facilitating data exchange and administrative processes. Additionally, coordination among local government agencies in application management is relatively well-structured.

In contrast to Mesuji Regency, research findings in West Tulang Bawang Regency indicate that application management is still carried out separately by each local government agency. Some applications are developed to meet the needs of specific work units without adequate integration mechanisms with other systems.

One informant stated:

"Each local government agency has its own applications, and not all of them are connected to the systems used by other agencies." (T-05)

Another informant explained:

"There are still applications that are not being utilized optimally due to limitations in management and coordination between units." (T-06)

Observations also revealed differences in the level of application utilization among local government agencies. In some work units, applications are routinely used to support administrative processes and public services, while in others, the use of digital systems remains limited. These conditions lead to variations in data management, information exchange, and the delivery of electronic services within the local government.

A review of SPBE reports and documents indicates that system integration and data interoperability remain key areas requiring improvement in the implementation of digital government in West Tulang Bawang Regency.

Digital Organizational Culture as the Foundation of Digital Transformation

Research findings indicate differences in organizational culture regarding support for digital transformation between the Mesuji Regency Government and the West Tulang Bawang Regency Government. In Mesuji Regency, civil servants demonstrate openness to the use of digital technology in carrying out their duties and providing public services. The use of digital applications and systems has become part of daily work activities across various regional agencies.

One informant stated:

"Employees are already accustomed to using applications in their daily work, so when a new system is developed, the adjustment process is relatively easier." (M-08)

Another informant explained:

"Most employees are willing to learn and adapt to changes related to the digitization of government services." (M-09)

Observations indicate that electronic-based services have been implemented in various administrative and work coordination processes. Officials in various local government agencies also demonstrate a fairly high level of participation in utilizing the available digital systems.

In contrast to Mesuji Regency, research findings in West Tulang Bawang Regency indicate that the adaptation process to digital transformation still faces various challenges. Several informants noted that the use of digital technology has not yet fully become part of the organization's work culture.

One informant stated:

"There are still employees who are more comfortable using manual work methods rather than the applications that have been provided." (T-07)

Another informant explained:

"The transition to a digital-based work system takes time because not all employees have the same level of readiness." (T-08)

Observations also revealed variations in the level of digital technology adoption across local government agencies. In some work units, the use of digital systems has become part of routine work processes, while in others, technology adoption remains limited to specific administrative needs. Furthermore, digital-based collaboration and information exchange among organizational units have not been implemented uniformly.

A review of documentation indicates that various digital transformation policies and programs are in place in both local governments. However, the levels of utilization and acceptance of digital technology in organizational activities exhibit distinct characteristics in each region.

To provide a more comprehensive overview of the differences in findings between the two research locations, the results of the analysis for each theme are summarized in Table 1. The table presents a comparison of leadership, human resource development, digital governance, and organizational culture in the Mesuji Regency Government and the West Tulang Bawang Regency Government.

Table 1. Comparison of Research Findings between Mesuji Regency and West Tulang Bawang Regency

Analysis Aspect	Mesuji Regency	West Tulang Bawang Regency
Leadership Commitment	Local leaders provide strong support for the implementation of SPBE through policies, coordination, and the provision of resources.	Leadership support for the implementation of SPBE is not yet optimal and has not become a top priority in the regional development agenda.
Human Resource Development	Digital competency development is carried out through training, technical guidance, and ongoing mentoring.	Opportunities for training and digital competency development remain limited and are not yet provided equitably.
Organizational Support for Human Resources .	Organizations provide support for civil servant capacity building and the management of digital transformation.	Organizational support for civil servant capacity building remains relatively limited
Digital Governance	SPBE management is carried out through more structured coordination involving various regional agencies.	The management of digital applications and services is still carried out piecemeal by individual regional agencies.
System Integration	Systems and applications are relatively well-integrated, thereby supporting data exchange and digital services.	System integration and data interoperability remain limited and face application fragmentation.
Utilization of Digital Applications	The use of applications has become part of administrative processes and public services.	The level of application utilization still varies among local government agencies.
Digital Organizational	Culture Civil servants demonstrate openness to innovation and the use	The adoption of digital technology has not yet fully become part of the

	of digital technology in their daily work.	organization's work culture and still faces resistance to change.
Inter-Unit	Collaboration Digital coordination and collaboration among local government agencies are proceeding relatively well.	Digital collaboration and information exchange among organizational units are not yet optimal.
State of Digital Transformation	The implementation of SPBE is proceeding in a more focused and sustainable manner.	The implementation of SPBE still faces various institutional, human resource, and system integration challenges.

Source: Research Findings (2026)

Table 1 shows that the differences in digital transformation achievements between Mesuji Regency and West Tulang Bawang Regency are influenced not only by technological aspects but also by factors such as leadership, human resource development, digital governance, and organizational culture. These findings are further analyzed in the discussion section to understand the relationships among these factors and their implications for the successful implementation of SPBE.

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and a review of documents, it was found that the success of digital transformation in local governments is influenced by the interrelationship between leadership commitment, human resource development, digital system integration, and organizational culture. The relationships among these factors are summarized in the research findings model presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Research Findings Model on Local Government Digital Transformation

Source: Research Findings (2026)

Figure 1 illustrates that leadership commitment serves as the initial factor that drives human resource development, supports digital system integration, and fosters an adaptive organizational culture. The interaction among these four factors contributes to the success of digital transformation in local governments.

Discussion

This study shows that the differences in the success rates of digital transformation between the Mesuji Regency Government and the West Tulang Bawang Regency Government are not solely due to technological or regulatory factors, but rather to differences in institutional capacity built through Strategic Human Resource Management practices. Although both local governments operate within the same national regulatory framework and implement the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE) policy, the research findings reveal significant differences in the areas of leadership commitment, human resource development, digital system integration, and organizational culture. These differences suggest that a common institutional and regulatory environment does not necessarily produce similar organizational outcomes because the implementation of digital transformation depends on how local governments translate formal policies into organizational priorities, human resource capabilities, coordination mechanisms, and everyday work practices. Taken together, these findings also suggest that digital transformation outcomes emerge through the interaction of human-resource capabilities, institutional capacity, and the alignment between organizational practices and technological systems.

These findings indicate that digital transformation in the public sector is a complex process of organizational change (Anwar et al., 2023; Jouda et al., 2016; Patil et al., 2023). The presence of digital technology does not automatically lead to better governance if it is not supported by competent human resources, visionary leadership, integrated digital governance, and an organizational culture that supports change (Boxall et al., 2016; Paltu & Brouwers, 2020). In other words, technology serves only as an enabler, while human and organizational factors are the primary determinants of the success of digital transformation.

These research findings support the Strategic Human Resource Management perspective, which positions human resources as a strategic asset of the organization (Bazana & Reddy, 2021; Els et al., 2021; Ndevu, 2019; Yu et al., 2019). In the context of local government, the development of civil servant competencies, leadership support, and the fostering of an adaptive organizational culture have proven to be factors influencing the successful implementation of SPBE. The research results indicate that Mesuji Regency was able to establish alignment between organizational strategy and human resource management, thereby achieving better institutional capacity compared to West Tulang Bawang Regency. This alignment is important because leadership commitment alone does not directly produce digital transformation; rather, its effects are mediated through organizational decisions concerning competency development, coordination, resource utilization, and the adaptation of work practices. Thus, SHRM can be positioned as the upstream mechanism in the digital transformation process, because strategically developed human resources provide

the capabilities that organizations subsequently need to coordinate, institutionalize, and align with digital technologies.

These research findings are also consistent with Institutional Capacity Theory, which explains that an organization's success is determined by its ability to manage resources, foster coordination, and sustainably develop organizational capacity (Beszter et al., 2015; Landau, 2017; Sanders & Yang, 2016; Gunawan et al., 2026). Mesuji Regency demonstrated stronger institutional capacity through cross-agency coordination, leadership support, and more systematic human resource management. Conversely, the limitations in institutional capacity in Tulang Bawang Barat Regency have resulted in low effectiveness in the implementation of SPBE. From an integrated perspective, institutional capacity represents the mechanism through which strategically developed human resources are translated into organizational capabilities. Leadership commitment and civil servant competencies therefore become more consequential when they are supported by coordination structures, resource allocation, governance mechanisms, and organizational practices that enable these capabilities to be institutionalized.

Furthermore, the research findings reinforce the Socio-Technical Systems Theory, which states that the success of technology implementation is influenced by the alignment between technical and social systems (Cregan et al., 2021; Johnston, 2023; Low & Salwa Mokhtar, 2017). This study found that the mere existence of digital applications and technologies does not guarantee the success of digital transformation if it is not accompanied by organizational support and human resource readiness. This situation is evident in Tulang Bawang Barat Regency, which still faces challenges in system integration and civil service capacity building despite having various applications supporting digital governance. The comparison therefore demonstrates that technological systems produce different organizational outcomes depending on whether the social and organizational conditions necessary to support their use have been developed. In this sense, socio-technical alignment represents the downstream mechanism through which human-resource capabilities and institutional capacity are translated into effective interaction between civil servants, organizational processes, digital systems, applications, and data.

Taken together, Strategic Human Resource Management, Institutional Capacity Theory, and Socio-Technical Systems Theory provide complementary explanations of the same digital transformation process. SHRM explains how human resources are strategically developed through leadership commitment, competency development, continuous learning, and adaptive organizational practices. Institutional Capacity Theory then explains how these human and organizational resources are coordinated, institutionalized, and translated into organizational capabilities through governance structures, inter-agency coordination, and resource utilization. Socio-Technical Systems Theory subsequently explains how these capabilities interact with technological systems, digital applications, data, and work processes. The comparative findings from Mesuji Regency and West Tulang Bawang Regency therefore suggest that SPBE outcomes depend not on any single factor, but on the cumulative interaction among strategically managed human resources, institutional capacity, and socio-

technical alignment. This integrated mechanism can be expressed as: SHRM → Institutional Capacity → Socio-Technical Alignment → Digital Transformation/SPBE Outcomes.

These findings support previous research that identifies leadership and organizational capacity as critical factors in public sector digital transformation (Blom et al., 2020; Muhamad et al., 2021; Venclová et al., 2013). However, this study offers a distinct perspective by demonstrating that the influence of leadership does not operate in isolation but rather functions through the mechanisms of Strategic Human Resource Management. Strong leadership drives the development of civil servant competencies, strengthens organizational coordination, and fosters a work culture that supports digital transformation. These findings further indicate that the resulting human-resource capabilities must be institutionalized through organizational capacity and subsequently aligned with technological systems for digital transformation to generate sustainable SPBE outcomes.

Unlike previous studies that have largely focused on technological infrastructure, digital governance, and SPBE policies, this study demonstrates that human factors play a more dominant role in determining the success of local government digital transformation (Ermaya et al., 2025; Ferine et al., 2024; Saefudin, 2024). These findings expand our understanding of SPBE implementation by positioning Strategic Human Resource Management as a central factor linking digital policies to organizational performance. More importantly, the findings suggest that the effect of human resources is not independent of organizational and technological conditions. Human-resource capabilities must be transformed into institutional capacity and subsequently aligned with digital systems and work processes. This provides a more integrated explanation of why local governments operating under the same SPBE policy framework may achieve different digital transformation outcomes.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature on public sector digital transformation by integrating Strategic Human Resource Management, Institutional Capacity Theory, and Socio-Technical Systems Theory into a single explanatory framework. Rather than treating these perspectives as separate explanations, the findings position them as interconnected mechanisms operating at different but complementary levels. SHRM provides the human-resource foundation through leadership commitment, competency development, and adaptive workforce practices. Institutional Capacity Theory explains how these capabilities are coordinated and institutionalized through organizational structures, governance mechanisms, resource allocation, and inter-agency coordination. Socio-Technical Systems Theory then explains how human and organizational capabilities interact with technological systems, digital applications, data, and work processes. Accordingly, this study proposes that leadership commitment, civil service capacity building, institutional coordination, digital system integration, and organizational culture constitute interconnected mechanisms through which strategically managed human resources contribute to SPBE and broader digital transformation outcomes.

This study has several limitations. First, the study was conducted in only two local governments within a single province, and therefore the findings cannot be statistically generalized to all local governments in Indonesia. Nevertheless, the comparative findings provide transferable organizational lessons for local governments operating under different

administrative and socio-economic conditions. In particular, the identified mechanisms suggest that the effectiveness of digital transformation depends on the capacity of local governments to translate leadership commitment into strategic human resource development, inter-agency coordination, digital system integration, and an organizational culture that supports adaptation. These mechanisms may be particularly relevant for local governments with similar challenges in digital competency, institutional coordination, and organizational readiness, although their implementation may need to be adapted to differences in administrative capacity, resource availability, and local socio-economic contexts. Second, the study used a qualitative approach focused on gaining an in-depth understanding of organizational contexts and therefore did not statistically measure the magnitude of relationships among the identified factors. Third, the study was conducted within a specific time frame and could not capture the long-term dynamics of digital transformation.

CONCLUSION

The results indicate that the success of digital transformation is not solely determined by the availability of technology and regulations but is significantly influenced by the local government's ability to manage human resources strategically. A comparison of the two regions reveals that Mesuji Regency has achieved a higher level of success in digital transformation, supported by strong leadership commitment, continuous capacity building for civil servants, more integrated digital governance, and an organizational culture that is adaptive to change. Conversely, various limitations in leadership, human resource development, system integration, and work culture act as factors hindering the acceleration of digital transformation in West Tulang Bawang Regency. These findings underscore that Strategic Human Resource Management serves as a strategic factor that strengthens institutional capacity and acts as a bridge between digital policies and the successful implementation of digital transformation in local governments. The findings further indicate that the contribution of SHRM to digital transformation operates through an interconnected process in which strategically developed human resources strengthen institutional capacity, while institutional capacity enables the effective alignment of organizational practices, human capabilities, and technological systems. Thus, digital transformation in the public sector must be understood as an organizational change process that places human resources, leadership, and organizational culture on par with technology in terms of importance.

These findings indicate that Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) functions as a mechanism linking leadership commitment with digital transformation capacity by strengthening human resource development, coordination, digital governance, and adaptive organizational practices. Institutional capacity subsequently provides the organizational mechanism through which these human-resource capabilities are coordinated and institutionalized, while socio-technical alignment enables human and organizational capabilities to interact effectively with digital systems, applications, data, and work processes. Accordingly, the findings support an integrated mechanism in which SHRM contributes to institutional capacity, institutional capacity facilitates socio-technical alignment, and their

interaction supports more effective SPBE implementation and digital transformation outcomes. Thus, digital transformation should be understood as an integrated organizational process in which leadership, SHRM, institutional capacity, socio-technical alignment, digital governance, and organizational culture interact to build institutional capacity. For SPBE implementation, local governments should prioritize competency-based digital workforce planning, structured digital leadership development, integrated inter-agency governance, continuous digital competency assessment, and institutional SPBE performance indicators. These measures should be implemented as an integrated strategy rather than as separate interventions, so that human-resource development, organizational capacity, and technological systems mutually reinforce one another. These measures can support more sustainable digital transformation beyond fragmented technology adoption.

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Abbreviation

The abbreviations used in this study are as follows: SPBE (Electronic-Based Government System), SHRM (Strategic Human Resource Management), BKPSDM (Regional Personnel and Human Resource Development Agency), Diskominfo (Department of Communication and Informatics), Bappeda (Regional Development Planning Agency), and NVivo (Qualitative Data Analysis Software).

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